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A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH OF VARIOUS DOCTRINES OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS THROUGH POETIC FORM

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ABSTRACT

Explaining the essence of different śāstrās through kāvya style is called Śāstrakāvya. Knowing it many scholars of different Śāstrās gave priority to various doctrines of Indian knowledge systems viz. Vyākaraṇa, Vedānta, Nyāya, Jyotiṣa, Chandas, etc. through the traditional poetic style. It is observed that not enough research was done as it was done on other forms of literature except Rāvaṇavadha of Bhatti and Rāvaṇārjunīya of Bhūmabhaṭṭa or a few others. But many compositions of this type remain unpublished even today; and many are so dilapidated and not in a condition to be published. It is a great loss to Indian heritage and literature. So Here I am trying to enlighten the different kinds of Śāstrakāvyas where the Indian knowledge systems explained through beautiful poetic works. I hope that this paper will showcase the traditional and richness of the Sanskrit language to everyone to pursue advanced research for the discovery of the unpublished treasure of the same.

KEYWORDS: Traditional and Richness, Human-Beings Life, Indian Heritage and Literature

INTRODUCTION

The man from the ancient times is observed to strive to achieve the four human goals i.e. *Dharma-Artha-Kāma-Mokṣa* in life. The whole of our Indian literature right from the *Vedas*, exclaim that the achievement of these four goals is the ultimate aim of the human-beings life. Our ancient texts tell untiringly that if *dharma* is understood and followed, then only one attains the fruit of this life. *Vedas* written in the *Vedic* language being Prabhusammitās became incomprehensible to the common man. Our sages observing this difficulty of the people and noticing the failure of understanding the *Vedas* have taken up the assignment of conveying the eternal truth of *Vedas* in the simpler language in the form of stories. This gave rise to the composition of epic-poems, poems, prose, and dramas, etc. Indian poets have contributed in many ways keeping this one objective in their minds i.e. the welfare of human society - Viśvaśreyahkāvyam.

The main purpose of writing poetry is to establish *Dharma* and help the man-kind to achieve the *Puruṣārthacatuṣṭayā* (four human goals). After the *Vedic literature*, the rhetoricians of Sanskrit have stated that the people would attain the fruit of *Puruṣārthacatuṣṭayā* even by going through the different varieties of compositions of classical literature and they stressed that the main objective of literature must be that only. The sage poets like *Vālmīki*, *Vedavyāsa* had composed epic poems to establish the importance of *Dharma* only. And by following the trend of the great sages, master poets like *Kālidāsa*, *Bhāsa*, *Aśvaghoṣa*, *Bhavabhūti* and hundreds of other poets also have composed many books which were both enlightening and entertaining. The poets have exhibited different *Alaṅkāra*, *Rasās* and other styles

256 Anjaneyulu Kongari

defined by rhetoricians. The excellent poetic descriptions were capable enough to take the reader to the other world instantly. The sanskrit language is not only restricted to $K\bar{a}vya$ literature. Many books on different doctrines, on various sciences, are composed in this language. Books on grammar, prosody, linguistics, etymology, pronunciation, etc. were written in Sanskrit and explain systematically the science of language.

And some poets who are skilled in various $\dot{Sastras}$ have attempted at a new method of explaining the doctrines of various $\dot{Sastras}$ in a poetic way by resorting to a story. It's well-known to the scholars that Bhatti, $Bh\bar{u}mabhatta$, $V\bar{a}sudeva$, and others have composed $k\bar{a}vyas$ to introduce the difficult points of grammar in an interesting way by adopting the technique of narration in a story form. All such kinds of works are popularly known as $\dot{Sastrakavyas}$ in Sanskrit as the name itself implies in a poem illustrating the Vyakarana or other $\dot{Sastric}$ knowledge or some other doctrines of Sanskrit. Few scholars named it as $K\bar{a}vya\dot{s}\bar{a}stra$ but later it is rendered as $\dot{Sastrakavya}$ or $Laksyod\bar{a}haranak\bar{a}vya$.

This Śāstrakāvya form was perceptible even before Patanjali's time. For instance here is a verse is given by Patanjali under the *sutra* – *Upānmantrakaraņe* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī*. 1.2.26) in *Mahābhāṣya*:

Bahūnāmapyacittānāmekobhavaticittavān |

Paśyavānarasainye'sminyadarkamupatiṣṭhate ||

Maivammamsthāḥ sacittoyameşopihiyathāvayam

Etadapyasyakāpeyam yadarkamupatiṣṭhati||

Other quotes under the sutra – *Anuvāde caraṇānām* (Aṣṭādhyāyī.2.4.3)

Nandantu kaṭhakalāpāḥ vardhantāṃ kaṭhakauthumāḥ

Udgātkaṭhakalāpāḥ pratyaṣṭhāt kaṭhakauthumam||

And some other quotes are also referred in different texts¹. Even many scholars stated that these verses could be either Patanjali's own or, more probably, quoted from works current in his time. Hence it was declared that this poetic style (Śāstrakāvya) is an old and most practical composition for approaching śāstric knowledge through the fine poetic creation. The *Trimunis*, Pāṇini, Katyayana, and Patanjali are foremost contributors to this tradition. They have shown their grammatical aphorisms in a poetic way to proclaim the aim of grammar i.e. "*Prayoga śaraṇaṃ Vyākaraṇam*". There are few examples which appeared only in various poets' quotes, however full texts yet to be discovered even today. They are Pāṇini's *Jāmbavatīvijayam*²³, Katyayana's *Svargārohaṇam*⁴, Patanjali's *Mahāṇandamayam*⁵ and another grammarian Vyadi's *Baladevacharitam*⁶. Imitating them, later Poets, who are well versed in the multiple Śāstras, like *Bhaṭṭi*, *Bhūmabhaṭṭa*, *Halāyudha*, *Hemacandra*, *Vāsudeva*, *Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa*, *Vedāntadeśika*, *etc.* have composed many kāvyas. There is a reference follows -

vyādirmunitrayam bhattirbhattabhūmo halāyudhah

hemacandro vāsudevastathā nārāyaṇāvapi||

śāstrakāvyapraņetāraḥ śābdikāḥkavayaḥ smṛtāḥ||

Though this is a great attempt by many poets, perhaps it is decided that the earliest extant specimen of a full-fledged and well-known composition of this type is $R\bar{a}vanavadhah$ or $Bhattik\bar{a}vya$. This is composed by 6^{th} -century poet,

Bhatti⁷ in 22 cantos which have its theme from the story of Rāmāyaṇa. This is arranged in four parts. Among which the first two parts have illustrated the more important sutras of Pāṇini, and the third mainly illustrates the aesthetic importance about alankaras, and last part again is exclusively covered with grammar parts - the tenses and moods of Aṣṭādhyāyī. The prolific writer Bhatti himself stated a quote to answer the false statement of Bhāmaha⁸ that, this work is like a lamp to those whose eye is grammar⁹.

Another well-known work of the same type is The *Rāvaṇārjunīyam* of *Bhaṭṭabhūmaka*. Pāṇini aphorisms of Aṣṭādhyāyī are incorporated following the same order while narrating the story of the war between Rāvaṇa and Kārtyavīryārjuna, in 27 cantos. And it is observed that Bhūmaka omitted some sutras which are related to Vedic language and Saṃjñās of Aṣṭādhyāyī.

This tradition of writing Śāstrakāvya, *Rāvaṇārjunīya* and *Rāvaṇavadhaḥ* are standing as a landmark. It has been continued by many later enthusiastic writers by incorporating different areas of Sanskrit grammar to enrich their fame untill very recent times.

The most important of this kind is Subhadrāharaṇa of Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa, (Son of Brahmadatta). It is composed in 20 cantos captivating the story of Arjuna's marriage with Subhadra. The first 16 cantos illustrate the Pāṇini aphorisms and rest 4, explain the different figures of speech and poetic merits. ¹⁰

vāsudevavijayam of V*āsudeva* is another important work of this style. In this composition more than 3000 Pāṇini aphorisms are illustrated in a rhythmic style in seven cantos, narrating the theme of Kṛṣṇa's victory over demons. The same style and theme are continued in the *Dhātukāvyam* by Melputtur Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa in three cantos from Akrura's journey to killing Kamsa, whereas around 1900 grammatical roots of *Dhātupāṭha* are illustrated in different tenses or moods with various suffixes and prefixes.

Śākalyamalla, who is native of Telangana during 1400-1470 A.D. of Kākatīya dynasty, composed *Udārarāghavam* in nine cantos on the theme of Śūrpanakhā's assassination. And some other compositions of this type like *Pāṇiniyasutrodaharana* of Namboodiri of Kutallur, *Daśānanavadha* of Yogīndranātha Tarkacūḍāmaṇi are yet to be published as full texts.

Among the above-mentioned compositions, an interesting fact is observed that most of the poets followed the order of Aṣṭādhyāyī. Likewise, there are some other attempts made by other writers to focus on main rules only. There are few examples like Lakṣaṇādarśa¹³ of Divakara on the theme of Mahābhārata, Kaṃsavadham of Mohanabhatta in twenty one cantos on the theme of Kṛṣṇa's history, Surūparāghavam¹⁴ of Illutture Ramaswamy (during 1824-1887) in eighteen cantos on the theme of Rāmāyaṇa, Jagannāthavijayam of Venkappa in twenty eight cantos on the theme of Bhāgavatapurāṇa, Rāmavarmamahārājacaritam of Vaikom Parameshwara (Vaikattupacchumuttattu) in eight cantos on the theme of Travancore king Ramavarma's life history, Yaduvaṃśyamahākāvyam of Kāśīnātha¹⁵ on the theme of Yaduvamshya kings, Tārakam of Ādibhaṭla nārāyaṇadāsa of Andhrapradesh¹⁶ in five cantos etc. are composed according Prakaranas or main rules of Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī.

There is another composition Śreṇikacaritam¹⁷ of Vinayaprabhasuri, who tried to highlight the importance of Kātantravyākaraṇa of Śarvavarma on the life of the king of Magadha dynasty, appears in a beautifully poetic way.

258 Anjaneyulu Kongari

An important attempt of this style is that few grammarians like Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa¹⁸ and Halāyudha gave importance to verbal forms. Here is a unique composition of Halāyudha i.e *Kavirahasya*, which elucidates the Kṛṣṇarāja-III who flourished in Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty during the 10th century, in 300 poems. This is a sort of lexicon of roots, in which the present tense verbal forms are illustrated, which are mostly spelled the same but has a different meaning. Because of this unusual type of creation, the scholars named it as *kriyānighaṇṭuḥ or kaviguhyam*.

Having faith in the success of this kind of works, a few Prākṛta grammarians tried to give importance for Prākṛta grammar also in the same method. In this regard, Hemachandra's contribution is remarkable for highlighting Sanskrit and Prākṛta grammar in one book. He composed *Kumārapālacaritam* in 28 cantos incorporating his own work *Siddhahemachandra* (Śabdānuśāsana) on historical theme of Anhilvād dynasty of Gujarat. The first 20 cantos are in Sanskrit whereas remaining are given priority to Prākṛta grammatical rules. And Kṛṣṇalīlāśuka of 13th century composed Śrīcihnakāvyam (Govindābhiṣekam) in eight cantos highlighting the Prākṛta grammar based on *Prākṛtaprakāśa* of Vararuchi rules on the theme of the life history of Kṛṣṇa. Later this composition is continued by Durgaprasadayati in four cantos illustrating *Prākṛtaśabdānuśāsana* of Trivikram.¹⁹

There is another unique composition of this tradition is *Sabhyābharaṇam* of Ramachandra kavi. Though no such theme is applied in it, each verse teaches a wonderful moral message. Therefore it is considered as a grammatical poem (śāstrakāvya).

Following it, many poets tried composing short poems and Muktaka (independent verses) poems, etc. Such as *Nakṣatramālā* of Śivarāmatripāṭhī, *Samāsakusumāvalī* of Sarvamaṅgala śāstri, *Sugalārthamālā* of P. Narayana Namboodiri (during 1947-1963)²⁰, *Vibhaktivilāsa* of Natimiti Maṅgaleśa on King Vijayarama of Pusapati, and a bunch of three compositions *Udāharaṇāni*,(Śrīrāmodāharaṇam, Śrīveṅkaṭeśvarodāharaṇam, Śrīrāmānujodāharaṇam) of living legend śrībhāṣyaṃ vijayasārathi, etc. are few valuable compositions to mention. Based on poetical merits these are all considered as Śāstrakāvyas only.

Having observed the grammarians effort many other scholars have been motivated and put their efforts to incorporate other śāstrās of their interest too. *Yādavābhyudayam* of Vedāntadeśika's composition is perhaps the earliest and most prominent composition of this style. In this text, Vedantic and aesthetic concepts are incorporated in twenty-four cantos while narrating the story of Kṛṣṇa's incarnation.²¹ Imitating this, a few experts of prosody extended this technique and composed poems to illustrate different meters of Sanskrit. Vasudeva's *Gajendramokṣa*, Ramapanipada's *Rāsakrīḍā* ²², Illatturu Ramaswami's ²³ *Vṛṭṭaratnāvaliḥ* and *śrīrāmastutiratna*, etc. are few examples where meters are illustrated in a fine poetic language.

Still, some more scholars, who are well versed in many śāstras, composed the poems explaining multiple śāstrās in one composition. *Nakṣatravṛttāvali* of Narayana Musshattu Aryan (1842-1902)²⁴ and *Vākyāvali*²⁵ of Vasudeva (Grandson of Parameshwara) are wonderful compositions, where prosody and astronomic concepts are presented simultaneously. And some other scholars, who are well acquainted with Vedic knowledge, composed poems in the same manner. *Sūktaśloka* and *Āśvalāyanakriyākarma* of Melputturu Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa²⁶ is an important work, where the procedure of rituals and Vedic traditional believes discussed applying *Kaṭapayādi* notation. And there is a composition of Chaturbhuja is *Haricharitam*²⁷ for *Vararuchi's* Vakyas i an interesting creation, where *Kaṭapayādi* mnemonics helped to compute the astronomical concepts.

A few other logicians gave priority to logical studies. *Hetvābhāsodāharaṇam* of Kotunnalluru Tampuran²⁸ and *Vidvanmodataraṅgiṇī* of Chiranjeevi bhattacharya are model compositions of this type.

And a modern philosopher incorporated the heterodox ideas too. Gangadharaśāstri of 20th century composed *Alivilāsasaṃlāpa* in nearly 1000 stanzas to illustrate heterodox theories. In this tradition, it seems that it is an unusual practice through a poetic style.

A famous rhetorician Vidyanatha of Kākatīya dynasty, a native of Telangana, composed *Pratāparudrakalyāṇam*²⁹ to practically illustrate rhetoric concepts of *Pratāparudrayaśobhūṣaṇam* of his own composition. Though it is composed as a play (*Natakam*), based on grammatical merits it could be treated as a Śāstrarūpakam.

Perhaps explaining the fundamental nature of different śāstrās through kāvya is not an easy task, but many scholars achieved success in writing this kind of poems. Although initially focused on grammar, later it is spread to many Śāstras, viz. Philosophy (Vedanta), Logic (Nyaya), Astronomy (Jyothisha), Prosody (Chandas) and Vedic systems such as Notations (Katapayadi) to standardize the various doctrines of Indian knowledge systems through traditional composition. This is indeed a new invention in Sanskrit classical literature. It is observed that much research or discussion is not done on this kind of treatises as it is done on other forms of literature. Some scholars have made good attempts to make research on Rāvaṇavadhaḥ of Bhatti and Rāvaṇārjunīya of Bhumabhatta. Many unpublished manuscripts of this type are decaying and not published. It is a great lost to our Indian heritage, especially for the Sanskrit language. Since consideration of some authentic works of above all work into regular academics or research is observed these days, we can hope that there is a scope for preservation and publication of such majestic works. If some of them are to be brought for computational programming for making it more interesting, then every language learner will try to get enlightened at this rich tradition and get inspired to pursue advance research to discover such unpublished treasures of the same.

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260 Anjaneyulu Kongari

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 - B) Carmanidvīpinam hanti dantayorhanti kuñjaram Keśeşu camarīm hanti sīmni puşkalako hataḥ Nimittātkarmayoge (Varthikam) Under the Sutra of Saptyamyadhikaraņeca (Aṣṭādhyāyī. 2.3.36)
- 2 Namaḥpāṇinaye tasmai yasmādāvirabhūdiha Ādau Vyākaraṇam Kāvyamanu Jāmbavatī Vijayam Kāvyamīmāmsā, pg.284
- 3 Sprhayanīyatva caritam pāninerupajātibhih | Camatkāraikasārābhirudyānasyeva jātibhih | |

Saṃskṛtavyākaraṇaśāstra kā itihāsa, pg.365

- 4 Yaḥsvargārohaṇaṃ kṛtvā svargamānītavān bhuvi Kāvyena rucireṇāsau khyāto vararuciḥkaviḥ Mahābhāṣyam, Vārarucamkāvyam,
- 5 Mahānandamayam kāvyam yogadarśanamadbhutam Yogavyākhyānabhūtam tadracitam cittadoṣāpaham || Saṃskṛta Vyākaraṇaśāstra kā itihāsa, pg.366
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