CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *HASTA MUDRĀS* AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS IN DANCE

Dr. Vijayapal Pathloth

Dance Exponent, Academician, Art Educator,
Author, Scholar, Performer, Choreographer, Dance Therapist

Faculty, Department of Dance,
Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University,
Hyderabad, Telangana, Bhārat.

Dr. Vijayapal Pathloth, a doctorate in Dance is an internationally acclaimed and leading exponent of Dance from South Bhārat (India). A versatile performer and scholar, he is perhaps the only artist from the tribal background who is expertise in both Academics and Dance performances. He is recognized for his scholarly, yet enthralling portrayal of the arts. An exceptional artiste of today’s generation, Dr. Vijayapal is an accomplished, prolific and promising professional and scholar, who aspire to reach the higher standards of perfection in the field of Dance, both academically and professionally. With Masters, MPhil and PhD in Dance, he pursued MBA and MPhil Tourism Management too. Besides being an Academician, he is a Dance performer, Art educator, Author, Scholar, Choreographer and a Dance Therapist who endeavors to make an impact on the social and cultural lives by sharing his expertise in the field of art. He has authored two books and published various research papers in National and International Journals and books and has also conducted seminars and workshops on dance and allied disciplines at various places furthering his academic pursuit. He is a recipient of various awards and titles besides a JRF and a gold medal for his research work.

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of the paper is to critically analyse the term Hasta Mudrās in terms of its origin, evolution and its usage in various disciplines. It analyses the terminology “Hasta Mudra” and critically analyses their attributes in comparison with various texts and scholars. It explores on its objectives and significance in general and introspects into dance. This research paper tries to enlighten the various domains of Hasta Mudrās and highlights its benefits and usages in various disciplines like Dance, religious practices of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism etc. It tries to investigate the various types of Hasta Mudrās used in Dance that are explained by various scholars in various treatises on Dance and allied subjects. The research paper also analyses scientifically the various ways and means of holding the Hasta Mudrās and their positions (Articulations, Pronation and Supination). Finally, it concludes highlighting the various benefits and usages of Hasta Mudrās.

**Keywords:** Hasta Mudrās, Mudrās, Nātya Shāstra, Dance, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Asamyuta, Samyuta, Nṛitta Hastās, Nṛitta Ratnāvali, Sangētaratnākara, Sārangadeva, Balarāma Varma, Balarāmabharatam.
INTRODUCTION:

Communication through gestures of the hands is said to be one of the most ancient forms of communication in human evolution. The spoken language is developed much later, long after the use of gestural communication. Even after the invention of spoken language, the gestural language has never lost its importance and thus gesticulation is a universal feature. Speech without gesticulation is often incomplete. Signaling or sign is the first and foremost means of communication. It involves the hand signals, head movements, eye movements, body postures etc. An infant starts using signs and signals before he or she could speak to communicate. Besides children, the deaf and the dumb, the traffic police, crew in the flights, army, navy and air force, also use the hand gestures to communicate. In fact we all use the hand gestures often to communicate certain things in spite of speech. Thus using the hand gestures is the fastest way of communication added with speech. In Bhāratēya context from the Vedic times, the hand gestures have always been a part of sacred rituals like recitation of mantras and dance performances. These hand gestures used in rituals and performances are referred to as Mudrās or as Hastās.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

Keeping in view of the abstract, the following are the objectives of the study.

- To give a brief overview on Hasta Mudrās.
- To explore into the terminology Hasta Mudrā and critically analyse their various attributes in various texts.
- To explicate the objectives and significance of Hasta Mudrās in various means and modes.
- To analyse various features and benefits of Hasta Mudrās that are used in various disciplines like Dance, religious practices of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism etc.
- To highlight the various types of Hasta Mudrās in Dance with brief analysis on various texts on Hasta Mudrās.
- To enlighten and educate the various modes and means of holding and positioning of the Hasta Mudrās with scientific approach.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This is a theoretical study which uses analytical and qualitative methods to analyze the ideas, opinions and theories presented in relation to Hasta Mudrās and its various benefits. Various ways and means are explored to study the Hasta Mudrās used in various disciplines to understand the benefits with an analytical approach to substantiate the objectives of the study. The study involves the critical analysis of Hasta Mudrās in Dance as explained in various texts. The analysis is drafted through the descriptive method.
DISCUSSION - BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HASTA MUDRĀS:

The origin of the word ‘Mudrā’ is uncertain. It is derived from the Sanskrit words ‘Mud’ and ‘Dhāra’, meaning ‘bliss’ and ‘dissolving’. The word Mudrā in Sanskrit refers to a seal, sign, mark, gesture, imprint, passport, badge, mystery, code, language, signet-ring and lock[1]. The origin of “Mudrā” can also be traced to the Persian word ‘muhāra’ meaning a ‘sign’. Muddika, the Pali word for Mudrā, is derived from the word “muddā” which means authority[2]. Thus, the word Mudrā indicates the seal of authenticity which involves the hands and fingers and sometimes the entire body. Its origin, according to the scholars, lies in the tantric text. In addition to these, Mudrā is a symbolic or a spiritual gesture used in the iconography and spiritual practices of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism[3]. In the post-Vedic literature, the term Mudrā referred to a seal or the imprint left by a seal and the later usage designated it as a ritual gesture; the way of holding the fingers.

Mudrā is the term used to indicate a sign with different parts of the body and mind. Such Mudrās include Hasta Mudrās / Kara Mudrās (Hands), Kāya Mudrās (Body), Shīra Mudrās (Head), Ādhāra Mudrās, Bandhā Mudrās (to unite / arrest), Chakshu Mudrās (Eyes), Swasa Mudrās (Breath), and Manō Mudrās (Mind)[4]. As mentioned above Mudrās are of eight types which are used spiritually and socially for various purposes like mantra, tantra, yantra, religious worships, sculptures, yoga, dance etc. Out of the eight mentioned Mudrās, Hasta Mudrās play a very major role and can be learned easily (or) held without much difficulty.

The term “Mudrā” which means a ‘sign’ or ‘chinha’ is not the terminology used for expression of gestures used in dance. In Bhāratēya Shāstrēya dance, the term “Hasta” “Abhinaya Hasta” “Abhinaya kāra” or “Hasta Mudrā” is used[5]. The hand gestures are referred as Mudrās in Yoga, Mantra and Tantra Shāstrēya whereas in Bhāratēya Shāstrēya dance it is referred as Hastās. Hastās are hand gestures used to convey various feelings or expressions or meanings. The literal translation of Hasta Mudrā in Sanskrit is hand (Hasta) symbol (Mudrā), though Hasta Mudrā can be interpreted in English as hand gestures or sign language. Hence it would be more appropriate to use “Hasta Mudrās” for general reference of the hand gestures. The Hasta Mudrās are static in Yoga and spiritual practices, whereas they are dynamic in the dance practices.

ORIGIN OF HAND GESTURES – HASTA MUDRĀS

The origin of Hasta Mudrās is still shrouded in mystery. There is no proper evidence on the origin of the hand gestures but they have been in use for millenniums by people of all religions and sects throughout the world. The Hasta Mudrās are found in everyday life, in both Mantra and Tantra, in the religious rites and rituals of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, Yoga and Bhāratēya Shāstrēya Dances. Hence the origin of Hasta Mudrās can be treated as Divine and Social origins. The Hasta Mudrās used in the religious practices are Divine in nature whereas the Hasta Mudrās used in Yoga and in Bhāratēya Shāstrēya Dance are regarded as Social.

---

2 Encyclopaedia Britannica -2010, Retrieved October 11, 2010;
3 Appa Rao PSR, Hastabhinnayam, op.cit, p. 11.
4 Prakash Rao Dharianpragada, Mudralu, Bandhālu, p.3.
5 Appa Rao PSR, Nāya Shāstra, op.cit, p. 292.
According to divine origin theory, the hand gesture practice is prevalent all over the world. “Kalika Purāṇa has an elaborate description of various Hasta Mudrās of spiritual importance. Mudrās are extremely important in Hindu and Buddhist iconography. They also form a useful aid to identify Buddhās, Bōdhisattvās and deities”. In Hindu rituals, we can find the Hasta Mudrās in prayers, Surya Namaskarams, Gayatri Mantram, Hōmam, sculptures of Gods and Goddesses etc. The sculptures of Gods in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism show various varieties of Hasta Mudrās. The rites and rituals in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism portray various Hasta Mudrā which are followed in Bhārat, Tibet, China, Japan Indonesia etc.

Yoga has abundant varieties of Hasta Mudrās which even explain about various benefits and therapeutic effects of practicing them. The science dealing with finger postures or the Mudrā Vīgyān holds a significant position in ancient Bhāratēya Sciences. It is an independent and separate branch of Yoga.

Bhāratēya Shāstrēya Dance communicates expressions (Abhinaya) through the Hasta Mudrās. Most of the Hasta Mudrās have a scope of Therapeutic effects hidden in them as they are used for various purposes since ancient times. The Hasta Mudrās used in Bhāratēya Shāstrēya Dance along with their scope of therapeutic effects have been described in this chapter. The description of Hasta Mudrās used in Yoga and Hindu rituals and their scope of therapeutic effects is dealt in the third chapter.

Documentation of different gestural techniques and artistic practices has not been a priority until very recent times. Data materials from written texts, archeological findings, temple sculptures, paintings, and inscriptions have been the best sources to create a reasonable history. The paintings in the caves of Ajanta and sculptures in the Ellora caves dating back to 2nd and 1st centuries BC show innumerable Hasta Mudrās. Hinduism shows the earliest recorded knowledge and analysis of Mudrās.

The earliest documentations are found in Mantra Shāstra (the book of incantations), Upasana Shāstra (the book of worship and prayers) and the Nātya Shāstra (the book of dhārstēya dramatology). The following verse from Srimad Bhagwad Gītā mentions that Lord Krishna was in the posture of Gyan Mudrā when he bestowed the knowledge of Gītā to Arjuna.

“Prapannapārijātāya tot rave pānaye, gyān Mudrāya Krishnāya gēṭāmritā duhe namah”
It says – Lord Krishna held the Gyan Mudrā and preached Gēṭāmrutam (Gītā/ Gēṭōpadesham) to Arjuna.

However, in Bhāratēya context of dance, more than any other evidence, a written text, the Nātya Shāstra, holds invaluable information about the form, function, and technical details of dance and theatre in ancient Bhārat, thereby introducing us to the codification of Hasta Mudrās.

Bharata in Nātya Shāstra explains the birth of dance as divine as it is created by Lord Brahma. Based upon the origin of dance, we can trace the origin of Hasta Mudrās (gestures) from Yajur Veda, as Lord Brahma has extracted the abhinaya aspect (expressions) from Yajur Veda to create dance. In addition to Nātya Shāstra, Hindu Mythology regards, Lord Shiva as the Lord of Dance. He is described as using different hand gestures while performing Tāṇḍavam – the Nyrittāśpect of dance. The Hasta Mudrās used by Lord Shiva, while performing the tāṇḍava aspect could be the first usage and origin of Hasta Mudrās technically.

---

6 Rajender Menen, The healing power of Mudras, Pustak Mahal Publications, Delhi, 2007, p. 44.
Another important treatise on Bhāratēya Dance is Abhinaya Darpanam. Traced back to the medieval times, this text delineates in detail the communicative aspects through the Hasta Mudrās. In fact, the gestural language as given in Abhinaya Darpana, is followed more than in Nātya Shāstra by southern Bhāratēya dance forms.

“Kanthaenālambayaeth Gētam, Hastae na Ardham pradarshayeth I
Chakshubhayām darshayaeth Bhāvam, Pādābhāyam Tālāmācharaeth II
Yatho Hasta thatho Drishti, Yatho Drishti thatho Manah I
Yatho Manah thatho Bhāva, Yatho Bhāva thatho Rasā II8”

(Ahinaya Darpanam – Slokas 56-57)

It says – The song is retained through the throat, the hands are used to express meaning, the bhāvam / expression can be seen through the eyes, the legs follow the rhythm of tāla , where the hands (Hasta) are - the eyes follow (dṛishti); Where the eyes are - the mind (manah) follows; Where the mind goes, there is expression of inner feeling (bhāva) and where there is expression or bhāva, mood or sentiment (rasā) is evoked.

Thus, it can be said that hand gestures become a primary aspect of dance and plays a very important role in the final evocation of the rasā.

Let us look at various religious practices and the usage of Mudrās in them. In Jainism, Swāmi Mahāvir Jain and in Sikkhism, Guru Nanak Devji always shows the Gyan or Dhyān Mudrā. Even today, the sign used by the priests of Catholic Churches while blessing the devotees, is the Mahāgyān Mudrā. Egyptian hieroglyphics are a virtual treasure house of Mudrās. The postures of their kings and queens and even the mummies show them holding Mudrās. The Babylonian sun God Damuzi shows certain Mudrās while descending into the underworld. In Islam, the mystical Whirling Dervishes used hand signs or Mudrās for various rites and rituals. Roman art is replete with Mudrās. Along with the spread of the Ramayana, the Shāstrēya performing arts and the Buddhist Tantras have spread Hasta Mudrās across Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Srilanka, Indonesia, Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, China, Korea and Japan10.

We eat, write with our hands, type with the fingers, rub our hands, press them in anxiety, wash them, and scratch with fingers and the list goes on. Knowingly or unknowingly we use our hands and we use the Hasta Mudrās for different purposes and most of us are not aware that these Mudrās have therapeutic effect in our daily life.

The above references of Hasta Mudrās shows that hand gesture is the universal phenomena and hence used by different gods which signify the hidden meaning and power seen through the hand gestures which are believed to have spiritual and healing powers. Hence Hasta Mudrās has both divine and social origin.

---

8 Nadikeshwara’s Abhinaya Darpanam (980 – 1020 Century AD), Slokas 56-57.
9 J.S.M.Ward, Pictures from the book “The sign Language of the Mysteries”.
10 Lokesh Chandra & Sharada Rani, op.cit, p. 1
HASTA MUDRĀS – OBJECTIVES AND SIGNIFICANCE

The hands are the bearers of important symbols, which are universally understood. A Bhāratēya Shāstrēya dancer expresses the whole universe through the language of gestures which has a greater influence on the mind than words could express. The gestures of the deities depicted in Hindu and Buddhist art symbolize and evoke specific mythological occurrences\(^1\).

The main objective of the Hasta Mudrās is to communicate a particular meaning. Its importance is extended in Hindu rituals, daily adoration’s, dance, Yoga, sculpture, painting and other fine arts. The Hasta Mudrās are described as devotional, emotional, aesthetic and psychic attitudes or gestures. Several kinds of hand gestures are brought in for varied uses. Research on hand gestures has revealed several benefits of practicing them. Yogis have reckoned Mudrās as postures of energy flow and associated them to Prānic force of individuals with the cosmic or universal force.

Bending and stretching the fingers of the hand and holding them in various positions form the Hasta Mudrās in Bhāratēya Shāstrēya Dance. These Hasta Mudrās are the vital source of communication in all the Shāstrēya dance forms of Bhārat like Kuchipudi, BharataNātyam, Odissi, Kathak, Kathakali, Manipuri, Mohiniattam, Chhau, Sattriya, Gaudiyā Nātyam, Vilasininātyam, Andhranātyam, Perini Shiva Tandavam, and Yakshagamam etc. An accomplished practitioner of dance would make the use of these Hasta Mudrās along with the accompanying facial expressions and body movements. A dancer could use any number of Mudrās to show a particular meaning but can judiciously choose one over the other with the understanding of subtle distinctions in their meaning. Each Hasta Mudrā has a name that is used to indicate the form as it is explained in the written texts. This name is usually indicative of the shape that the fingers create and/or the object represented by the shape.

HASTA MUDRĀS – BODY DISCIPLINE:

Scientifically the human body is divided into head, body and limbs. The limbs include the hands and legs. The hand is divided into the shoulder, upper arm, elbow, lower arm, wrist, palm and fingers. The human body comprises of muscles, bones, nerves, blood etc., and is systematized into different systems. The important systems of the body, which aid in effective functioning of the body include the skeletal system, muscular system, nervous system etc.

The human hand in general has 5 fingers Angustha - Thumb Finger, Tarjani - Fore Finger, Madhyamā - Middle Finger, Anāmika - Ring Finger and Kanishtha - Little Finger\(^2\). These five fingers represent Agni (fire), Vāyu (air), Ākāsh (space), Prithvi (earth) and Jal (water) respectively according to Ayurvedic terminology\(^3\).

The Yogic studies say that the physical body is composed of five elements which are fused with each other in different proportions to form each human body.

---


\(^{3}\) Dhiren Gala, *Health at your Fingertips*, Navnēt Publications, Delhi, p. 12.
**HASTA MUDRĀS IN DANCE**

The usage of hand gestures - ‘Mudrās’ used by the priest in prayers and holy rituals became the language of expression and communication for the dancer known as ‘Hastās’. This research encompasses a thorough analysis of the ancient art of hand symbols found in wide range of disciplines including performing and other fine arts, medicinal and other alternative therapies, ritual activities, Yoga etc.

The language of communicating a particular meaning through the Hasta Mudrās in dance is known as ‘Sharirabhāsha’\(^{14}\). The Hasta Mudrās are as important to a dancer as alphabets to a language. They are important to a dancer just as notes for music, words for literature, brush and colours for painting and hammer and chisel for sculpture. Hasta Mudrās play a very important role in communication. Before the invention of written languages, dance was one of the methods of passing stories down from generation to generation\(^{15}\). In the ancient times, the specific language to name the hand gestures (Hasta Mudrās) is known as ‘Akshara Mustika’\(^{16}\).

**Hastābhinayam**, the nonverbal language of communication through gestures is the central point in a course of research study on communication in dance. It offers an in-depth approach and understanding of dance especially in communication through the gestures. *Abhinaya Darpanam* – the mirror of gestures written by *Nandikeshwara* mentions *abhinaya* as fourfold namely Āṅgikābhīnaya, Vāchikābhīnaya, Āharyābhīnaya and Sātwikābhīnaya.

Sātwikābhīnaya or expression (abhinaya) of the mind is performed by Āṅgikābhīnaya through the usage of suitable body movement and limb gestures as it is the extension of psychological emotions expressed through the body movements. Āharyābhīnaya is associated to the dressing, decor and deals with the costumes and make-up of an artist who performs various roles. A dancer translates the meaning of communicating the language between the writer and the audience through the gestures and body movements. Vāchikābhīnaya especially in theatrical dance is associated with the use of verbal language and communicating it through a non verbal language which involves the tone, voice, accent and rhythm which brings out the lyrical characters of the play through enacting.

Āṅgikābhīnaya is the expression through the gestures of limbs and body and Hasta Mudrās occupy a very special place in it. The emotions and the thoughts of the mind are expressed effectively through various body parts, which involve different postures, movements, gaits and gestures of the limbs. The application of gestures in the daily routine is very much different from that of the artistic gestures and at times there is no correlation between the realistic and artistic gestures. The artistic gestures add aesthetic appeal to the dance.

*Bharata* explains that Āṅgikābhīnaya which is an expression through body gestures is three fold containing *Angās*, *Upāṅgās* and *Pratyangās*. Hand is a major limb in his division of three fold that plays a very important role. *Angās* further divide the body into 6 parts – *Sīram*, *Hastās*, *vaksha*, *pārśwās*, *kāti* and *pādas*. The *Hastās* play a very vital role in dance independently as well as with facial expression and body gestures.

According to the available literature, *Hasta Mudrās* in dance are first conceived by *Bharata* in the first known treatise on dance “*Nātya Shāstra*”. Most of the texts on dance divide the *Hasta Mudrās* into two categories

---


Abhinaya Hastās - Asamyuta Hastās, Samyuta Hastās

NṛittaHastās - articulations

The difference between the first two varieties and the NṛittaHastās is that while the Asamyuta and Samyuta Hastās belong mostly to the sphere of finger manipulation indicating their positions, the NṛittaHastās indicate movements of the fingers for the most part and invariably suggest an arm movement also\(^\text{17}\).

The Nātya Shāstra, Abhinaya Darpana and Nrittaratnāvali, as mentioned earlier, explains Hasta Mudrās in the form of verses. Bharata, Nandikeshwara, and Jayapasenāni pursued a common format and explained all the dance related movements pertaining to hands, feet, eyes, eyebrows, neck, head etc., in the form of verses. These texts also include which specific parts of the body should be used and exactly how to move or place them in relation to the rest of the parts. Further the authors proceed to explain, in which contexts this particular position, movement, or symbol could be used. It is important to note that many of the verses, after listing the possible contexts, end with the word etc., indicating that these are suggestions and guidelines but not exclusive uses. This explanation gives an enormous amount of depth into each element of the dance technique and its practice. These texts on Hasta Mudrās play a very important role in communicating various aspects in dance.

Scholars have explained the hand gestures (Single and double hand gestures) and have also mentioned their usage in different ways. The technique of holding the Hasta Mudrās, their placement, significance, other subsidiary Hasta Mudrās and many more details of Hasta Mudrās are explained in the dance treatises written by different scholars. Besides gestures some scholars have identified the positioning of the fingers besides holding it in a particular posture.

Sārangadeva, the author of Sangitaratnākara has explained the movement of the fingers\(^\text{18}\) which are seven in number which include

- **Samyata** – joined together
- **Viyukta** – separated
- **Vakra** – curved
- **Valita** – moved
- **Patita** – fallen
- **Kunchanmula** – bent at the root
- **Prasarita** – spread out.

He further explains the Hasta Karanās (the movement of the fingers to make a gesture) Āvestita, Udvestita, Parivaritita and Vyāvaritita; and 20 Hasta Karmās\(^\text{19}\) (characteristic usage of hand gestures) which are

- **Ahvāna** – to invite
- **Utkarshana** – to draw up
- **Chaedana** – to cut
- **Tarjana** – to threaten
- **Tādana** – to strike
- **Tōdana** – to push
- **Dhunana** – to shake
- **Nigraha** – to lower
- **Parigraha** – to enfold


\(^{19}\) Ibid, p. 291. verse 441.
Bhaeda – to split
Mōksana – to release
Mōtana – to crush
Rakshana – to protect
Vikarśana – to remove
Vikshepa – to throw
Viyōga – to separate
Visarga – to send forth
Vyākarana – to pull
Samsāresha – to join
Spōtana – to disengage.

He has also mentioned the *Hasta Ksetrā* (places or positions of holding the hand gestures) which are 14 in number that include Pārsvavāyā, Purastat-Siras, Paschat-Siras, Urdhvah-Siras, Adhah-Siras, Lalāta, Karna, Vakshas, Nābhi, Katisērsha, Urudvaya and Skandha\(^{20}\).

Similarly, in order to explore into the details of the *Hasta Mudrās* and to create awareness on the hand gestures and their movements, the *Hasta Mudrās* can also be divided on the basis of the number of fingers extended, number of fingers bent, number of fingers curved partially or fully while holding them. Depending on the number of fingers extended, they can be classified as six types; single finger extended, double finger extended, three fingers extended, four fingers extended and five fingers extended. The single finger extended *Hasta Mudrās* include Shikhara, Sūchi, Hamsapaksha. The double fingers extended *Hasta Mudrās* include Katakāmukha, Chandrakala, Mrigashīrsha, Simhamukha. The three fingers extended *Hasta Mudrās* include Ardhapatāka, Kartarimukha, Mayura, Shukatunda, Hamsāsyā, Trishūla. The four fingers extended *Hasta Mudrās* include Tripatāka, Arāla, Kāngūla, Chatura, Bhramara. The five fingers extended *Hasta Mudrās* include Patāka, Ardhachandra, Alapadma, Samdamsha, Mukula. No fingers extended *Hasta Mudrās* include Musthi, Kapitta, Padmakosha, Sarpasīrsha, Tāmrachūda.

Scholars have explained various *Hasta Mudrās* with different finger positions which stimulate the acupressure points located in the fingers and palm. These scholars are well versed in various disciplines and hence have explored the significance and usage in various ways and means. Jayāpasēnāni in his book *Nṛitta Ratnāvalī* relates *Hasta Mudrās* to the nature in the below sloka.

\[
\text{Chatura makararāji, prōllasat padmakosham bhramaralalitā lēlam, hamsapakshābhirānam I pravichala dalapadmanm karkatādyuryuapetām jaladhi jala mivedam brūmahae Hastalaksma II}^{21}
\]

The characteristics of the *Hastās* are numerous and compared to the water in an ocean. It is like the talented crocodile, the lotus buds and petals, honey bees, beautiful swans etc.

Alike *Abhinaya* (expressions), the usage of *Hasta Mudrās* is also two types – Lōka Dharmi and Nātya Dharmi which is further divided in to two more types each depending on the *Hasta Kśhetrās* and *Hasta Kurmās*\(^{22}\).

---

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
\(^{22}\) Appa Rao PSR, *Hastabhūnayam*, op.cit, p. 5.
The treatises that deal with the Hasta Mudrās include – Nātya Shāstra of Bharatamuni, Abhinava Darpanam and Bharatārnavam of Nandikeshwara (3-4 Century AD), Abhinava Bhārati of Abhinavagupta (980 – 1020 Century AD), Nṛutta Ratnāvali of Jāyasṇēnā (1253-54 Century AD), Nrūtya Ratnakōsham of Rājakumbakarnadēva (1449 Century AD), Srē Hastamuktāvali of Shubhankarā (1500 Century AD), Telugu Abhinayadarpanam of Mātrubhutaiah (16-17 Century AD), Hasta Lakshana Dēpīka of Somanarya, Balarāmabaratam of Balarāmavarma Kartikatirunal (1724-98).

Apart from these the Hasta Mudrās are also mentioned in the ancient literature of dance, drama and music which include Maheswara Mahapātra’s Abhinaya Chandrika, Simhabhūpāla’s Lāsyaranjanam, Vishnudharmittara puranam (500-600AD), Rāja Someshwara’s Mānasollāsam (1131 AD), Shāradatana’s Bhubrapraakasham (1175-1250AD), Sārangadeva’s Sangētaratnākara (1230 AD), Sudhakalasha’s Sangētopananishat Sāram (1324-1354), Asokamalla’s Nrūtya Adhyāyam, Pundarēka Vithala’s Nartanarnirnayam, Subhankara’s Sangēta Damodaram (1500AD), Vipra das’s Sangētachandram (1450AD), Manavalli Ramakrishna Kavi’s Bharatakosham (1951AD), Vedasuri’s Sangētamakandam (17th Century), Parshwadeva’s Sangēta Samayasāram (13-15 Century AD), Utaaka Govindachary’s Nātya Shāstra sangraham (1800AD), Ilango Adigal’s Silappādikaram, Someshwara’s Abhilāsitārtha Chintamani, Srikantha’s Rasakowmudhi (1575AD), Chandrashekarā Pandita’s Bharatasāram, Chillakuri Divakarakavi’s Bharatasāra Sangraham23.

Bharata has explained certain basic Hasta Mudrās and some detailed Hasta Mudrās for different usages. However he says that the hand gestures should be devised for their form, movement, significance and class according to the personal judgment of an artist. This can be clearly observed from the following slokas24.

“Akṛtyā chaeshtayā cihnaṇā jāryā vignyāīa vastuṣṭha I Svaṃyam vitarkya kartavyaṃ Hastaśhīnayananam budhaih II”

“Nokta ye ca maya hyatra lokād grāhyastu te budhaih I”

The similar idea is also explained by Sārangadeva in Sangēta Ratnākara and is clearly evident from the below sloka25.

“Lokavruttamūsārātteppuyhantam anayā disha I Netrabhrumukharāgādyair upāngair upābrmhitaḥ II”

From the enumeration and description of the Hastās explained, it may be observed that Nātya Shāstra, Sangēta Ratnākara and Nṛutta Ratnāvali belongs to one group as they are the basic source and Abhinaya Darpana, Sangēta Samayasāram, Abhinava Bhārati etc., belong to another group as they have been written by referring the basic sources. However Sangētaratnākara and Nṛutta Ratnāvali give additional information and additional lōkadharmi besides following Nātya Shāstra.

23 Appa Rao PSR, Hastabhinayanam, op.cit, p. XV-XVI.
24 Bharatamuni, Nātya Shāstra IX, p 161.
25 Sārangadeva, Sangēta Ratnākara, VII, p. 287.
Nātya śāstra Sangraha, Bharatārnavam and few other texts are only the compilations of stanzas from these sources and therefore they have no independent value. Hastalakshana Dēpika which is popular in Kerala and used in Kutiyattam and Kathakali is different from other texts to some extent and so stands separate. The Balarāma Bharatam takes materials from all these and is intended for the use of BharataNātyam as well as Kathakali26.

Nātya Shāstra comprises of the 36 chapters which detail all aspects of the performing arts including exhaustive elements of artistic experience (from the point of view of the creator), artistic content or states of being, and structure of the dramatic plot. Hasta Mudrās which is part of Āngikābhinaya is dealt in the 9th chapter and are included in the artistic content. There are several other texts on the topic of dramatic performance and dance movements. One of the most important of these, with reference to Hasta Mudrās, is Nandikeshwara’s Abhinaya Darpana (literally, Mirror of Gestures) written around 1000 AD. This compact text can be described as an abridged dancer’s guide based on the Nātya Shāstra. The chapters which deal with Hasta Mudrās are from chapter 6 to 11 and partly in chapter 12 of Nātya Shāstra.

The Hasta Mudrās form an integral part of Āngikābhinaya or stylized body language, in which the goal is to create an image in the mind of the observer. Nātya Shāstra is the basic reference for the Bhāratēya Shāstrēya dance forms; however there are few other texts which are followed along with Nātya Shāstra. The Nātya Shāstra describes 24 Asamyuta Hastās, 13 Samyuta Hastās and 30 Nṛitta Hastās 67 varieties in all27.

Sarangadeva accepts all these Hastās of Bharata and says that the Nṛitta Hastās, though primarily intended for Nṛitta (pure dance) are allowed by the highest authorities like Bharata and by approved practice, in abhinaya also. He also states that the use of the Nṛitta Hastās is regulated by imaginative skill, approved traditional and the general practice28. According to Sarangadeva, the total number of the Hastās of Bharata is 67. He splits the Nṛitta Hastās, Alapadma and Ubana into two, namely Alapadma and Ubana and thereby enumerates 30 Nṛitta Hastās. He also gives explanation on the 64 Hastās mentioned by Bharata29.

Nṛitta Ratnāvali is another treatise on dance written by Jāyapāsenānī of Kākatēya dynasty during 1253 A.D. This treatise also deals with the Hasta Mudrās in the chapter 2. According to Jāyapāsenānī, the Hastās single and combined and the Nṛitta Hastās are just those given by Bharata in name and number which would give 66 in all. He gives a more satisfactory explanation for Bharata’s statement of the number of Hastās as 64, by emphasizing on the word “Nāmatah” means by name. The Sūchasyam among the single hand gestures and Svastika among the combined hand gestures are included in the Nṛitta Hastās also. Therefore the names are 64 and the gestures are 6630.

Bharatārnavam mentions 27 Asamyuta Hastās, 16 Samyuta Hastās and 22 Nṛitta Hastās. On the authority of Brihaspati, it further gives a list of 27 Hastās, many of which are included in the first list31.

Hasta Lakshana Dēpika gives 24 Alphabetic hand gestures almost closely following the terminology given by Bharata, with some changes affected in their definitions and applications32.

26 E. Easwaran Namboothiri, Balaramabhаратam – a critique on dance and drama, op.cit, p. 190.
27 Appa Rao PSR, Hastabhinayam, op.cit, p. 3.
28 Sarangadeva, Sangētha Ratnakara, op.cit, p. 90-92.
29 Appa Rao PSR, Hastabhinayam, op.cit, p. 4.
30 Jayapasenani, Nṛutta Ratnavali, op.cit, p. 87-88.
Balarāmbharata mentions 40 Asamyuta Hastās and 27 Samyuta Hastās totaling 67 in number. Among the 40 Asamyuta Hastās, the 24 names are from Bharata’s Nātya Śāstram, 7 are based on Abhinaya Darpanam and the remaining nine are based on other sources. He does not enumerate all the Nṛitta Hastās of Bharata, but mentions that some of the Hastās can be used as Nṛitta Hastās also not in the context of Hasta, but in the context of Bahuprachararas 33.

There are over 250 Hasta Mudrās in the Bhāratēya Śāstrēya dance forms especially Kuchipudi, Bharatanātyam, Odissi, Kathakali etc.

LINGABHAEDA (GENDER) OF HASTĀS

Bharatamuni, in his treatise mentions that he has explained the division of Hastās and their number along with the usages. Both the male and female performers have to implement the Hastās keeping in view of the region, time, implementation and the meaning of the Hastās.

However, there could be numerous other Loukika Hastās which can be identified and implemented based on the Rasa (sentiments) and Bhava (emotions) 34.

“Daesham kālam prayōgam chāpyardhayukitimaekshyacha
Hastāhyateta pratātyīyā nṛōnām stēnam vishaeshhataha”35

“Anyaečhāpradha samyuktā loukikā yae karāśtvih
Chandatasthae pratyktāvyā rasa bhāva vichaestitaih”36

Balarāma Varma, the author of Balarāmbharatatam divides Asamyuta and Samyuta Hastās into three groups namely pullinga, strilinga and napumsakalinga. Among the Asamyuta Hastās, the fifteen Hastās – the Patāka, shikhara, musthi, sūci, ṃrtigisirsha, hamsāsya, mukula, būna, bhadra, arāla, apaveshitā, silimukha, tāmrachūḍa, mayūra and ardhapatāka are Pullinga Hastās. The twelve Hastās namely tripatāka, hamsapaksha, kartari, katakāmukha, trillinga, pūrnachandra, bālachandra, ardhachandra, udvesita, sarpasīra, kutila and bhamara are Strilinga Hastās. The remaining thirteen Hastās namely padmakūṣa, sandamsa, urnamebha, alapallava, puronnata, chatura, kapittha, chaturunnata, simhānana, gāṅgula, shukatunda, nirēkshana and prālamba are the Napumsakalinga Hastās 37.

Among the Samyutā Hastās; anjali, garuda, dola, gajamukha, vistratapallava, kurparaswastika, tāranaPatāka, sankalpa, gajadanta, varadābhaya and kapota – these eleven Hastās are Pullinga Hastās. The nine Hastās namely pusgaputa, bhariati, Patākawastika, utsanga, padmamukula, katakāvarta, subhashobhana, samyuktapallava and vardhamāna are Strilinga Hastās. The remaining seven namely makara, mallayuddha, kartariswastika, upachāra, kalaha, karkataka and avahittha are Napumsakalinga Hastās 38.

This kind of classification of Hastās on the basis of gender is not mentioned elsewhere except in Balaramabharatatam. Abhinayadarpanam is one that goes into the details of Hastās indicate the Vedas, mountains (Parwatās), seasons (Rhitus), tenses (Kālas), numbers (Sankhyas), tastes (Shatrasās), musical notes (Sapta-swarōs), melodies (Rāgas), stars (Nakshatrās), sentiments

33 Karthika Thirunal Bala Rama Varma - Maharajah of Travancor, Balaramabharatatam, p. 249.
34 Appa Rao PSR, Nātya Shāstram, op.cit, p. 308.
36 Ibid, Sloka No. 164.
37 Karthika Thirunal Bala Rama Varma, op.cit, p. 90 st. 619 – 624.
38 Ibid., p. 90 st. 625 – 630.
(navarasās), parts of the body (Sarwa Áṅgās), week days (Sapta Vāras), nine gems (Navaratnās), metals (Lōhās), zodiac signs (Rāsis), sage (rishi), race (vamsha), colour (varna), flower arrows of Mannatha (Pancha Bānas) and the guardian deity (daevata) etc., of the Hastās and in a way gives a religious and cultural touch of the Hasta Mudrās besides practitioner oriented.

Keeping in view of the division of the Hastās in Abhinayadarpanam, the author of Balārāmabharatam brings in another element to Hastās namely the Linga bhaeda Hastās.

Apart from the Asamyuta and Samyuta Hasta Mudrās there are few extra Hasta Mudrās known as Grandhāntara Hastās brought out by Nandikeswara. The Asamyuta and Samyuta Hastās play a very major role in Bhāratēya Shāstrēya dance forms for expressing varied meanings and emotions. These two Hastās are the base and they become the major sources in reproducing the various other Hasta Mudrās.

Both Asamyuta and Samyuta Hasta Mudrās are used to represent various other Hasta Mudrās with the combination of one or both these Hasta Mudrās. The examples of such Hasta Mudrās are Nritta Hastās, Bāndhavya Hastās, Navagraha Hastās, Dashāvatāra Hastās, Devata Hastās, Navaratna Hastās, Sapta Samudra Hastās, the seven upper worlds and the even lower worlds, hands that represent different rivers, trees, animals, aquatic beings, emperors etc., the Nātya Shāstra and Abhinaya Darpana also lists Hasta Mudrās for the 27 stars, the different rāsis (moon signs and sun signs), the seven musical notes, different ragas and the four classes of Nāyikās such as Padmini etc.

**HASTĀBHINAYA (GESTURES OF THE HANDS)**

Hasta Mudrās or the hand gestures play a very important role in Bhāratēya Shāstrēya dances. They represent a particular object, person, animal, mood, emotions etc. The two most important varieties are:

- Asamyuta Hastās or single hand gestures
- Samyuta Hastās or double hand gestures

**Asamyuta Hastās**

Asamyuta Hastās are single hand gestures or uncombined Hastās. According to Abhinaya Darpanam there are 28 Asamyuta Hastās apart from 6 additional Hastās totaling to 34 and according to Nātya Shāstra there are 24 in number.

‘Nātya Shāstra describes 24 Asamyuta Hastās namely patāka, tripatāka, kartarīmukha, ardhachandra, arāla, shukatunda, musti, shikhara, kapittha, katakāmukha, suchasya, padmakosha, sarpashīrṣha, mirgashīrṣha, kāngūla, alapadma, chatura, bhramara, hamsāsya, hamsapaksha, samdamsha, mukula, ūrananābha and tāmrachuda.

Abhinaya Darpanam mentions all these Hastās except ūrananabha and adds seven more namely ardhapatāka, mayūra, trishūla, chandrakalā, vyāghra, simhamukha and ardhasūchika.

Sangēta Samayasāram mentions all the above mentioned Hastās except the trishūla, chandrakalā and ardhasūchī and adds udvaestita, apavaestita, parivrutta, damaruvadaka and

---

41 Nandikeshwara, Abhinaya Darpanam, *op.cit.*, p. 93-167
vartana\textsuperscript{42}.

Sangēta Ratnakara\textsuperscript{43} and NṛttaRatnāvali\textsuperscript{44} closely follow the Nātya Shāstra and mention only the 24 Hastās of Bharata.

Bharatarnavam includes the 23 Hastās of Bharata except ārnanabha along with ardhaPatāka, mayura, bana and hamsasya from Abhinaya Darpanam\textsuperscript{45}.

Nātya Shāstra Sangraham which is the compilation of different sources mentions Bharata’s 24 Hastās and adds ardhapatāka, mayūra, chadrakala, trishūla and hamsāsya of Abhinaya Darpanam\textsuperscript{46}.

The Hasta Lakshana Dēpika which is used for Kudiyāttam and Kathakali in Kerala does not make the divisions of Asamyuta and Samyuta; but it prescribes that certain Hasta Mudrās are used with both the hands. The terminology of the hand gestures is almost the same as that found in Bharata’s Nātya Shāstra. It is in their definition, application and number that the Hasta Lakshana Dēpika differs from the other texts. It does not mention the single hand Hasta padmakōsha, kāṅgula, alapadma, chatura, samdamsha and tāmrāchūda of Bharata; but adds six other varieties namely Mudrākhyā, kāṭaka, anjali, mukula, pallava, vardhamanaka, many of which are differently defined.

The Balarāmabharatam describes 40 Asamyuta Hastās\textsuperscript{47} from Nātya Shāstra, ardhapatāka, mayūra, bāna, hamsāsya, udhvestita and apavestita from Sangēta Samayasāram and ten other varieties namely trishula, kutila, balachandra, nērkshana, prālamba, puronnāta, caturunnata, puronnata, caturunnata, punacandra, silimukha and bhadra based on oral and other sources.

Apart from these, there are few more Hastās mentioned by the libertarians. Some of them are Ērnanābha, Ardha-Suchi Hasta (Half needle), Bāna Hasta (Arrow), Ērnanābha Hasta (spider), Vyagra Hasta, Katakā Hasta, Valli Hasta.

Below are the Asamyuta Hastās (single hand gestures) along with the pictorial representation according to Nandikeshwara’s Abhinaya Darpanam\textsuperscript{48}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[42] Parshwadeva, Sangēta Samayasāram, p. 2-4.
\item[43] Sarangadeva, Sangētha Ratnakara, VII, St. 102 – 184.
\item[44] Jayapasenani, Nruita Ratnavali, op.cit, p. 97-171.
\item[45] Nandikeshwara, Bharatarnava I, op.cit, p. 5-61.
\item[47] Nandikeshwara, Bharatarnava, op.cit, p. 40 st. 5 – p. 74 st. 433.
\item[48] Appa Rao PSR, Abhinaya Darpanam op.cit, p. 155 - 255
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Samyuta Hastās are double hand gestures or combined Hastās. According to Abhinaya Darpanam there are 24 Samyuta Hastās and according to Nātya Shāstra there are 13 in number. The Asamyuta Hasta include Anjali, Kapōta, Karkata, Swastika, Dōla, Puspaputa, Swastika, Shivalinga, Katakavadamāna, Kartarīswastika, Shakata—Shanka, Chakra, Samputa, Pāsha, Kēlaka, Matsya, Kūrna, Varāha, Garuda, Nagabandha, Khatva, Berunda and Avahitta. Below are the Samyuta Hastās (single hand gestures) along with the pictorial representation and some major usages.
Adhika Hastās:

Apart from the Asamyuta and Samyuta Hasta there are some extra hand gestures (Adhika Hastās) which have been mentioned by the scholars. Nandikeshwara in his Abhinaya Darpanam has mentioned about 52 Adhika Hastās and few of them are Nishādha, Gajadanta, Avahitta, Vardhamāna, Viprakērna (Loose), Arāla-Katakāmukha (giving pieces of betel leaf), Suchāsya (Needle-face), Ardha Raechita (invitation), Kaesa-Bandha (Tying the hair), Mushthi-Swastika, Nalini-Padmakōsha (cluster of flowers), Urdhesitālapadma (indicating desires), Ulbana (Abundance), Lalita (mountain), Garudapaksha (wings of eagle), Nishaedha (prohibit) etc.50

Hasta Prānas:

In dance, the way Hasta Mudrās are held is divided into 12 different ways which are known as ‘Hasta prānas’ or ‘prāṇa lakshanās’ in dance terminology.51 Below is the list of the twelve Hasta pranās and the process of its usage.

Prakarana Hasta – The fingers are stretched.
Kunchita Hasta – The fingers are folded.
Raechita Hasta – The fingers are given movement.
Punchita Hasta – The fingers are folded or moved or stretched.
Apavaeshtita Hasta – The fingers are bent down.
Prerita Hasta – The fingers are bent back or moved or stretched.

50 Ibid, p. 155 - 255
51 Appa Rao PSR, Hastābhinayam, op.cit, p. 273
Udveshtita Hasta – The fingers and hand are held upwards while dancing.
Vyavrutta Hasta – The hands are held up to the sides.
Parivrutta Hasta – The hands are brought together from sides.
Sanketa Hasta – The hands used to convey implied meanings.
Chihna Hasta – The hands used to convey certain things which are visible and invisible.
Padārthatēka – The hands used to confirm the meaning of certain words.

The Hasta Mudrās are static in Yoga and spiritual practices, whereas they are dynamic in the dance practices.

As we have explored the various types of Hasta Mudras according to various texts and their benefits and usages, now, let us explore the holding and positioning of these Hasta Mudras correlating them with scientific approach.

Pronation – Supination of Hand

The Hasta Mudrās are held in a prescribed shape and angle according to the requirement. Few of the Hasta Mudrās are held facing the fingers towards the ground, few facing the sky and few facing different directions or angles. The hand is rotated in different angles and directions either from the wrist or forearm. The science of hand, describes the rotation of the hand in different angles.

Pronation

In simple terms Pronation of the hand is facing the knuckles outwards / upwards from the neutral position and Supination of the hand is facing the knuckles inwards / downwards from the neutral position. It can be clearly understood from the above picture. The keen observation of the wrist, forearm, and hand gives the clearest understanding of the mechanism of pronation/supination. At the end of the arms, we find the supinator, a short muscle whose fibres run from the ulna (long forearm bone) and the lateral end of the humerus (upper arm bone) to the radius (short forearm bone). It assists the biceps brachii in rotating the forearm laterally (supination). Whereas, the pronator terse is a short muscle connecting the ends of the humerus (upper arm bone) and ulna to the radius (forearm bones). It functions to rotate the arm towards inside, as when the hand is turned so the palm is facing downward (pronation). The pronator
quadratus, which runs from the far end of the ulna (longest forearm bone) to the far end of the radius (shortest forearm bone) helps in this activity.\(^{52}\)

Supination and Pronation (rotation from the axis of the forearm) are added to the two axes of movements of the wrist while holding the Hasta Mudrās individually or while performing the Nṛitta Hastās. Pronation and Supination are a paired set of joint manipulations though not unique to humans, gives us a greater degree of dexterity and flexibility. This ability is found in both the hands, feet and to a lesser extent in other joints. Neither set of muscles could accomplish the task separately, nor could they do so without a special joint that allows the radius and ulna to cross each other within the arm. Yet together they make the process of pronation or supination possible to rotate the arms outwards and turn the palms upward and downward.

The Hasta Mudrās in Bhāratēya Shāstrēya dance are held in different postures and in different angles depending on the necessity. The pronation and supination play a major role in turning the hand to a particular angle from the base of the wrist and is very much useful in holding the Hasta Mudrās in different postures and angles in Bhāratēya Shāstrēya dance. The Bhāratēya Shāstrēya dance either uses pronation or supination to hold the Hasta Mudrās with ease and perfection either individually or in Nṛitta Hastās. The Hasta Mudrās, which involves pronation include kapitta, katakāmukha, sūchi, sarpashērsha, mrigashērsha, simhamukha, bhramara, hamsapaksha, samdamsa, dōla, matsya, varāha etc. The Hasta Mudrās, which involve supination, include padmakosha, kāngula, chaturā, mukula, puspaputa, khatva, avahitta etc. The Hasta Mudrās, which involve both pronation and supination, include samputa, pasha, kēlaka, kurma, etc. However, while performing the Nṛitta Hastās, each both pronation and supination might be used to show each Nṛitta Hasta.

**ARTICULATIONS OF HAND**

The Hasta Mudrās are held either by stretching the fingers or by bending them. The stretching of the fingers may involve all or few of the fingers. Similarly, the bending of the fingers may involve all or few of them. Hence, the holding of the Hasta Mudrās individually or while performing the Nṛitta Hastās, involve different joints of the bone in the hand to bend the fingers.

The different joints in the hand include the wrist, the carpel joints, the metacarpal joints, the proximal phalanges, the middle phalanges and the distal phalanges. The joints in the hand are identified as articulations in the language of science. The articulations are\(^{53}\):

- Interphalangeal articulations of hand (the hinge joints between the bones of the finger)
- Metacarpophalangeal joints (the place, where the fingers meet the palm)
- Intercarpal articulations (the portion, where the palm meets the wrist)
- Wrist (that may also be considered as a part of the forearm)

There are numerous sesamoid bones in the hand that differ in number, from person to person. A pair of sesamoid bones is found virtually in metacarpophalangeal joints and interphalangeal joint of the thumb (72.9% chances), the metacarpophalangeal joints of the little finger (82.5% chances) and the index finger (48% chances). In rare cases, the sesamoid bones can be seen in all the metacarpophalangeal joints and all distal interphalangeal joints except that of the longest finger\(^{54}\).

The articulations play a very important role in holding the Hasta Mudrā in a particular pose, particular level, in a particular angle and importantly in a particular posture. All the above

---

52 Schmidt & Lanz, Human Physiology, op.cit, p.107.
54 Ibid.
mentioned four articulations are involved in holding the *Hasta Mudrās* depending upon the *Hasta Mudrā*, its positioning and the angle of holding it (*Hasta Pranas – Nṛitta Hastās*). The interphalangeal and metaphalangeal joints or articulations are involved in holding the *Hasta Mudrā*, whereas the intercarpal articulation and the wrist is involved in positioning of the *Hasta Mudrās* in different angles while performing the *Nṛitta Hastās*.

**CONCLUSION:**

From the above discussion, we have explored into the terminology of *Hasta Mudra*, their origin, evolution, its attributes and usages in various disciplines like Dance and religious practices of *Hinduism, Jainism* and *Buddhism*. The objectives, significance and principles of the *Hasta Mudras* are also investigated in brief. A detailed critical analysis of the *Hasta Mudras* used in Dance are analysed in detail as enumerated by various scholars and disciplines. The various attributes like place, movement, holding and positioning of the *Hasta Mudras*, their genders, classifications, types etc are all dealt in detail as explained by various scholars. The positioning and holding of the *Hasta Mudras* are compared and analysed with scientific approach. The above analysis has to be promoted, propagated and educated to understand the concept of *Hasta Mudras* in detail for effective implementation in Dance and religious practices.

**REFERENCES:**

- Prema Nair, *Dance your way out of ailments*, Times of India article, May 6, 2002.
- Dance to boost your confidence, PTI, *Times of India* article, June 18, 2005.