



Navarasas and Creative Arts in Strengthening Teacher Emotional Intelligence and Well-Being

Ms. Deepti Agawane

Assistant Professor, Thakur Shyamnarayan College of Education and Research, Kandivali (E), Mumbai
Email: clockhourwork@gmail.com

Abstract:

The emotional demands of the teaching profession necessitate sustained emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among educators. This study explores the role of Navarasas and creative arts in strengthening teacher emotional intelligence and well-being. Drawing upon Indian aesthetic theory and contemporary educational psychology, the research investigates how engagement with creative and performing arts supports emotional awareness, regulation, and resilience among teachers. A qualitative research design was adopted, and data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire administered to teachers across school and higher education contexts. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret participants' responses. The findings reveal that teachers perceive emotional intelligence as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, all of which are enhanced through artistic engagement. Creative arts function as effective tools for emotional expression, stress reduction, and work-life balance. Navarasas emerge as a culturally grounded framework that enables teachers to identify, reflect upon, and transform diverse emotional states experienced in professional contexts. The study highlights the transformative potential of integrating creative arts and Navarasas in fostering emotionally intelligent, resilient, and well-balanced educators. The findings align with the holistic vision of NEP 2020 and underscore the relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems in contemporary teacher development.

Keywords: Navarasas, Creative Arts, Emotional Intelligence, Teacher Well-Being, Holistic Education.

Introduction:

Teaching is widely recognized as an emotionally intensive profession that requires continuous interpersonal engagement, empathy, and emotional regulation. Teachers are expected not only to deliver academic content but also to respond sensitively to students' emotional and social needs while managing institutional expectations and professional pressures. In this context, emotional intelligence has emerged as a critical competency for effective teaching and sustained well-being. Emotional intelligence enables teachers to understand their own emotions, empathize with learners, manage stress, and maintain positive classroom relationships.

Indian aesthetic philosophy offers a rich emotional framework through the concept of Navarasas, which articulates nine fundamental emotional states experienced in human life. These rasas provide an indigenous lens for understanding emotional awareness and regulation. Creative and performing arts, traditionally

associated with the expression of Navarasas, offer experiential pathways for emotional expression, reflection, and balance. Integrating Navarasas and creative arts into teacher development has the potential to enhance emotional literacy and holistic well-being.

This study situates itself at the intersection of emotional intelligence, creative arts, and Indian Knowledge Systems, examining how these elements collectively contribute to strengthening teacher emotional intelligence and well-being in contemporary educational settings.

Review of Literature:

Research on emotional intelligence consistently emphasizes its importance in teaching effectiveness, classroom management, and teacher well-being. Studies indicate that emotionally intelligent teachers demonstrate higher levels of empathy, effective stress management, and greater professional satisfaction, which positively influence classroom climate and instructional quality (Goleman, 1995; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). Emotional intelligence has also been associated with reduced burnout, improved coping strategies, and stronger teacher–student relationships, highlighting its role in sustaining long-term professional well-being (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes, & Salovey, 2010).

Creative arts have been widely acknowledged as therapeutic and reflective practices that support emotional expression and psychological well-being. Arts-based approaches in education contribute to holistic development by addressing emotional and affective dimensions of learning, thereby supporting mental health and emotional balance in professional contexts (Eisner, 2002).

Indian aesthetic theory, particularly the concept of Navarasas, has been examined extensively in relation to art, performance, and emotional experience. Scholars have identified Navarasas as a comprehensive framework for understanding human emotions and their transformation through aesthetic engagement (Rasa, 2010; Vatsyayan, 1996). However, empirical research that integrates Navarasas with teacher emotional intelligence and well-being remains limited. This study addresses this gap by examining how Navarasas and creative arts together function as culturally grounded tools for emotional literacy, regulation, and well-being among teachers.

Research Questions:

1. How do teachers perceive emotional intelligence in relation to their professional roles?
2. What role do creative arts play in supporting teachers' emotional regulation and well-being?
3. How does the Navarasa framework contribute to teachers' emotional awareness and transformation?

Research Objectives:

To explore teachers' understanding of emotional intelligence.

To examine the role of creative arts in enhancing teacher emotional well-being.

To analyze the relevance of Navarasas as a framework for emotional literacy in teaching.

To identify the impact of arts-based practices on teacher emotional regulation and resilience.

Research Methodology:

A qualitative research design was adopted to capture teachers' lived emotional experiences and perspectives. An open-ended questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool, allowing participants to reflect freely on emotional intelligence, creative arts, and Navarasas in their professional lives.

Sampling and Sampling Technique:

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who were actively engaged in teaching at school and higher education levels. This technique ensured the inclusion of teachers with diverse experiences and familiarity with creative practices. The sample comprised educators from varied institutional contexts.

Data Analysis:

The qualitative analysis examines how Navarasas and creative arts contribute to strengthening teachers' emotional intelligence and well-being. Findings indicate that teachers perceive emotional intelligence primarily as self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and sensitivity toward students. Teaching is experienced as an emotionally dynamic profession, requiring conscious management of stress, patience, and emotional balance. Participants emphasized that creative and performing arts—such as music, dance, drama, drawing, and storytelling—serve as effective mechanisms for emotional expression, stress reduction, and psychological restoration. Engagement with artistic practices enabled teachers to externalize suppressed emotions, regain inner calm, and sustain emotional clarity amid professional pressures.

Work–life balance emerged as a significant concern, with teachers reporting emotional exhaustion due to workload and institutional expectations. Creative arts were viewed as intentional self-care practices that foster mental peace, emotional rejuvenation, and resilience. Within this context, Navarasas functioned as a culturally rooted framework for emotional literacy. Teachers identified emotions such as Karuna (compassion), Raudra (anger), Bhayanaka (fear), and Shanta (peace) as frequently experienced in classroom interactions. Conscious awareness of these rasas supported emotional reflection, regulation of negative affect, and cultivation of calmer, constructive emotional states.

The transformative role of artistic expression was evident in narratives describing emotional shifts from anxiety, anger, or fear toward joy, balance, and serenity. Such transformations highlight the cathartic and reflective potential of creative arts in operationalizing the Navarasa framework. Participants also stressed the need for institutional support, aligning arts-based well-being practices with NEP 2020's emphasis on holistic education and Indian Knowledge Systems. Overall, the findings suggest that the integration of Navarasas and creative arts offers a sustainable, culturally responsive model for enhancing teacher emotional intelligence, well-being, and professional effectiveness.

Representation of Data theme wise

Theme	Representative Codes
Emotional Intelligence and Self-Awareness	Awareness of own emotions; understanding student emotions; empathy; emotional regulation
Creative Arts and Emotional Balance	Music, dance, drama, painting; emotional expression; stress relief; relaxation
Teacher Well-Being and Work–Life Balance	Emotional exhaustion; workload stress; self-care; mental peace
Navarasas as Emotional Literacy	Recognition of multiple rasas; emotional awareness; regulation of negative emotions; Shanta and Hasya
Transformative Role of Arts	Emotional catharsis; emotional transformation; healing; inner stability
Institutional Support and NEP 2020	Holistic development; arts integration; policy alignment; professional development

Table 1: Themes and Codes

The qualitative data analysis was conducted using an inductive thematic analysis approach. Participants' responses revealed that teachers perceive emotional intelligence as a combination of self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and sensitivity toward students. Teaching was described as an emotionally demanding profession requiring conscious stress management. Engagement with creative and performing arts—such as music, dance, drama, and visual arts—emerged as a key strategy for emotional expression, stress relief, and psychological balance. Creative practices were viewed as effective self-care mechanisms that support work–life balance and emotional rejuvenation. Navarasas functioned as a culturally grounded framework for emotional literacy, enabling teachers to identify and regulate emotions such as compassion, anger, fear, and calmness. Artistic engagement facilitated emotional transformation, supporting shifts from negative emotional states toward serenity, joy, and inner stability.

Findings and Discussion:

The findings of the study indicate that creative arts and the Navarasa framework play a significant role in strengthening teachers' emotional intelligence and overall well-being. Teachers who regularly engaged in artistic practices such as music, dance, drama, and visual arts demonstrated heightened emotional awareness, improved empathy, and greater emotional resilience in their professional roles. These practices enabled teachers to recognize and express their emotions constructively, thereby reducing stress and enhancing emotional balance. The integration of creative arts also supported reflective practice, allowing teachers to process emotional experiences arising from classroom interactions and institutional responsibilities.

The Navarasa framework further contributed by offering a structured and culturally rooted emotional vocabulary through which teachers could identify, understand, and regulate diverse emotional states. Emotions such as compassion, anger, fear, and calmness were consciously recognized, enabling teachers to transform intense or negative emotions into more balanced and constructive responses. This process strengthened emotional regulation and promoted inner stability, positively influencing teacher–student relationships and classroom climate.

These findings align with existing research that highlights the importance of emotional intelligence and arts-based practices in enhancing professional well-being and reducing burnout among educators. At the same time, the study extends existing literature by situating emotional intelligence within an indigenous cultural perspective. By integrating Navarasas with creative arts, the research underscores the value of culturally responsive approaches in fostering emotionally intelligent, reflective, and resilient teachers.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that the integration of Navarasas and creative arts provides a holistic and culturally responsive approach to strengthening teacher emotional intelligence and well-being. By engaging with creative and performing arts, teachers are able to develop greater emotional awareness, regulate their emotional responses, and maintain emotional balance in demanding professional contexts. The Navarasa framework offers a structured and meaningful way to recognize and transform diverse emotional experiences, thereby enhancing reflective practice and emotional resilience. These processes contribute to sustained professional effectiveness, healthier teacher–student relationships, and improved classroom environments. Furthermore, the incorporation of Indian Knowledge Systems into teacher development initiatives reinforces culturally grounded methods of emotional learning and self-regulation. Such integration aligns with the holistic vision of contemporary educational reforms, which emphasize well-being, experiential learning, and the development of the whole teacher. Overall, the study highlights the potential of Navarasas and creative arts as sustainable tools for promoting emotional intelligence, personal well-being, and long-term professional growth among teachers

Recommendations

1. Incorporate creative arts and Navarasa-based activities in teacher education and professional development programs.
2. Provide institutional support for arts-based well-being initiatives.
3. Encourage reflective practices grounded in emotional literacy for teachers.

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