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Dr. Nagalakshmi S

Assistant Professor, Christ

Deemed to be University,

Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Sanskrit: A literary language

Dr. Nagalakshmi S

Abstract

The two great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata not only inspired a huge masses of literature in the regional languages but the characters depicted in them moulds the national ideals. The poetry and drama composed by Kalaidasa and Sudraka still remains as a great achievement in the realms of India. The Literary activities in a proper oral languages specialized in a few selected sectors like religion and lyric or epic poetry, and for the greater part, literary criticism, logic and metaphysics, medicine, art, law, astronomy, mathematics, etc were dealt with Sanskrit.

The period in which we are all living is experiencing new movements in the social religious and philosophical fields. With Indians taking after the life style of western in an increasing manner, with overseas and travel becoming common, with the criticism which the west was leveling and Indian social reformers were repeating against Hindu customs and institutions like early marriage, widowhood, caste, untouchability etc., the orthodox Hindu found himself as a champion of the traditional ways.

Keyword: Ramayana and Mahabharata, literary language, Kalaidasa and Sudraka

Introduction

In our country Sanskrit, the classical language has a history of four thousand years. Its earliest literature, the hymns of Rig-Veda, which is the oldest and most extensive remains of Indo-European literature. The antiquity of Sanskrit literature is well known but its continuity is not less remarkable. In the same accents in which the hymns of Vedas were uttered, even today it is intoned in same way. Even the Sanskrit scholars write their verse or prose in the same manner in which Kalidasa and Bana composed. Rigveda is the earliest Sanskrit work probably composed around 2000 B.C. It is considered as the most sacred of Hindu literature and it consists of 1028 hymns to various nature gods, like Indra, Agni, Surya, Soma, Varuna etc.

The Sanskrit language kept changing since 2000 B.C. In the fifth century B.C the great scholar Panini, the great grammarian whom the world has ever seen, wrote a great book "Astadhyayi" (That is the book of eight chapters). In this books he fixed the rules of Sanskrit and thereafter no further changes in Sanskrit were permitted except a slight changes by two other great grammarians, namely Katyayana who wrote 'Vartika' and Patanjali who wrote his commentary on the Astadhyayi known as 'Maha Bhashya'.

In the long run of history of Sanskrit, it has put forth intensive literary activity of every department that is literature, philosophy, arts and science. But only a part of it has come into print, the bulk amounts of literature in the form of manuscripts are lying in the libraries and some good part of it is lost. Sanskrit has dealt with every imaginable branch of human activity. In respect of quality, originality and executional skill, philosophical system, poetry and drama can be cited. Some of them are like Upanishads, Bhagavad githa, form the most important and precious part of the heritage of India which has indeed become part of world thought today. The two great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata not only inspired a huge mass of literature in the regional languages but the characters depicted in them moulds the national ideals. The poetry and drama composed by Kalaidasa and Sudraka still remains as a great achievement in the realms of India. The Literary activities in a proper oral languages specialized in a few selected sectors like religion and lyric or epic poetry, and for the greater part, literary criticism, logic and metaphysics, medicine, art, law, astronomy, mathematics, etc were dealt with Sanskrit.

The period in which we are all living is experiencing new movements in the social religious and philosophical fields. With Indians taking after the life style of western in an increasing manner, with overseas and travel becoming common, with the criticism which the west was

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Nagalakshmi S

Assistant Professor, Christ

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leveling and Indian social reformers were repeating against Hindu customs and institutions like early marriage, widowhood, caste, untouchability etc., the orthodox Hindu found himself as a champion of the traditional ways. The pundits boldly faced the rising tide of the reformist movements and wrote many dissertations against sea-travel, post puberty marriage, widow remarriage etc., for example *Abdhinauyanamimamsa* by *Kasi Sesha Venkatachala Sastri*, 1903. *VivahaSamaya mimamsaabdhhiyana Vimarsha* by *N.S. AnanthaKrishna Sastri* in 1913, *Balavivahaani Prakasa* by *Ramaswarupa*, in 1922etc.. In the socio religious shere there was the Aryasamaj movemtn which, with its call back to the pristine purity of Vedic religion, gave a support to Sanskrit study, and for its spread prepared many text books. Among the critical literary works the Pandits composition included the critiques of Dayananda Saraswathi's views. When Hinduism had to be safeguarded against the Buddhist and Jain faiths, Sanskrit philosophers studied thoroughly the metaphysics of the rival schools and kept up a continuous philosophical contest in the works they produced. Due to the influence of Islam and Christianity no literature developed in this line to that extent.

Among the new movemenmts the Arya samaj is the one which has been intimately associated with Sanskrit and its revival. The school produced many Sanskrit works expounding its ideas and ideals and Akhilananda sarma is its most prolific and gifted poet and writer. Among recent writers of this school is Brahmamuni parivrajaka of Haridvar who has written a new commentary on the Vedanta sutras called *VedantaDarshana* in which methods of interpretation of the classical Bhashyakaras are criticized. The Ramakrishna Vivekananda missions not only produced the hymns in Sanskrit but also many books written, commentaries and translations are also done. In those days the Ashramas of Ramana Maharshi and Aurobindo have witnessed a more noteworthy record of Sanskrit writings.

Now many Sanskrit universities are raised and they are encouraging the people to study and produce in Sanskrit. Many professors are working day and night for the progress of the Sanskrit. They are bringing out many journals like *Anantha*”, *Vimal vimarsh* etc. where the scholars are contributing a lot to share their knowledge. The universities are conducting conferences and seminars based on the real and actual problems of the society, scholars are invited to talk and suggestions are taken and brought in the form of proceedings which increases the value of the Universities simultaneously of the scholars even.

Sanskrit periodicals:-

In the beginning the Sanskritists, felt that there is a need to start Sanskrit periodicals. A survey of Sanskrit Journals is indeed a revelation; not only have there been numerous journals, but these journals not only have there been numerous journals, but these journals have carried such varied contributions that they might well be credited with having played an important role in influencing a fresh life into Sanskrit. There are more than 45 Sanskrit_Journals which are UGC listed that publishes minor poems, short stories, research articles novels. For example,

1. Dhimahi (print only) Chinmaya International Foundation Shodha Sansthan 0976-3066
2. Gomati (print only) Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan 2231-0800
3. Jayanti Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan 2248-9495
4. Jyotirveda Prasthanam Bharatiya Jyotisham Private Limited 2278-0327

5. Khagolah Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan 2546-3420
6. Kiranavali Sanskrit Research Foundation 0975-4067
7. Nibandha Mala (print only) Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan 2277-2359
8. Pali- Prakrta Anusilanam (print only) Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan
9. Purana (print only) All India Kashiraj Trust Fort, Ramnagar Varanasi 0555-7860
10. Samskrita Pratibha (print only) Sahitya Akademi 0558-3764
11. Sanskrit Vimarsah Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan 0975-1769
12. Sharada Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan 2320-740X
13. Shodh Pragya Uttarakhand Sanskrit University 2347-9892
14. Shodha Prabha (print only) Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rastriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth 0974-8946
15. Shreevidyamantramahayoga (print only) Shrividyadhana Peeth 2277-5854
16. Vagvai Brahma (print only) Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan 2457-0729
17. Vaidika Vag Jyotih Gurukula Kangri Vishwavidyalaya 2277-4351
18. Vakyartha Bharathi (print only) Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan 2249-538X
19. Vastushastra Vimarsh (print only) Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha 0976-4321
20. Veda Vidya (print only) Maharshi Sandipani Vedavidya Pratishtanam 2230-8962
21. Vedavipasha Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan 2348-7828

Not only these journals give an idea of the subjects that these Sanskrit periodicals discussed: the day to day happenings of the state, national and international economic conditions, politics, the present situation of Corona, Hindu Law reforms, peaceful uses of atomic energy, quiz and puzzles, jokes and tit-bits. They do not fail to devote space to discuss questions regarding on the promotion of Sanskrit. Among these some of the topics like Sankrit as a National language, simplification of Sanskrit, uniformity of Sanskrit Education, methods of Sanskrit teaching greatness of Sanskrit, present plight of Sanskrit and so on.

There are many modern Sanskrit scholars, who have authored many works; among them some are chosen for my study

1. Rambhadracharya. is an Indian Hindu spiritual leader, Sanskrit scholar, polyglot, poet, author, textual commentator, philosopher, composer, singer, playwright and *Katha* artist based in Chitrakoot, India. He is one of four incumbent *Jagadguru Ramanandacharya*, and has held this title since 1988
Rambhadracharya is the founder and head of Tulsi Peeth, a religious and social service institution in Chitrakoot named after Saint Tulsidas. He is the founder and lifelong chancellor of the Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Handicapped University in Chitrakoot, which offers graduate and postgraduate courses exclusively to four types of disabled students. Rambhadracharya has been blind since the age of two months, had no formal education till the age of seventeen years, and has never used Braille or any other aid to learn or compose.
2. Srinivas Rath. Was a poet writing in Sanskrit. He lived at Ujjain, India and was instrumental in the sustenance of the Kalidas Akademi, a center of arts and literature in

Western India. Rath Sahib, as he was called by many, had written a collection of poems entitled "tad eva gaganam saiva dhara," published by the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan in the 1990s (already two impressions), which won a Sahitya Akademi Award for 1999, and completed a mahakavya entitled Baladevacarita.

Poems of Prof. Rath depict the establishment with Indian culture, patriotism, social reformation, humanitarian significance and philanthropic attitude. His poetic presentation in lucid style with lyrical excellence attracts the minds of the readers. In the modern age of scientific progress, the poet observes the deterioration of human value and ethical importance. Many inhuman activities are found in the social sphere. To eradicate the pollutions from socio-cultural arena, the poet has endeavoured much in his lyrical expressions.

Rewa Prasad Dwivedi was a Sanskrit scholar, poet, writer, teacher, and critic. His original works include poetry as epics and lyrics, plays, and prose. He wrote new literature under the pseudonym "sanatana", meaning 'the eternal'. He is also known as 'Acharya' Dwivedi ('the scholar' or 'the expert' Dwivedi).

Dwivedi's scholarship includes work on literary principles including modern theories in Sanskrit poetics and dramaturgy and preserving (editing, compiling, indexing, and republishing) the works of all major Sanskrit scholars.

Ram Karan Sharma wrote in both Sanskrit and English. His literary works include the poetry collections *Sandhya*, *Pathyasatakam* and *Vina*, and the novels, *Rayisah* and *Sima*. *Elements of poetry in the Mahabharata* is considered his most significant work as a critic. Apart from his literary works he has also translated and edited books on Indian medicine, epics, and Puranas. He also contributed research papers in various seminars, journals and books in the field of Indology.

Bhatt Mathuranath Shastri was an eminent Indian Sanskrit scholar, poet, philosopher, grammarian, polyglot and expert of Tantra from Jaipur, Rajasthan. He was one of the prominent Sanskrit writers of the twentieth century who wrote on both traditional and modern themes. He pioneered the use of several new genres in Sanskrit literature, writing radio plays, essays, travelogues, and short stories.^{[2][3][4]} He wrote many songs in Sanskrit including *Ghazals*, *Thumris*, *Dadras* and *Dhrupads*. He pioneered the use of Prakrit (Braja and Hindi) metres in Sanskrit poetry.

Shastri, Vidyadhar. Has authored many poems he Sanskrit *Mahakavya* (epic poem), *Haranamamritam* may appear at first glance to be a biography of his grandfather Harnamdutt Shastri, however, the primary purpose is to inspire its readers to devote themselves to improve the world. In the other *Mahakavya*, *Vishwamanaviyam* the poet addresses the impact of modernisation and the 1969 moon landing. *Vikramabhinnadanam* illustrates the cultural traditions during the rule of Chandragupta Vikramaditya and memorializes Shankracharya, Rani Padmavati, Rana Pratap, Guru Govind Singh, Shivaji and others continuing these traditions. The *Vaichitraya Lahari* is an entreaty to the populace to reflect on their unrestrained behaviour. Written in a humorous vein, the *Matta Lahari's* protagonist is a drunkard (*matta* in Sanskrit), who invites everyone to free themselves from the bonds of society and join him in the tavern.

Kalika Prasad Shukla. Has authored fifteen books and more than 25 papers. His major works include—*Śrīrādhācaritamahākāvya* – This is an epic poem in 13

cantos on the love life of Radha and Krishna .The entire poem is from the perspective of Radha. The work is epic in mode with hardly any dialogues. *Madhura Bhakti* is the main Rasa of the poem. There is detailed poetic description of nature including the land of Braja, the river Yamuna, the hamlets, cowherds, seasons, groves, sunrise, moonrise, flora and fauna, et cetera. The work received the Sahitya Akademi Award for Sanskrit in 1986 for its "innovative form, epic structure and devotional appeal". *Sūryasatakam*: A poem of one hundred verses devoted to Surya and many.

The modern education and the cultivation of the critical spirit and the study of Indian history in a more intensive manner, a fresh realization of the value of Indian heritage came to the lime light. . The Sanskrit scholars particularly turned to the glory that was ancient India with a fervor which urged them to fresh efforts for a renaissance.

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