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Traces of anthropomorphic elements in hitopadesa: Vigraha

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Abstract

The vibrant heritage of storytelling and creative imagination of events are a part of daily life. That's why it is difficult to define the origin of story. It flourished through conversations or descriptions of incidents. Transmission of same travelled from generation to generation by oral and accepts the changes of time and space. It is a prominent literary genre inclusive of entire world traditions. This had an ability to capture the additions and omissions according to time. It is vast and unique compared to any other traditions. A significant extent of give and take can be traced from narrative traditions in global. Ancient Indian tradition of narratives consists of variety of narrative techniques and devices. When Indological studies nurture in the world of literature many extracts of narrative styles came forward. Story is an imitation of Preaching. It is also a medium to establish ideas and doctrines. Most of the narratives had a type of moral, ethical tenor. It helps to nurture the moral conduct among society. For better understanding of complex matters and relate the same to the common folk authors utilised various narrative techniques. Most of the ancient Indian narratives utilised the possibility of various narrative devices. Anthropomorphism is a narrative device that writers can utilise in different ways. That helps to cross the boundaries between human beings and non-human. The current study entitled 'Traces of Anthropomorphic Elements in Hitopadesa Vigraha' is examining the content analysis with respect to theoretical aspects. An analysis of Vigraha book, animal fables in the light of anthropomorphism helps to understand an in-depth meaning of theme and characters. It provides a way to understand the cultural and social facet of stories. These fables open a path to identify the psychological detailing against mental conflicts also. To trace the qualities like; critical thinking, facing the challenges, understanding moral/ethical lessons, resilience, sustainable and holistic development apparatuses etc., in Hitopadesa Vigraha in the light of anthropomorphism is the prominent treatise enclosed here.

Keyword: Anthropomorphism, personification, allegory, transformation, hitopadesa

Introduction

Indian literature is a treasure house of narratives. Divergent type of narrations can be traced from secular to folk literature. The vibrant heritage of storytelling and creative imagination of events are a part of daily life. That's why it is difficult to define the origin of story. It flourished through conversations or descriptions of incidents. Transmission of same travelled from generation to generation by oral and accepts the changes of time and space. It is a prominent literary genre inclusive of entire world traditions. This had an ability to capture the additions and omissions. It is vast and unique compared to any other traditions. A significant extent of give and take can be traced from narrative traditions in global. Ancient Indian tradition of narratives consists of variety of narrative techniques and devices. When Indological studies nurture in the world of literature many extracts of narrative styles came forward.

Story is an imitation of Preaching. It is also a medium to establish ideas and doctrines. Most of the narratives had a type of moral, ethical tenor. It helps to nurture the moral conduct among society. For better understanding of complex matters and relate the same to the common folk authors utilised various narrative techniques. Most of the ancient Indian narratives utilised the possibility of various narrative devices. According to Winternitz, Indian stories are the best product of the Indian mind and they have occupied the status of the literature, Indian soil is favourable for the tales and stories and particularly for the animal fables. (Winternitz, V. Sreenivasa Sharma tr. 1993)

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Review of Literature

Anthropomorphism related studies in ancient Indian narratives are very less compare to other worldly literature. Ancient Indian literature consists of a number of narratives and its divisions. The components of anthropomorphism can be traced from most of these narratives in direct and indirect way. The first anthropomorphic tales in India is *Pancatantra*. *Jataka* and *Avadana* also possessing animals with human characteristics. Most of the studies related to the same focused on modern/postmodern literature, psychology, multimedia, digital science and the like. 'Anthropomorphism in Indian Visual Narratives' by (R. Bhuvaneshwari, Cynthiya Rose, Sep 2022) focused on visual representation of Indian literature and graphic novels. Another study entitled 'Anthropomorphism, in Encyclopaedia of Psychology and Religion' (Bailey, L.W., 2014). explains the concepts of anthropomorphism in Indian Religion and Mythology. *Hitopadesa* stories undergo various studies in the realm of juvenile literature, translation and narratology. Analysis of same with the components of anthropomorphism is a new venture.

Objectives

The current study entitled 'Traces of Anthropomorphic Elements in Hitopadesa Vighraha' is examining the content analysis with respect to theoretical aspects. The major objectives of current study are;

- To understand more about the theory of anthropomorphism in Indian narratives and trace out various components from the *Hitopadesa*.
- To understand the cultural and social facet of stories with the light of anthropomorphic theory.
- To identify the psychological aspect of stories, how it relates with mental conflicts.
- To foster skill development, critical thinking, facing the challenges, moral practices through animal fables in the light of anthropomorphic elements.

Methodology & Theoretical frame work

The methodology used in this study is the analysis of *Hitopadesa* text especially chapter 3, named *Vighraha* (war) with anthropomorphic treatise. The components of this theory and its variant forms can be traced from original text. Here a descriptive method is following to record the details of theory and narrative techniques of *Hitopadesa* original text. Here a descriptive method is following to record the details of theory and narrative techniques of *Hitopadesa* original text.

Anthropomorphism is a literary device that can be defined as a technique in which a writer ascribes human traits, ambitions, emotions or entire behaviours to animals, non-human beings, natural phenomena or objects. (Oxford English Dictionary, 1885). This narrative technique treats the plot with deceptive and illusionary way to make readers or listeners more anxious. Anthropomorphs are those, when an animal/ object literally behaves like a human being. There is no longer a distinction between the human and animals in this type of narration. There is a slight difference between the terms of anthropomorphism, anamorphism and personification. Anamorphism is a transformative technique that allows characters to cross the boundaries between human and animal. Personification occurs when something non-human is described with human characteristics. The components of these three concepts scattered in *Hitopadesa*.

Hitopadesa & Narayana pandita

Hitopadesa is an Indian narrative consists of divergent stories. One can trace variety of narrative compositions from this work. It is an extract or summarize version of ancient narrative literature, especially the *Pancatantra* and other folk tales. This narration can be treated similar to that of preaching or discoursing. Adapted themes narrated in *Hitopadesa* are deliberately less authentic and make users feel less reliable for their actions. It occurs socio-political affairs in simple and well-designed manner. The personification of animal characters in this narration fully lies with imagination of author. He assumes every object and animals have human qualities. It also reflects variant types of motifs. The motif changes along with the situations. The importance of these motifs extinct with their dual purposes conveyed by the composer. It also helps to increase the beauty of the tale. They connected life lesson with poetical fictions. It describes the governance policy, ethic, culture, social values, philosophical ideals, sympathy, compassion, good deeds, power of karma, strength & weakness, mentality, evilness and the like. Animals and birds portrayed in these tales are the representation of various strata of society.

Hitopadesa as the name indicates "beneficial advice" consists of both animal and human stories. These stories are in the form of advices to make the king's sons wise. The original version of these stories is in Sanskrit. Later the same translated into various languages. From the introduction part of text, it is evident that the text was composed by Narayanapandita between 8th to 9th century A.D. and king Dhavala Chandra was the patron. (*Hitopadesa*, Prologue). There was no other information regarding this author and the king. Some Indologists attributed this text belongs to Vishnu Sharama, the author of *Pancatantra*. In this text Vishnu Sharma played the role of narrator. He tried to enlighten the sons of king with the medium of stories. For composing this story intentionally, the author used variety of narrative devices. The major narrative techniques used here supports the purpose of enlightenment through entertainment. Several versions of this texts are available. Shortest version consists of 655 verses and longest 749 verses. According to Wilkins, first book of *Hitopadesa* has nine fables, second and third have ten and fourth has thirteen fables.

Hitopadesa structure and contents

Hitopadesa encloses story within a story structure of narration. Simple and straight forward basic plot inclusive of variety of narrative devices. The author was well versed in all the literary genres of his times, he makes use of all the available sources to create this master piece. In the prologue of *Hitopadesa* he admits that *Pancatantra* fables and some other strategic works inspired him to create this text; *Nitisara*, *Nitisataka*, *Sukasaptati* and *Vetalapancavim sati* are some among them.

Hitopadesa consists of four parts/books named *Mitralabha*, *Mitrabheda*, *Vighraha* and *Sandhi*. As the names indicates it consists of topics like; attaining friends, segregating friends, war and the union/treaty respectively. Each part supports special topics with life lesson, moral & ethical lessons, different strategy for war and life etc.

Mitralabha

Attaining friends is the content of first section. It consists of nearly nine stories. Most of the tales depicted here are animal fables. Partnership of friends, quality of friendship, the ways to attain suitable friends, how one's actions and behaviours

influences friendships etc. are the main themes depicted in the stories.

Mitrabheda

This section includes nearly ten stories. The central themes in this section are how to segregate /lose friends, how the evil actions/thoughts lead to the loss of friends and the factors affect quality friendship etc.

Vigraha

Hitopadesa third section named *Vigraha* consists of war strategy related stories that happened in a bird kingdom. The war happened between aquatic and hill area kingdoms. In this section Vishnu Sharma narrates nearly ten stories. Among these, seven are animal fables, remaining stories portrayed human beings as characters. This section enigmatically describes the after effect of greed and ego, thoughts and actions of wicked one, strengths and weaknesses, control over emotions, wisdom, war strategy, war arrangements, execution of military service, advise of ministers' council etc., as the important topics.

Sandhi

The fourth section named peace/treaty encloses about various type of treatises. Whom should be approached for treatise is the theme of stories. According to author, one should seek peace with peoples like, righteous, strong, triumphant, self-destroying and the like. If one examines own behaviour and rectify with time he can achieve peace. Keep attention to friends and provide supporting mentality that empowers the truth. These thoughts are enigmatically narrated through stories.

Anthropomorphic elements in Hitopadesa Vigraha

After listening the stories related to *Mitralabha* and *Mitrabheda*, the princes (king's sons) show desire to know about war. Then Vishnusharman narrates the stories of war between royal swan, peacock and also the betrayal of crow.

Vishnu Sharma relates the story with a place called Karpuradwipa, there lived aquatic bird's king named Hiranyagarbha. He is a flamingo/ Royal Swan. One day his follower Dirghamukha, a crane came there to meet him. Between their conversation the king asked Dirghamukha about the current news, then he narrates the incidents happened in the Jambudwipa, kingdom of Citravarna; a peacock. 'While travelling through Jambudwipa Vindhya mountain, there Chitravarna's guards asked him about himself and his intentions. In the middle of conversation, he praised the king and kingdom of Karpuradwipa. Hearing this the guards become angry on him.' His words are then like milk to serpents, which merely increases the poison; advise of fools to the infuriation not to the conciliation. The wise only to be advised, not the ignorant.

While analysing the primary story part it is evident that how the author beautifully incorporated the anamorphism/ anthropomorphism as the key narrative device. Here imagination of an island/world, which is its high ecstasy. An aquatic kingdom named Karpura dwipa, island of camphor, there one beautiful waterbody named Padmakeli, (covered with lotus flowers). A royal swan named Hiranyagarbha, as the king and he was introduced with a scene, that he along with his administrators and family members relaxing a cushion chair made of lotus. Here the personification mode of narration is applied to the characters, behaviours and

surroundings. The author observed minute expression of characters, like Hiranyagarbha and Dirghamukha.

For furtherance of situation, Dirghamukha narrated a story of monkeys and birds. The lesson from this story is before advising someone make sure that they are sensible. In this narration of monkeys their actions, behaviourism and thoughts all are exactly like evil/wicked people. They are representing the evil side of the society. The negative mentality to accept the practical lesson, ego, temper and selfish attitude are human related emotions and actions, that are attributed to monkey. Birds they shown compassion towards the monkeys.

This anthropomorphic elements in non-human beings helps to cultivate moral conduct and good behaviour among the people. Detailed analysis of *Hitopadesa Vigraha* stories shows that it had some religious and cultural tenor. In the last portion of bird Kingdom story Sarasa (the commander in chief of Hiranyagarbha) saved the life of his master by devoting his body. Sarasa did renunciation of his body and life.

In the concluding portion Vishnu Sharma describes the princess that Sarasa will go to heaven where the counter parts of Vidyadhara will serve him with all pleasures. Vidyadhara concept is popular in Buddhism especially in the regions of Nepal and Tibet, and considered him as supreme one. Buddhist philosophical ideals and sum up of certain Buddhist narratives can be traced from these *Hitopadesa* stories. Non-violence, protective mentality, care and support truthfulness, combustion and sympathy, empathy like all these characteristics can be traced from these stories.

Most of the animal or bird characters depicted in stories demonstrates the ideals of human beings and their attitude towards others. Human struggles along with suffering and their resilience power also we can trace from story line. Human mentality towards advice, weakness towards emotions, identification of strength, vision towards future, utilise wisdom to change destiny, identification of good companion, association of good and bad friends and the result, the effect of betraying own community and the like are enigmatically narrated through the possibilities of anthropomorphism. This narrative model allows the bird and animal characters to cross the boundaries between them and human beings. All the story lines are thought provoking one. It opens a world where the reader / listener can experience their own life through the instincts of non-human beings. The most prominent feature here is the induct understanding of characters and situations. In metaphoric line also this narrative technique serves the literary genre. The exploration of serious and complex themes in allegoric way is the highlighting feature of *Hitopadesa* stories. It has the power to entertain the variant strata of society. It takes the mind towards a world of fantasy and allows some characters to shift the story line from base to extreme level. Symbols used in the stories provides some serious hint to socio religious and cultural dilemma. It delves into the struggles and tried to face and solve the problem with fine solutions.

Although this text composed in centuries ago, then also still it is suitable for our society to connect with experiences. The hidden aspects of the human mind and thought process can be trace from these narrations. By using anthropomorphism in narratives one can give multiple layers to the story telling process. This is a transformative way to explore the development of characters and themes. The communication between audience and narrator through the medium of stories enlighten the mind with its moral and ethical perspective. In

Hitopadesa story within a story narration is captivating one as main plot. Both main and sub characters experiences internal conflict, moral dilemma and also transformation. Everything explained here showcasing a mirror image of human life. There is one challenge on the efforts of characters to maintain their identity as non-human, in some cases as human beings. Reality and fantasy both incorporates a vital role in these narratives. This gives a unique perspective to *Hitopadesa* stories.

The close analysis of all fables in *vigraha*, it is evident that from beginning onwards the curiosity of listeners, fluency and expertise of narrator that psychic approach leading the narration. When it comes in the introduction of two bird kingdoms, the narrator brings the audience to a fantasy world. In the depiction of that worlds one can imagine according to their level. That may be based on their life experience and knowledge. The characters are introduced here one by one in a systematic manner. Their attitude is clear in their dialogues and expressions. The transparency and steadiness in behaviour one can understand through specific situations. But in reality, it is not clear to anybody. A crane named Dirghamukha wandering type bird is the root cause of the war episode, admits his faults, the wise minister of king named Chakravaka easily understands his actions and criticize him for all those. Whenever king faces a problem then the minister gave him support to overcome the problems. The king sometimes stuck with thoughts then also minister guided him towards the path of truth.

The compassion and power, both are together in a ruler; his country should surely reach success and prosperity. Evilness and ego will destroy everything. These two extremes can be visible in *Hitopadesa* stories. To understand the world and surroundings one should realize self and avoid negative thoughts. Listening to someone without considering one's age and appearance is a good quality, applying the same in life is different. That is up to the listener's mentality. Control towards anger is a quality everyone wants in life. Before advising someone, one should think twice, the listener is capable or not, if he or she is not capable leave them with their attitude (monkey and birds). Here two sides of the or situation/problem considered by the author. One in wise-human nature and the other foolish- human nature. One can connect with reality the other is fantasy.

In the story of the donkey in the tiger skin the evilness of the owner to harm the neighbour by wicked the action of covering a tiger skin to the donkey. Due to continuous heavy work donkey become tired. Feeding that animal without any use, the owner persuades the donkey to steal corn from the neighbour's field. Evil human mentality promotes theft and betrays the animal, another human being watcher or protector of corn field identifies the donkey by its sound and killed. Donkey with the weakness on female subjects approaches the watcher ask he was covered one grey coloured blanket. If that animal controlled his emotion, it will be good for his life. Here we can see two categories of human beings one is evil and the other is wise and gentle. Due to the action of these two people the animal had a bitter experience. By understanding or identifying one's own weakness and strength opposite and can easily conquer them.

In the story of hare and elephant one small creature like hare by the advice of elder rabbit used an idea to defeat a powerful enemy. Here hare think wisely and execute ideas carefully without any harm to others. While analysing this story it is clear that his name Vijaya indicates his approach towards a problem. For reaching his destination he utilized the

possibility of a myth related to the moon. On the other side the elephant leader believed all those lies and acted without any thoughts. Somebody informed him about the water body, he went there without understanding the things around him, and when hare said himself as a messenger from the moon and the lake belongs to the moon the elephant believed blindly. He didn't even think about the plan of hare. His perspective towards nature and knowledge towards surrounding things are very less. Never judge someone with their appearances.

While selecting a companion one should be very careful, segregating good and bad friends is important in one's life. In the crow stories of *Hitopadesa*, one swan stands along with crow, due to the wicked action of crow the swan had lost his life. In another story of crow, quail travelled along with crow due to wicked action of crow, quail also had lost its life. In both stories crow is the evil one and behaves exactly like evil people. He betrays his companion without any guilt. In the primary story line also, the crow named Meghavarna (king of crows) along with his team entered into Hiranyagarbha's army and betrayed them.

A story related to blue jackal shows that he had selfish attitude, and when his body accidentally got blue coloured, he utilises that chance to fulfil his desire of being the king of animals. He planned wisely and execute his mission clearly. The other members in the Jackal group joined together and used tricky ways to reveal his identity. Basic nature and identity remain same whatever acquired. Here also when blue Jackal hear the howling voice of his group, he also starts making noise. Other wild animals noticed this and killed him. Due to his wickedness and graving towards power give him this end.

The above-mentioned stories are eternal possessions for shaping our experiences. These animal fables and its narration highlights the creative problem-solving skills to overcome challenges. Both the group of birds they planned and execute strategies for war. Between the story line some discourses regarding the management and innovative solution for complex issues were included. According to changing circumstance how to response towards wicked actions, how to learn from mistakes, all these details can be traced from these fables. In emotional intelligence and decision-making human beings has to be careful, that is clearly depicted through these stories.

The *Vigraha* book deals with the attributes like companionship, cooperation, defensive thinking, bravery, resolution, wisdom, cunning, anxiety, distress, devotion, promises, enthusiasm, supervision, support, simplicity, dishonesty and significances of egoism etc. Anthropomorphic animals / birds with human features, like gentle royal swan (Hiranyagarbha) wandering crane (Dirghamukha), courageous peacock (Citavarna), compassionate/empathetic birds, egoist monkey, short tempered birds as peacock's guard, foolish/sense less donkey, wise hare (Vijaya), foolish elephant, cruel and wicked crows, gentle swan, genial quail, smart parrot, wise minister (Cakravaka), courageous soldier/fort maker (Sarasa), powerful eagle (Duradarsi), wicked jackal, angry wild animals, strong rooster as soldier leader, and the like can be traced from these stories. Human characteristics in non-humans helped to connect /understand the situations/ ideologies easily. These narrative techniques help the readers/ listeners to relate the moral wisdom and life lesson easily. *Hitopadesa* stories encompasses cultural significances, ancient Indian heritage, beliefs and also certain regional myths.

Conclusion

The animals/ birds/ small creatures in *Hitopadesa* stories consciously behaving like human beings. They all are showing mannerisms, emotions, and behaviours of human beings keeping the character identity. Literal, analogical, symbolic and metaphorical types of anthropomorphism can be traced from *Hitopadesa Vighraha* part. The philosophical thoughts included between the stories in the form of verses focuses the ultimate knowledge. The verses that describe about all strata of society from high class to lay man, regarding their social commitment and dedication. The impact of ancient Indian texts on strategic thinking and logic is visible in these verses.

Hitopadesa stories provide great prominence to psychological aspects of human beings. Most of the characters and situation allegories possess some of the psychological ideals. These anthropomorphic descriptions are fully concentrated on the minds of the listener/reader. The ultimate aim of all these advises are to overcome the superstitions of the minds and to find out the correct path towards self-determination. It psychologically approached the various stratum of society with powerful ideologies on various levels. Its main aim is to treat the mind and to set free men from the bonds of greed, hatred and illusion. For good actions one should have a static mental state. It should obtain only from love and affection towards fellow beings, that portrayed through the attitudes of variant animal and bird characters. These tales demonstrate the perfect ideals of man through his own conduct and attitude towards others. They promote the message of compassion and service. The reality of suffering and its transcendence along with elimination is the main psychological aspect of these tales.

The war between two bird kingdoms, the causes behind war, participants, planning and execution all these enigmatically focus the human conflicts in society. All the birds represent different forms of human temperament. Between stories author put enlightening thoughts along with philosophical ideals. He utilised anthropomorphism as a narrative device to relate and engage the listeners /readers. Human quality of handling languages and speech, wisdom, skills like problem solving, emotional balance, thought process, physical and mental dealings etc are illustrated through animals. It connects the listeners/readers to understand complex ideologies. The human values and critical approaches along with socio cultural characteristics are also attributed to animals in a systematic way. The emotional connection between anthropomorphic animals and listeners/readers makes these stories most captivating one. Due to these reasons the text had got wide acceptance all over the globe.

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