The Indian artistic treatment of the human figure has to be understood in the light of its aesthetic purpose. It works with a certain ideal, a general norm and standard which permits a good. When we look on the artistic creation like sculpture or painting, we shall be able to see that the sculpture of ancient and medieval India claims its place on the very highest levels of artistic achievement. We must observe a more profound intention, a greater spirit, a more consistent skill of achievement in a piece of stone art. The dignity of the human figure in the Indian iconography can not only be excelled, but a spiritual and psychic beauty as well as has the delicacy of complexion.

Life of human beings manifest the love, feelings, creativity, rejoice and sorrow. In the world of human civilization, poets, artists, philosophers, scientists, dancers and singers take their efforts with the help of their physical power and mental contemplation. For the exposers of beauty and creating rejoice in the mind of general people, artists accept the hard toil and proceed gradually to the apex of his creative uniqueness. If anyone asks how a stone piece represent the astonishing exuberance to an art lover? It will be the answer that only their artistic sense and the flawless dexterity can fulfill the elegance of iconic art.

Mention may be made about the Rishi Aurabinda's view. He rightly says—"The greatness and continuity of Indian sculpture is due to the close connection between the religious and philosophical and the aesthetic mind of the people. It's survival into times not far from us was possible because
of the survival of the cast of the antique mind in that philosophy and religion, a mind familiar with eternal things, capable of cosmic vision, having it’s roots of thought and seeing in the profundities of the soul, in the most intimate, pregnant and abiding experiences of the human spirit.\textsuperscript{59}

Different Postures and Ornaments

As a cultural epoch, the period of Palas and Senas may be considered as a golden era in the history of Bengal. Those have been the ages of great artistic activities, which were patronized by the monarchical powers and influenced by the elegance of artistic dexterity.

The human figure of gods represents the culmination of the divine entity. So, it is a conscious medium of divine adoration. As icons have high magnanimity according to the devotee’s deep credence, so those are created on the basis of higher aesthetic sense.

The intellectual discipline lies at the root of the evolution of various attitudes (\textit{asanas}) and gestures (\textit{mudras}) for the actual manifestation of the different actions and moods to be ascribed to the images. The general classification of attitudes is determined as the standing (\textit{sthana}), seated (\textit{asana}) and reclining (\textit{sayana}). Standing attitudes are subdivided according to the flexion on the body of the image and these are samapada- \textit{sthana}, \textit{abhanga}, \textit{dvibhanga}, \textit{tribhanga} and \textit{atibhanga}. The instances of seated postures are \textit{vajra paryanka}, \textit{padma paryanka}, \textit{maharajalila}, etc. Among the aforesaid attitudes, \textit{maharajalila} and \textit{alidasana} are frequently displayed on the icon of Shiva.

Indian aesthetic canon has evolved largely depending on the formulated language of gestures. These gestures are visualized with the conventions of finger plays and hand poses. Some commonest of such

\textsuperscript{59} Sri, Aurobindo, The Significance of Indian Sculpture, Facets of Indian Culture (Swami Prajnanananda Commemoration Volume), 2010, p. 243.
gestures are abhaya mudra, dhyana mudra, bhusparsa mudra, varada mudra, etc. Vitarka mudra, anjali mudra, kataka hasta, gaja-hasta are also mentionable for beautification of image. Varada mudra, abhaya mudra, etc. are more associated with the images of Siva.

By ornamentation an attractive sight is obtained by which adorers are gladdened. Many kinds of ornaments are used for bedecking the image. In the field of iconography there are so many bedeckings shown on the body of the gods. As for example, the followings—Turban, hair-knot, matted locks of hair, ear-ornaments, pendant, different types of necklace, waste girdle, etc.

Brahmanical gods have many weapons in their hands. The weapons have the significance to determine the manifold actions of those gods. Lord Siva has generally four weapons in his hands. Those are trident, shield, spear and staff. In few cases, axe, khattvanga (bone made stick with a skull), tanka and torch (agni) are shown on the Siva's incarnations.60

The second class of objects which are shown on the hands of the images of gods consist of certain musical instruments. Vina and damaru are the instruments, which essential for the images of Lord Siva. Other objects, held in the image of Siva are kamandalu, kapala, darpana, mriga and rosary. Now we shall focus on the features of relevant weapons and musical instruments of Siva.

Parasu

Parasu is the battle axe. It contains a blade, which fixed in a hole on the top of the handle. Another form consists of a heavy club, resembling the gada.

Khattvanga

**Khattvanga** is a curious sort of club, made up of the bone. A human skull is attached on the top.

**Agni**

This is shown in two varieties according to its representation. Both of them are commonly displayed on the hand of Siva.

**Sula**

*Sula* is the favourite weapon of Lord Siva. It is the triple metal pike with the edge of sharp point. The weapon has a long wooden handle.

**Khetaka**

*Khetaka* is the shield made of wood or hide. It is generally circular in shape.

**Khadga**

*Khadga* is a sword, either single edged or double edged. The weapon has a handle.

**Dhanus**

*Dhanu* is the bow. In Siva image, generally three different types of this weapon are displayed. Some are similar to an arc, with the ends joined by a string. Second variety has three bends. Third variety has five bends.

**Vina**

It has a long hollow semi-cylindrical body with a number of keys on its sides.

**Damaru**

*Damaru* is a small drum with a hollow body. Over each of the open ends of the hollow body is stretched a covering which is held in position firmly.
There are some other materials except weapon displayed on the hands of different types of Siva images. Those are narrated subsequently.

**Kamandalu**

This is a vessel for holding water. The specimen in most cases simple in design. Some representations are very beautiful.

**Kapala**

*Kapala* denotes the human skull. It is used by Siva as a receptacle for food and drink.

**Akshamala**

It is the rosary of beads. The rosary is found in the hands of Siva as well as Brahma and Saraswati.

**Darpana**

*Darpana* means a mirror. In ancient time, highly polished metal plates were utilized to serve the purpose of mirror. Uma, the consort of Siva bears mirror on her left hand in the representation of Uma-Maheswara dual form.

Different types of hand poses, shown on the image are called gesture. Their Sanskritised indigenous name is mudra. Each pose has it’s own designation. Following mudras are found on the images of Siva.

**Varada Mudra**

The *varada-hasta mudra* shows the pose of the hand while conferring boon.

**Abhaya Mudra**

It means the protection affording hand pose. The palm of the hand, with the fingers pointing upwards, is exposed here.
Kataka-hasta Mudra

Kataka-hasta is that pose of the hand wherein the tips of the fingers are loosely applied to the thumb to make a shape of ring. This mudra is also called simhakarna.

Vismaya Mudra

Vismaya mudra indicates astonishment. In this pose the fore-arm is held up with the fingers of the hand pointing up. In dual form of Uma-Maheswara, vismaya mudra is shown on the image of Uma.

Amongst the manifold types of asana, padmasana, maharajalila or sukasana are more familiar in the images of Siva. Generally the images of Lord Siva are made in samapada-sthanaka attitude. Some of special representations of Lord Siva are shown in abhanga or in tribhanga attitude. Among the sitting posture, padmasana and maharajalila are associated with the figures of Siva.

Padmasana

In padmasana the two legs are kept crossed so that the feet are brought to rest upon the thighs.

Maharajalila

It is the name of a sitting posture where one leg usually the left rest on the seat. The right knee is raised upward on the seat.

Headgears take an important part in the work of ornamentation. There are varieties of headgear found on the head of different deities. It is called mukuta in indigenous language. The jatamukuta, specially prescribed for Brahma and Siva is described here—

Jatamukuta

Jatamukuta is made up of twists of matted hair. It forms like a tall cap.
Necklace, bracelet, keyura, kankana, udarabandha, katibandha are the different ornaments treated as the embellishment of Siva.

Necklace

Necklace is also called hara. In Indian iconography, it is of different types as well as of manifold patterns.

Keyura

It is a flat ornament worn on the arm just over the biceps muscle. The ornament is associated with the different types of image of Siva.

Kankana

The kankana is another important bedecking. It’s indigenous name is kankana and in English it is called bracelet. The ornament is placed at the wrist of the figure.

Katibandha

Katibandha is the ornamented belt, which encompasses the waste of images. Various images of Lord Siva bear the evidence of this ornament with good workmanship.

Udarabandha

It encompasses the belly of the image. The object is an ornamented belt, which increases the beauty of image.

Bhujanga vâlaya

The ornament is worn at the wrist by Siva. It is mainly a bracelet similar to a coiled snake. It is shown at the wrist of Saivite icon.

Literary evidence indicates that men in ancient Bengal generally used a single piece of cloth as dhoti and also an upper garment called uttariya. Various ornaments, such as ear ring, necklace, armlet are common to the
local people. For this reason we have the evidence of those ornaments in the different types of Siva images.

Ornamentation and Aesthetic Excellence of Siva

The Bengal images of God Siva are analyzed. These images are displayed in the Asutosh Museum of Indian art, Indian Museum, Vangiy Sahitya Parishad, Birla Academy, Bangladesh National Museum and Varandra Research Museum, Rajsahi, Bangladesh. Those are considered as the witness of the Eastern Indian school of sculpture.

The Indian Museum collection offers a prominent icon of two handed Siva. The stone sculpture, collected from Navagram, Murshidabad manifests the Lord Siva in tribhanga posture. A nice full blown lotus is held in his right hand and kamandalu in the left. On the upper part of the body, there is an uttariya garment. Lower portion is pervaded by a dhoti. Bracelets are shown on both of the god's hands. The upper part of left hand shows an armlet. Yajnapovita and vanamala are skillfully engraved on the body. Jatamukuta is of well formation. Whole creation, placed on a projected pedestal with attendants. The ornamentation of this image is very simple, but attractive for it's tangibility.

A unique collection of the Indian Museum is the Sadasiva, which can be taken as a remarkable instant of ornamented image. The image is a representation of twelfth century A.D. The god has five peaceful faces and ten fleshy hands. Two broken hands possibly represent vyakhyana mudra. Rest of eight hands, the four right hands shows varadamurda, sakti, trisula and probable khattvanga. Left hands display lotus, drum, snake and matulunga fruit. The image is seated in vajrapadmasana on a fully blossomed double petaled lotus. The upper portion of the stele is decorated by designs of flora. Necklace, armlet, bracelet, crown are engraved on the image beautifully. Despite of the robusticity, the whole representation
seems to be a pacific incarnation, which able to create rapture in the mind of votary.

Bangladesh National Museum has a rich collection of Siva’s icon. Among manifold images of Siva, few images are doubtlessly noticeable. Stone made four handed Siva Nilkantha, collected from Kasipur, Barisal is of very attractive complexion. The statue is erected in samapadasthanaka attitude on the lotus, which placed on the centre of the pancharatha pedestal. Varada mudra and trident are shown on two right hands. Rosary and khattvanga are visualized on two left hands. Jatamukuta of the god is depicted with a semi-circular aureole. Despite of it’s less ornamentation, the image is associated with the generally used bedeckings like kanthahara, keyura, upavita, mundamala, etc. Umbrella is decorated on the top of the figure to signify the supremacy of the god. The image draws the attention because of it’s artistic integrity and perfection.

It is noteworthy that the ten handed form of Nataraja, found at Kachua, Comilla and now preserved in the Bangladesh National Museum represents the pose of dance, known as lalita and one of his right hands shows gajahasta mudra. Aforesaid gestures are manifested on the image under the influence of Bharata’s Natyasastra. According to the image observation it is not to say wrong that the Bengal sculptor’s dexterity in engraving is evidenced on the basis of the depiction of the bull. It is shown here that the bull is observing to it’s Lord for enjoying his dance. The vehicles of the demigods and goddesses are carefully carved on the body of the image. The display of the icon with tribhanga pose brings the rhythmic beauty to the spectators.

The extreme beauty and unique speciality of Kalyanasundara image of Lord Siva, preserved in the Bangladesh National Museum, the Varendra Research Museum and the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Museum, Kolkata bears the evidence of the local marriage customs. Specimen of Bangladesh National Museum has eleven tiers for the whole depiction of wedding ceremony. Bangiya Sahitya Parishad icon has seven tiers for representing
the marriage scene, which locally popular. Mention may be made that ritual like pacing of the seven steps (saptapadi gamanam) is engraved in this image.

To ascertain the aesthetic features of Bengal Siva images, it is clear to us that during pre-Gupta period the highly ornamentation of stone image was fully absent. But artistic accuracy was considered as an important matter for the terracotta icon making in this phase. In the age of stone sculpture under Pala and Sena rulers, glorification and glamour on the image were the main characteristic features. Naturally the evidence of those schools are more congested and populated. Artists of stone images were in most cases influenced by the tenets of the Pauranic or Agamic scriptures. But it is doubtlessly told that they were successful in the arrangement of weapons on the god’s hands or the representation of attitudes on the different parts of the body of the deities.

Ornamentation also differs in case of benignant and malevolent images of the Lord Siva. As beautification proliferates the glamour and attractivity, the pacific forms are decorated by the different types of ornaments. On the other hand awful representations are generally made for harmful purpose and ornamentation is less displayed. The fact is that the decoration of image of Siva and other gods was implemented according to different purposes, views and needs.

Emotion Depicted in Images

Emotional attitudes (bhavas) of human beings are the sources of different sentiments. In icon making, the realization of the emotional attitude and manifestation of sentiment are very important. Sentiments accelerate the action of the body of the image. The depiction of different moods through hands, feet and faces develop the visual beauty of the art objects, like sculpture, painting, etc.
After the assessment of Chitrasutram of Vishnudharmottaram, it may be said that nine sentiments are essential for making ideal picture. Side by side, Vastusutra Upanishad indicates the application of sentiment (rasa) for the formation of good sculpture. Both of the books tell us about nine sentiments, revealed in art. These are as follows—Sringara rasa, hasya rasa, karuna rasa, raudra rasa, bhayanaka rasa, bibhatsa rasa, adbhuta rasa, vira rasa and santa rasa. Among the aforesaid nine sentiments, sringara, vira, bhayanaka, adbhuta and santa are manifested in the different types of Siva images.

Generally icons of Siva are of two types—Benignant and malevolent. Benignant figures mainly designed following the santa rasa. As the subordinate sentiment, there also the manifestation of sringara rasa and hasya rasa are found. On the other hand, malevolent figures of Siva are created on the basis of vira, bhayanaka and raudra rasa.

A few images of Siva are described to ascertain the aesthetic appraisal on the view point of sentiments. Nilkantha of the Bangladesh National Museum, which collected from Kasipore, Barisal in true sense the incarnation of santa rasa. Principal god with all the subordinate gods is represented here in a graceful appearance. The stone image of Sadasiva, collected from Bangarh and kept in the Indian Museum collection bears the testimony of iconisation of santa rasa.

Uma-Maheswara image, most likely considered as an amorous couple shows the sringara rasa. Somewhere, the same icon makes the amalgamation of sringara rasa and santa rasa. An Uma-Maheswara image of the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art has a graceful appearance with both of sringara and santa rasa.

Typical figures of Nataraja of Bengal are mentionable for the depiction of santa rasa as well as of adbhuta rasa. For instance, two specimens of the Bangladesh National Museum are rememberable. The benignant figures of Siva with dwarfish body complexion display both the sentiments namely santa and adbhuta.
Among the various fearful images of Siva, Bhairava icons of Bengal are the most important for the development of awe-inspiring sentiment. The Bhairava stone image of Domohani, Jalpaiguri, now in the Indian Museum collection has the witness of raudra rasa. The figure of angrious god is engraved on the stele with the flame of fire. Batuka Bhairava of Bangladesh, now in the Asutosh Museum collection is an incarnation of viru rasa. The restless structure of this icon, with a mace on left hand depicts the aforesaid sentiment. Two images of Ekapada Bhairava, one in the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art and another at Mahanad (Fig.26), Hooghly are also the representations of viru rasa. The stone images of Aghora preserved in the Bangladesh National Museum, Gajasurasanharaka figure of the Indian Museum show the bhayanaka rasa as well as the partial manifestation of bibhatsya rasa.

According to the aforesaid perusal it is easily comprehensive that the different types of Siva images are made after the assessment of sentiment, which is necessary to make artistic skill for the proper iconisation of those sculptures.

**Ideal Configuration**

Ideal configuration of the image is fully dependent on the shaping the parts of body consisting the icon. Therefore, in case of image making the parts of the body are compared with the matter of existing world.

Different parts of the body have close similarity with the organs of various animals and the parts of the trees. According to Indian tradition, the face of the image has the affinity with the egg of fowl, which indicates that face should be roundish in shape. Forehead is similar to a bow. The pair of eye-brow is just like the leaves of Nīm tree. Eyes are as similar as the fish. Ears get the form of the letter 'la' of the Grantha script. The noses are shaped just like the flower of sesame. Lip of the image has the resemblance with the fruit of Bimba tree. The chin and throat should be the shape of
mango-seed and conchiferous respectively. Middle part of the body is generally compared with a small drum or *damaru*. Thigh of the image should be similar with the stem of the plantain tree. Palm and feet are comparable with the leaves of plant.

The nature of anthropomorphic sculpture of Bengal tells us that icon makers efficiently followed the aforesaid forms of existing world for making the ideal shape of the images. As a result, different anthropomorphic and therio-anthropomorphic figures of Lord Siva possess the attractive features and aesthetic beauty in their body complexion.

Accordance with the analytical approach on stone images, it is clear to researchers that the sculpture in the human figure combines both spiritual and mundane suggestiveness. It is needless to say that icons with stele (prabhamandala) have more attraction than the modelling without stele. So, different types of anthropomorphic icons of Siva are in the most cases shown with the stele on their background. Male or female associates, demi-gods and goddesses that accompany the main figure in playful attitudes decorate the stele with deep contrast, composition and flawless perception. In the evolution of stone sculpture, it is found that in the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries, the accompanying elements, in spite of exuberance, maintain a balance. But during the 12th century, associate figures overwhelm the principal images by their overgrowth.

The evolution of sculptures highlights the change of iconic feature during the centuries when those were flourished. The fact is that in 9th century, the anthropomorphic Siva icons represent the soft texture of the flesh and skin. But during 10th century, serenity and softness evolve in a powerful massive form of the body and vigorous outlook. Gracefulness, elegance etc. are maintained on the images as the aforesaid era. The stylistic index of the 12th century is supplied by a *Sadasiva* image from Rajibpore. It has the slender bodily type with the speciality of modelling becomes a bit more petrified. Ornaments are inordinately lavish and sumptuous. The gradual change in the representation of figure and
application of ornament, observed in Bengal sculpture proves that aesthetic view differ in course of time.

It is shown that there is sufficiency of phallic forms beside anthropomorphic forms of Siva in Bengal. Despite of the aforesaid fact, those phallic forms are hardly ornamented. The phallus symbol is treated as a naturally pious object. So, it has no need of ornamentation in the belief of the Saivas. The artificial ornamentation is kept away on that case. On the other hand, human beings prefer to adorn himself. The intentions of beautification, which nourished in the human mind help to create the attraction in different art objects. For the similarity with the human body, the anthropomorphic images of Siva are easily glorified by the various types of ornaments and postures.