

Indian Culture and Aesthetics

Abstract

The recorded history of India as of now beings with the Indus valley civilization is around 5000 years before. It is generally believed that Indian Civilization in the oldest living civilization of the earth, unity in diversity and spiritualism are the two important characteristics of Indian Culture. Over a period of 5000 years not much has changed in India. The vedic mantras (hymns) that were being charted for different purposes, from bathing to eating have not undergone any change and continue to be used in the same way for the purpose. This is the only civilization in the world where there is a continuity in the life style traditions & customs, food habits, dress, religious, faith and belief it. Which is not found in any other civilization of the world.

Keywords : Aesthetics, Culture, modernization

Introduction

The term "Culture" refers to the state of intellectual development or manners. It is said that 'Soil conglomerated forms stone, society conglomerated becomes culture". The social and culture forces that influence the growth and cultural forces that influence the growth of human being is defined as culture, culture as a term has many interrelated meanings different authorities have described culture in different ways. By and large, the word "Culture" is used with three basic senses i.e. integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behavior, excellence in test of fine art and humanities and set of shared attitude, values, goals and practices that characterizes a society.

In Indian context culture refers to a pattern of human activities, associated with the people of India over centuries India's language, religion, dance, music, art, architecture, food habits and customs differ from place to place within the country itself even then there is a commonality called Indian culture. Indian culture therefore, is often leveled as an amalgamation of diverse cultures spread over the entire country. Indian culture is rich and diverse, vast and varied. The continuity of the civilization is the essence of Indian Culture. In spite of the acceptance of modernization and modern ways of living along with relative changes in life style, the intrinsic values continue to remain unchanged, peripheral changes in clothing, food habit, way of living have failed to affect the heart and soul of the Indians . Modernity is only skin deep. The original Indian mind can never change so soon. It may take centuries if need be.

The centuries of foreign rule and frequent invasions by outsiders which are supposed to influence the Indian life and culture, in fact, have very little impact on Indian culture. The Afghans and the Moghuls ruled over India for nearly 400 years followed by the British for 200 years. There 600 years of foreign domination has succeeded only reaching the vestibule of Indian culture. It has failed to touch the mainstream of India culture.

Antiquity, unity and continuity are the three important aspects which have helped the homogeneity of Indian culture over the ages. The key aspects of Indian culture like respect for elders, respect for one another respect for the guests (Atithi Devo Bhava) helpful natures, availing of pleasure, pain and suffering are the binding factors that are personified Indian music, Indian dance, Indian drama, Indian image making among others. Indian is the birth place of Hinduism, Budhisim, Jainisim, Sikhism and many other religions and religious cults. Today Hinduism and Buddhism are world's 3rd and 4th largest religions respectively with followers spread over the entire world. Buddhism in fact is the official of many countries outside India. Hence as Indians, we are proud of our culture and cultural values.

The main feature of Indian culture reflects through its glorious chapter of art & architecture. The uniqueness of Indian Culture exhibited in various cave paintings, natural colour painting, sculpture and proved the rich aesthetic sense of ancient India. The essence of Indian aesthetic cultural trails recognized by the entire would from ancient past.

Chakradhar Behera
Reader,
Deptt. of Painting,
Utkal University of Culture,
Bhubaneswar

Aesthetics as "Soundarya Sastra" what we call "Aesthetics" in western context is designated as "Soundaray Sastra" in India. However we do not come across this term in any context, that is philosophical and non-philosophical in classical Indian literature. There is no branch of Indian Philosophy which developed under the nomenclature of "Saundarya Sastra". It is obvious that the usage of this name is recent and twentieth century phenomenon, However, whatever is being brought as a subject of study under the scope of sundarya sastra is not very different from the western context, even though the issue have different names such as "*raga theory*", kaunya sastra, alankar sastra etc. this is an evidence of the fact that we have a roots Aesthetics embedded in the most omcient literatue as ancient as the vedic texts which compare the highest spiritual bliss with aesthetic enjoyment. The epithet rasavaisah in the Jaittiriya upanisad to describe Brahman implies that the awareness of Brahmanhood is an experience of rasa itself, that is a kind of detached enjoyment or bliss. Thus it is clear that the basic concepts of aesthetics are quite old in India but the coinage of the name "Sundarya Sastra" is new. This name seems to have been invented by the contemporary Indian thinkers to stand for something that is analogous to western concepts and theories about art. It is an attempt to comprehend the similar tendencies in Indian thought which have been presented in the forms of different sastras under one umbrella and mahe a consistent science out of it.

The question that is being raised now is whether there is any justification in using terms like Indian aesthetics". If aesthetics is a philosophy of beauty and art is it proper to think that such generalisations are different in India and West ? can philosophical approach to art and for that matter to any problem that is analysed by Philosophy have special identity of its own in different parts of the world ? one think that must be made clear in this context is that Indian art has a unique identity if its own determined by its long cultural traditions and ideological grounds. We come across a large number of books dwelling upon the specialties of Indian art written with a view to enlightening the readers on this subject. But these works are of the nature of art-histories and art-criticism. In a way, every nation has its own traditions and cultural determinants which can be called contributing factors of art practices. It is not surprising that we have historical accounts of these arts which vary from culture to culture. But the same thing is not true about the philosophy of art, Since philosophising is done almost in the same manner in all parts of the world. Hence there should be only one philosophy one aesthetics and perhaps we are not justified in dividing philosophy into oriental, western, American etc.

However, the interesting fact is we do talk of philosophy as being western, Indian, Chinese, American, Russian etc. and in the same manner of the Indian philosophy of art and the western philosophy of art as being distinct and original in its own way. In fact, it is a well-known trend and fashion these days of making comparative studies of philosophies, political and economic doctrines and systems, culture etc. and to discover what is common

and varian in human knowledge in different parts of the world. We can illustrate the validity of comparing Indian aesthetics as a distinct way of doing it with western aesthetics on the basis of following arguments.

Reference

1. Harekrushna Mahatab(ed) History of Orissa.Cuttack-1949
2. B.C.Ray.Cultural Heritage of India-vol-| Centre for Advanced Studies and Culture BBSR-1984.
3. Art & Aesthetics P.N. Mago