उ० प्र० राजर्षि टण्डन
मुक्त विश्वविद्यालय, प्रयागराज

MEAN -110 (N)
Indian Poetics and Aesthetics

CONTENTS

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Block I contains three units on Indian Poetics.

Indian poetics deals with the principles of literary composition and criticism. Rooted in Sanskrit literature, it evolved over centuries through various schools of thought that interpreted the nature, purpose, and the effect of poetry (kāvya). The earliest and most influential text of Indian poetics is Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* which introduced the theory of Rasa. Ānandavardhana introduced the Dhvani theory, emphasizing suggestion as the soul of poetry. Abhinavagupta, a philosopher-aesthetician, further expanded Rasa theory. Other key schools include the Alaṅkāra school (figures of speech), Rīti (style), Vakrokti (oblique expression) and Auchitya (propriety).

Unit 1 provides a historical and conceptual framework for Indian poetics. It explores the philosophical underpinnings of Indian aesthetics, drawing connections between literary theory and broader cultural, spiritual, and philosophical traditions such as Vedanta, Sankhya, and Yoga. The idea of kavya (poetry) is introduced not merely as artistic creation, but as a means of conveying deeper truths and achieving emotional and spiritual refinement. The unit also discusses the idea of rasa (aesthetic relish) as the central purpose of poetry.

Unit 2 deals with the core components of Indian literary theory. It introduces Shabda (word), Artha (meaning), Riti (style), Alamkara (figures of speech), Dhvani (suggestion), and Vakrokti (obliqueness). These elements form the core of poetic expression and are crucial to understanding the various theoretical models developed in later units.

Unit 3 introduces major schools of Indian poetics. These include the Rasa, Dhvani, Alamkara, Riti, Vakrokti, and Auchitya schools, each offering a unique perspective on literary excellence. This unit serves as a map for the rest of the course, allowing learners to see how each school fits into the broader aesthetic tradition.

Unit 1 - INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN POETICS AND AESTHETICS

Structure

1.0 Objectives

In this Unit, we propose to shed light upon Indian critical tradition as to how it arose and flourished in India. Indian intellectual tradition fortunately has been in possession of critical sensibility and understanding from the days of emergence. Indian poetics encompasses a wide range of subjects. The present Unit will be looking at the key-points such as;

- ✓ What is poetics?
- ✓ What is aesthetics?
- ✓ Origin and growth of Indian poetics.

1.1 Introduction

Indian poetics is so comprehensive that all aspects of literature can be addressed comfortably. It is reader-writer centric and semantic as well. Most scholarly works are written in

Sanskrit. Works on poetics written in Sanskrit enjoyed reputation and circulation more than any other language of India. Sanskrit poetics had spread itself across the country and hence it came to be recognized as “Indian poetics” also.

Having studied this Unit, we hope that learners will be able to understand the discipline of Indian poetics. Along with, it is also expected from them that they will prepare their own answers of the questions asked in section 1.6 in the light of given hints and suggestions. And it is also hoped that they will make sure the study of a few more books suggested in the section 1.7.

1.2 Defining Indian Poetics

Indian poetics is practically Sanskrit poetics. Over the years, Sanskrit had been the language of scholarly debates in India. The Indian intellectual tradition has over two thousand years old method of handling interpretation, evaluation and classification of literature. Professor Krishna Gopal Srivastava writes about the Indian intellectual tradition in his herculean work *An Encyclopaedia of Critical Terms*, volume I:

The history of Indian civilization is shrouded in mystery; it is ageless and beyond human measurement of time. And just as Indian civilization is ageless, Indian poetics is also ageless. For, nobody on the earth can pinpoint authoritatively at what particular point of time it was born. This becomes quite clear from the fact that Vedas, being eternal and the source of all knowledge, contain seeds of discourse on poetics and presume a highly developed awareness of poetry and its problems. (Srivastava 3)

The term “*Kavyashastra*” is the Indian equivalent of the western term “poetics” or “literary criticism”. Other Sanskrit equivalent terms that imply the similar sense are *Alankarshastra*, *Sahityashastra*, *Sahityavidya*, and *Kriyakalpa*. The term “*Kriyakalpa*” is the oldest of them. It was used by Vatsyayana of the *Kamasutra*. It was one of the 64 arts.

Poetics was one among three main branches of knowledge in ancient India. The other two branches were grammar and philosophy. Poetics simply means an approach or method that deals with nature (linguistic potential) and function (effects upon social beings) of literature. Thus, it is both normative and pragmatic. 'Poetics as a branch of study should serve as a guide to educate good taste and promote good criticism for it is not end in itself' (Krishnamoorthy 46). Say simply, it refers to a set of broad principles or assumptions which can be used with the purpose of defining, interpreting and evaluating a variety of literary works. Prof. Kapil Kapoor in his "Preface" to *Literary Theory: Indian Conceptual Framework* writes:

> Poetics (literary theory) in its general and widely understood sense designates any internal theory of literature. It defines and explains categories that enable us to recognise at the same time both the unity and the variety of literary works. It proposes models of the description which when applied to different literary works shows what all literary works have in common and in what ways they differ from one another. The object of poetics thus is not any particular work but the general principles that enable us to explain and analyse the work. It does not concern itself with interpretation or determination of meaning of particular works but with the definition and refining of instruments of analysis. In other words, poetics is concerned not with particular works but with literary discourse. (Kapoor ix)

1.3 Aesthetics in Indian Intellectual Tradition

Aesthetics in the west is an important offshoot of philosophy. However, in the context of India "the study of aesthetics does not form a branch of philosophy" (Kulkarni 1) because it was attended by those who were not strictly philosophers. They studied the conception of beauty in regard to creative literary works as one of the fine arts. They inquire into the source of beauty in

literary works chiefly. To them, aesthetic pleasure is the most important source of beauty in literature. In general, "Aesthetics identifies the effect of art, its enjoyment, and seeks to explain or account for the ground of this enjoyment" (Kapoor 96). S. K. De in his book *A History of Sanskrit Poetics* (1960) writes that the term "aesthetic" "is misleading inasmuch as the theoretical scope of *Alaṅkāra* literature is not co-extensive with what is understood by that term [Aesthetic] in modern philosophical studies" (De iii).

1.4 "The Origin and Growth of Poetics in Sanskrit" by P. V. Kane

Professor Pandurang Vaman Kane (1880-1972) was an Indian historian, academician, Indologist, lawyer, Sanskrit scholar and the prestigious Bharat Ratna awardee of the year 1963. He was born in Ratnagiri district of Bombay Presidency.

At the outset of the essay "The Origin and Growth of Poetics in Sanskrit" P. V. Kane solemnly writes that it is quite difficult to define poetry and distinguish it from other forms of literature. However, the true poetry clothed either in prose or verse can be distinguished on three counts- peculiar diction, subject matter, and the spirit it uses to take care of the themes. In this context, the *Rigveda* contains all these three elements though the *Rigveda* is commonly considered to be a religious book. Many of the prayers especially those addressed to Ushas exhibit the perfect specimens of poetry. The Rigvedic poets were not only acquainted with the usage of figures such as simile, hyperbole and metaphor but they had had some ideas about the theories of poetics. They were very fond of alliterative expressions. They were quite aware of the distinction between ordinary speech and poetic speech. The men of intellect know how to select words for poetic and imaginative expressions.

The term "*Kāvya*" occurs several times in the *Rigveda*. In the ancient times, poems with sweet words were praised high but no traceable attempts were made towards evolving any theory

of poetics. The *Shatapathabrāhman* treatises stress the female beauty. The ancient Sanskrit poets did the job likewise. For dramas and dramatic representations, four elements such as dialogue, songs, music and dance were explained in the Vedic literature. References to several types of musical instruments are found in the *Rigveda*. Even before the Vedic period, dramatic performances were of religious nature. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharatamuni affirms that the roots of ancient Sanskrit drama are laid in the Vedas. For instance; recitation and dialogue are derived from the *Rigveda*, song from the *Samaveda*, acting from the *Yajurveda* and emotion (Rasa) from the *Atharvaveda*. The *Upaniśadas* though attempt exclusively to arrive at the philosophical truth yet contain very beautiful rhetorical passages. The *Ramayana* is an example of true poetry in the sense of both form and content. It is abounded in elaborate descriptions of flights of imagination. Acharya Dhananjaya even asks authors of dramas to seek inspiration from the *Ramayana*. The earliest seeds of it seems to be found in theatrical shows, narratives and pantomimes.

From 500 BC to 1000 BC, a good deal of poetical materials of secular nature are found in Sanskrit texts. And by speculations, there must have been developed some sort of arguments regarding the standard of poetic compositions, functions and objects of poetry. In the process, there might have been some efforts made towards establishing a theory of poetics and literary criticism. It seems to be sure that the creation of secular poetry and the elaboration of rules must have started campaigning simultaneously.

On the basis of the Seven Brahmi Inscriptions from Mathura and the Inscriptions of Rudradaman of Junagadha, P. V. Kane points out that *Kavya* (poetry) was well developed before the 1st century BC. The Inscription of Rudradaman (dated 150 AD) sheds enough light upon the stages of poetics. Overall, it seems that prior to 2nd century AD, Kavya (poetry) had been divided into Gadya (prose) and Padya (verse). Both classes of poetry were required to use

qualities (Gunas) and figures of speech to make attractive and charming. The Nasik Inscription though in Prakrit holds the similar view. In addition, several other Inscriptions had worked towards flourishing a theory of poetics. Poetics had progressed quite well long before the 4th century AD. The Nighantu cites twelve phrases from the Rigveda as the examples of Upama (simile). The Nirukta provides a scientific definition of Upama given by Gargya, a predecessor of Yaksha. It points out that in the Rigveda, a superior object is often compared to an inferior object though the general rule is that Upamana (that with which the comparison is made) is projected superior to Upameya (that which is compared). Likewise, there is a reference of Purna (full) and Lupta (elliptic) Simile. A full Upama is to have four elements- Upamana, Upameya, Samanya (the common property), and characterising words such as Iva, Tulya etc.

The early works of Poetics were called *Kāvyalaṅkāra* such as the works of Bhamaha, Vamana and Rudrata. In these works, treatment of figures of speech is most prominent. Vamana in his book *Kāvyalaṅkāra sutra* says that *Alaṅkāra* is used in two ways first, regarding the beauty of a thing and the second; with respect to the figure of speech. For Vamana, "a work on Poetics is called *Kāvyalaṅkāra* because it points out and explains the things of beauty in *Kavya*". Even Dandin's three-fourth portion of *Kāvyadarśa* is occupied with figures of speech- *Sh*abdā*laṅkāra* and Arthā*laṅkāra*. Besides, he claims to be trying to explain the characteristics of *Kāvya* to his ability. Bhamaha titled his work *Kāvyalaṅkāra*. The *Dhvanyāloka* also talks about the characteristics of *Kāvya*.

The term *Sāhitya* is another name for poetics, so writes P V Kane. The term *Sāhitya* was used earlier in allied sense but in modern times it became synonymous with Poetics. In the general sense, the term *Sāhitya* implies *Kāvya* or literature in general. But to be specific, *Kāvya* is the very quintessence of literature. *Pratihārendurāja* had used the term in regard to Poetics.

Yayawara Rajashekhar has used the term *Sāhityavidyā* in regard to poetics. He called it the seventh auxiliary discipline of the Vedās, fifteenth branch of knowledge and fifth discipline which is the soul of other disciplines. A work on the perfect union between word and meaning is known as *Sahitya*. Kuntaka too held the same view. The term *Sāhitya* is derived from Sahita which means union. The word and the meaning get together constitute poetry. But mere the union of word and meaning cannot form poetry in absence of the peculiar charm.

Hereafter, Professor Kane turns to discuss the problems and issues that the science of poetics is supposed to deal with. The first problem is what poetry can do for humanity including the poet (*Kāvya-prayojana*). The second pertains to the instruments of the poet (*Kāvyahetu*). Here, poetry (*Kāvya*) is defined. Its soul is discussed. Three kinds of word-powers and therefrom three meanings- literal, figural and suggestive. *Kāvya* is classified into sub-types and then into the best, the mediocre and the inferior. The division into Draśya and Śravya opens up the very vast field of dramaturgy. The flawless type of poetry that is, free from blemishes of foot, sentence, meaning, emotion etc., is to discussed. Certain tools of embellishments of *Kāvya* are also to be taken into consideration.

P V Kane tabulates most works on Poetics. The first group includes works which dwells on the entire field of Poetics including dramaturgy such as the *Sāhityadarpana* and the *Prataprudrayashobhushan*. The second group excludes dramaturgy such as *Kāvyalaṅkāra Kāvyadarsha*, *Kāvyaprakasha*, *Rasagangādhara*, etc. The third group includes works that are focussed on dramaturgy such as, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the *Daśarupaka*. The fourth group comprises those works which are exclusively dedicated to the study of *Alaṅkāras* such as, *Alaṅkārasarsangraha*, *Alaṅkārasrvasva*, and Chitramimansa. The fifth category includes works like the Dhvanyāloka and the Vakroktijivitama which focus on especial theory of poetics. The

sixth group is comprised of works that focus on the power of words such as Abhidhāvrittimatrika and Śabdaavyaparavichara. Works falling in the seventh category deal with the theory of Rasa without treating of dramaturgy such as Sringaratilak and *Rasatarangini*. The eighth category includes works that focus on special matters such as the *Rasamanjari* (it dwells on Nayikas and their types) and the *Yashastilaka*.

1.5 Let Us Sum Up

The meaning and import of 'poetics', 'aesthetics' and 'criticism' is identical and can be used interchangeably. There is no harm in it. The ancient critical acumen fortunately took birth in the soil of India of which the medium of communication was Sanskrit. Hence, it is confidently called Indian Poetics, Sanskrit Poetics or Sanskrit Criticism by academicians. Ancient Indian critical acumen is the representative of the whole of Eastern treasure of critical knowledge and hence, a few academicians prefer to call it Eastern Poetics. Afterall, Indian poetics seems closer to Indian sentiments and mindset.

1.6 Questions and Their Answers

Q.1 What is poetics?

Ans. See section no. 1.2.

Q. 2 Comment on the scope and range of Indian poetics.

Ans. Carefully go through section no. 1.2.

Q. 3 What is aesthetics?

Ans. Read section no. 1.3.

Q. 4 Prepare a table of works on poetics as suggested in the essay of P V Kane.

Ans. See section no. 1.4.

Q. 5 Critically analyse the origin and growth of Indian poetics in your own words.

Ans. Go through section no. 1.4

Q. 6 Discuss various titles of Indian poetics and their appropriateness.

Ans. Read carefully section no. 1.3.

1.7 Further Reading

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UNIT 2 ELEMENTS OF INDIAN POETICS

Structure

2.0 Objectives

After having introduced to the concept of "Indian poetics", we are going to discuss the formation of Indian intellectual tradition developed across the centuries. India being a multilingual country, there developed different types of poetics such as, Sanskrit poetics, Tamil Poetics, Persian poetics etc. Besides, there may be many minor types of poetics developed in regional languages. In the formation of Indian literary tradition, literary theories in local languages are not insignificant. However, in this Unit, we propose to have a look on-

- ✓ Sanskrit Poetics
- ✓ Tamil Poetics
- ✓ Persian Poetics

2.1 Introduction

The structure of Indian poetics is though built upon the strong pillars of spirituality, religion, philosophy, and culture yet it is critical and aesthetic. Sanskrit poetics is wider than Tamil and Persian in terms of scope and subject-matter. In ancient India, Sanskrit was used for all types of intellectual activities. Tamil and Persian literary theories also contributed to the evolution of Indian literary tradition. Unfortunately, in the name of modernity, Indian intellectual tradition came to be described as old and non-progressive. With the passage of time, it went into self-imposed isolation. However, it did not lose its relevance and significance. New paradigms are emerging to cater the need of contemporary times. Many texts are being translated from the regional into national and international languages. Digitizing of archives and old texts will help significantly in the revival of ancient Indian intellectual tradition.

At the completion of this Unit, learners will be enriched by the richness of Indian literary tradition. They are also expected to discuss characteristics of Indian poetics and its kinds. In addition, they are advised to answer a few questions asked in section no. 2.4.

2.2 Elements of Indian Poetics

Indian intellectual tradition is marked by its universality, interdisciplinarity, comprehensiveness, continuity and cumulativeness. In this tradition, we see a culture of source text, primary texts, *sangraha* texts, edited texts and commentaries. This tradition encompasses a wide range of disciplines such as, “philosophy, medicine, grammar, architecture, geography, literary theory, political economy (polity), logic, astronomy, military science, sociology, metallurgy, agriculture, mining and shipbuilding” (Kapoor 8). In Sanskrit poetics, we see the division of Indian knowledge system into two heads- Shastra and Kāvya. The former covers the

literature of knowledge. It includes sciences, history, mythology, etc. The Kāvya is considered to be the synonym for creative literature. Dr Nagendra writes that in 'Shastra the sense and the sound have their independent identities and, on the whole, it is characterized by the predominance of sense, whereas in *Kāvya* there is a complete fusion of the two' (Nagendra 13). *Kāvya* is the superior knowledge which leads to the attainment of higher goals of life. Ancient Indian literary theories are supposed to have begun with Bharata.

2.2.1 Sanskrit Poetics

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* is considered to be the founding text of Indian literary criticism. Sanskrit poetics is globally recognized for its critical insights. It grew out of the Vedas- *Rigveda*, *Samaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*. Sanskrit literary criticism is encompassing. It enjoys independent disciplinary status. We can find very systematic deliberation on any aspect of literature in Sanskrit literary criticism. According to Dr Nagendra, "There are two starting points in Sanskrit criticism: (I) Art of Poetic Composition, and (II) Poetic Experience. All the major problems of the Art of Composition have been treated in great detail by the exponents of the theories of *Alaṅkāra*, *Rīti* and *Vakrokti* and of experience by the proponents of the theory of *Rasa. Dhvani* deals with the Art of Composition and Poetic experience- both" (Nagendra 7). Kapil Kapoor in his book *Literary Theory: Indian Conceptual Framework* has tried to classify Indian literary theories on the basis of the aspect central to them. He suggested seven categories on the basis of-

a) Language: The *Alaṅkāra* theory and the *Vakrokti* theory.

b) Style and structural value: *Guna/Dosha*, *Riti* and *Auchitya* theories fall under this category.

c) Verbal symbolism: The *Dhvani* theory.

d) Aesthetic experience: The *Rasa* theory.

e) Narrative: The concept of *Mahāvākya* with respect to Bhoja's Sringāraprakāśa and Panini's Ashtādhyāyi.

f) Discourse analysis: The Yuktis with reference to Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra*.

g) Comprehensive analysis: For example- Yayawar Rajashekhara's composite model as suggested in his *Kāvyamimansā*.

Kapil Kapoor prepares a chart of major schools along with their representative thinkers and texts:

Name of the Sampradaya / Rasa	Thinker (s)	Texts
	Bharata, Dhanika-Dhananjaya	*Nāṭyaśāstra* (2nd century BC), *Daśarupaka* (10th century AD)
A*laṅkāra*	Bhamaha, Dandin, Udbhata, Rudrata	K*ā*vya*laṅkāra* (6th Century AD), K*ā*vyadarsa (7th Century AD), K*ā*vya*laṅkāra*sarsangraha (9th century AD), K*ā*vya*laṅkāra* (9th century AD)
Rīti	Vamana	K*ā*vya*laṅkāra*sutra (9th century AD)
Dhvani	Anandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, Mahimabhatta	Dhvany*ā*loka (9th century AD), Abhinavabhārati and Locana (11th century AD), Vyaktiviveka (11th century AD)
Vakrokti	Kuntaka	Vakroktijivitama (11th century AD)
Guna- D*oṣa*	Dandin, Bhamaha	Kāvyadarsha, Kāvya*laṅkāra*

Auchitya	Kshemendra	Auchityavichāracharcha (11th century AD)

Besides, Rajashekhara, Bhojaraja, Mammata, Visvanatha and Pt. Jagannatha are famous for their sangraha texts. Rajashekhara wrote Kāvyamimānsa (9th century AD), Bhojaraja Saraswatikanthabharana and Shringāraprakāsha (11th century AD), Mammata Kāvya Prakāśa (11th century AD), Viswanatha Sāhityadarpana (14th century AD) and Jagannatha wrote Rasagangādhara in 17th century.

Satya Dev Choudhary in his book Glimpses of Indian Poetics (2002) divides the whole subject-matter of Sanskrit poetics into ten constituents:

1. Kāvya-swarupa (the nature of poetry). Under it, various causes of poetry; definition of poetry; purpose of poetry; and classifications of poetry are analysed and evaluated thoroughly.
2. *Śabda - śa*kti (signification of the word).
3. Dhvani-kāvya.
4. Gunibhuta-vyangya Kāvya.
5. Rasa (aesthetic relish). The classification of hero and heroine is included into it.
6. Guna (excellence of poetic expression).
7. Rīti (style).
8. A*laṅkāra* (figurative beauty of poetry).
9. *Doṣa* (blemishes in poetic expression).
10. Natya-vidhāna (dramaturgy).

Thus, we can say that Sanskrit poetics is quite rich in terms of literary perspectives. No aspect of literature is found unaddressed in Sanskrit poetics.

2.2.2 Tamil Poetics

India being the land of different languages, customs, and cultures, we see many variants of literary traditions. Tamil poetic tradition is one of the richest literary traditions of India. Tamil poetics flourished almost parallel to Sanskrit poetics. The earliest work of Tamil poetics is Tholkappiyam. It throws light on the cultural contexts of Tamilnadu from the ancient times. In Tamilnadu, the Tholkappiyam vies with Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra.* In The Tholkappiyam was written by Tholkappiyar sometime between 4th and 5th century BC. He is often compared with Vyasa of Sanskrit literature. Tholkappiyar is considered to be the author of first Tamil grammar. He was basically a linguist and grammarian. The main portion of the Tholkappiyam deals with Tamil linguistics. A small portion of it "is devoted to the discussion of styles, metres, diction, and poetic sentiments" (Devy 15). 'The most original and significant contribution to the discipline of literary theory that the Tholkappiyam makes is in developing the antithesis between the poetry dealing with the themes of the 'interior' and the poetry dealing with the themes of the external world' (Devy 15). To refer to the former, the term Akam was used and Puram for the latter.

The Akam symbolizes the inner truth of human life. It talks about an ideal man or woman but no name is mentioned. In poetry, Akam represents a generalized autobiography of an individual. The Puram deals with the various aspects war and the victory of human life. In Puram poetry, particular names are considered to be appropriate. A. K Ramanujan finds Akam and Puram "related to each other by context and by contrast" (Devy 368). He tabulates the whole matter in the following manner:

	Akam	Puram
1.	interior	exterior
2.	heart, mind	body surfaces and extremities, e.g. back, side, arms

3.	self	others
4.	kin	non-kin
5.	house, family	houseyard, field
6.	inland, settlement	area far from dense human habitation, e.g. jungle, desert
7.	earth	farthest ocean
8.	love poems- no names of places or persons	poetry about war and other than (well-matched?) love, a "public" poetry, with names of real people and places
9.	codes of conduct appropriate to akam	codes of conduct appropriate to puram

(adapted from Devy 368)

The Sangam literature contains poems on Lord Vishnu, Shiva, Goddess Durga, and Murugan. It is surprising enough that the Tholkappiyam could not influence the prosody of other three sister languages namely Kannada, Malayalam and Telugu.

2.2.3 Persian Poetics

The medieval India was dominated by Persian language and literature. Persian during medieval India has been very influential. Several words from this language are still used in other Indian languages. Even many stories in Persian are adapted in other languages. Persian has influenced the prose style of modern Indian languages too. Amir Khusrau and Al Badaoni are great writers of medieval India. They have contributed significantly to Indian literary thinking. The Persian contribution to Indian literary thinking is the continuation Sanskrit poetics. Amir Khusrau was of Turkish origin. His forefathers have migrated to India some two generations before his birth. He has enjoyed the patronage of Nizamu'd-Din Auliya. He was a great poet and composer. His contribution to Indian music, Hindi and Persian poetry is remarkable. He was

familiar with Sanskrit poetics and poetry. He used to write in Hindi and Persian. He approves India's multilingualism. He is considered as an exponent of Comparative Literature.

Amir Khusrau's *Nuh Siphir* (1318) translated as *India As Seen By Amir Khusrau* in English contains his theoretical thinkings. His pronouncements with respect to multilingual literary culture are very interesting and critical. He writes that the Brahmans of India have greater wealth of philosophical thoughts than Rumi but unfortunately nobody has ever tried to learn from them. He was the great admirer of Indian wisdom and learning which seemed to him inestimable. Indians can speak several languages but people outside India cannot speak Indian dialects. Indians can speak any language of the world proficiently. About the Indian wisdom, Khusrau is of the opinion that scholars come to India from all over the world to learn its arts and sciences but the Brahmans never went out of India to acquire knowledge. It proves the superiority of Indian wisdom and knowledge. He finds the flight of imagination in the Panchatantra. He sees Indian music par excellence. Many foreign scholars came to India to learn music and stayed roughly for 30 or 40 years but they could not add anything new. Indian music is sweet and melodious to the core. He accepts the superiority of Indian knowledge and learning. He approves all regional languages and their unique system and technique. After all, he sees Sanskrit as a pearl and the best of all pearls (regional languages).

Al Badaoni is remembered for his contribution to history writing. His interest in documenting medieval Indian art, culture, society, and politics served as a model of historiography. His historical writings provided a methodology and discursive framework. In fact, it was Indian model of writing history. Badaoni's *Twarikh* deals with the history of Persian poetry. About his achievement, G. N. Devy writes:

> Badaoni's achievement is impressive for several reasons. First, he was clear about the aims of his history. Then, he is consistent in methodology employed to analyse poets and poems. And, finally, his standards of evaluation are uniform throughout the massive work. (Devy 108)

Both Amir Khusrau and Al Badaoni were interested in historiography of Indian literary history and Indian history. Both were the chroniclers of medieval India.

Additionally in modern period, many Indian theorists of different languages continued the ancient tradition of thinking and contributed to Indian poetics to determine its contemporaneity and relevance. Rupa Goswami strongly argued for *Bhakti-rasa* in literature. His contribution to Sanskrit poetics is very significant. In 20th century, we have a long list of critics. Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Jainendra Kumar, A. K. Coomaraswamy, Balkrishna Sitaram Mardhekar, Krishna Rayan, A. K. Ramanujan, Suresh Joshi, Bhalchandra Nemade, Gayatri Chakravorty, Sudhir Kakar, etc. have contributed significantly to Indian literary criticism. Tagore and Jainendra Kumar focused on literary beauty. Aurobindo argued for Indian literary historiography. Krishna Rayan stresses literariness and Suresh Joshi interpretation. Bhalchandra Nemade stressed the need to evolve 'nativism'. Gayatri Chakravorty brought forward the concerns of subalterns for deliberation.

Besides, we have Dalit, Folk and Tribal criticism. These are the latest strands of Indian literary criticism. Actually, the 21st century is an era of discourses. These discourses aim at bringing about changes in a short period of time. Justice, equality and harmony occupy central space in such discourses.

2.3 Let Us Sum Up

At the conclusion, it can be said that Indian poetics has a long narrative but every constituent of it is every way significant. The Indian critical thinking has never stopped in its journey. Every regional language in India has its unique literature, system and technique. Sanskrit poetics has by and large has influenced most regional poetics. Sanskrit poetry and poetics were in earlier times studied and recognized across the country. Hence, Sanskrit poetics bears national ethos.

2.4 Questions and Their Answers

Q. 1 Give an overview of Sanskrit poetics.

Ans. See section no. 2.2.1

Q. 2 Distinguish *Akam* poetry from *Puram* poetry.

Ans. See section no. 2.2.2

Q. 3 Evaluate Persian poetics.

Ans. See section no. 2.2.3

Q. 4 Indian poetics is essentially Sanskrit poetics. Justify.

Ans. Read carefully section no. 2.2.1

Q. 5 Discuss constituents of Sanskrit poetics.

Ans. See section no. 2.2.1

Q. 6 Discuss differences between Shastra and *Kāvya*.

Ans. See section no. 2.2.

2.5 Further Reading

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UNIT 3 SCHOOLS OF INDIAN POETICS

Structure

3.0 Objectives

In previous two units we made learners familiar with the discipline of Indian Poetics and its construction. In this unit, we propose to familiarize learners with *Sampradāyas* or Schools of Indian Poetics. Indian theories are considered to be traditional or conventional which has resulted in a kind of self-imposed isolation. It shall be our attempt to re-enkindle interest in Indian Poetics by familiarizing learners in general as well as in specific contexts. Hopefully, this kind of study

will extend the boundary of their critical depth and would feel pride over the rich critical heritage of India.

3.1 Introduction

The phrases such as “Indian Aesthetics”, “Indian Poetics”, “Sanskrit Poetics”, “Eastern Poetics” etc. are used to refer to the ancient Indian literary tradition. The Indian literary tradition is broadly characterized by orality, continuity and interdisciplinarity. The scholastic nature of Indian theories often surprises scholars of both hemispheres- northern and southern. It needs to be put forth in general manner so that interested readers could proceed from general to specific.

Having gone through the Unit, learners will be acquainted with the tradition of Indian literary thinking. They are expected to prepare their own answers to questions asked in the section no. 3.4. In addition, they are advised to consult a few more books suggested in 3.5 for further reading.

3.2 Schools of Indian Poetics

In Indian poetics, the term *Sampradāya* or sect is usually used to describe a group of theorists who give primacy to one aspect of literature. Each school is comprehensive enough to cover up the whole world literature. We shall now hereafter briefly describe major schools of Indian poetics:

3.2.1 *Rasa*

Rasa as a critical term in Indian poetics implies aesthetic pleasure that a sensitive reader experiences. The theory of *Rasa* deals with emotions and feelings common to mankind and how these are depicted, evoked and transmitted through creative works. It validates the presence of

emotions both in text as well as reader. Rasa-theorists think *rasa* as the soul of all imaginative writings (dramatic and non-dramatic both). Bharatamuni is considered to be the originator of the theory of *rasa* in his book the *Nāṭyaśāstra.* However, Rajashekhar in his book *Kāvyamimansā* claims that even before Baratamuni, Nandikeshwar had discussed the theory of Rasa. But there is no evidence extant. For the practical purposes, Bharata is believed to be the earliest exponent on *rasa* doctrine. Bharata in the sixth chapter "*Rasadhyāya*" of *Natyasastra* states: *na hi rasad rite kascid arthāh pravartate*. Simply it means that aesthetic delight is the bottom-line purpose of any work of art. Without *rasa*, no outcome will be met. Bharata's *rasa*-sutra is *tatra vibhāvanubhāva-vabhicāri-samyogād rasa-nispattih* . That is, out of the combination of *vibhāvas* (causes), *anubhāvas* (consequents) and *vyabhicāribhāvas* (transitory feelings,) *rasa* is generated in the reader. Kapil Kapoor writes that the theory of *rasa* "thus becomes in effect a theory of literary experience which is strongly rooted in the empirical human reality" (15).

Bharata has classified eight-fold basic human emotions into primary and secondary. The former consists of Sringāra, Raudra, Vira and Bibhatsa. The latter consists of Hasya, Karuna, Adbhuta and Bhayānaka. The ninth Rasa (Shanta) which is certainly later addition persists in the beginning and in the end too. All nine sthāyibhāvas are thus love (rati), laughter (hāshya), sorrow (shoka), anger (krodha), enthusiasm (utsāha), fear (bhaya), disgust (jugupśā), astonishment (vishmaya), and indifference (nirveda).

Dhanika-Dhananjaya had re-examined Bharata's typology of drama and added to it the typology of uparupakas (play-within-play). Abhinavagupta gave philosophic twist to literary experiences. The Rasa theory has been well recognized by all major theorists pre/post Abhinavagupta. Acharya Jagannatha and Viswanatha gave scholastic interpretation of the Rasa doctrine.

3.2.2 A*laṅkāra*

The A*laṅkāra* is the oldest school of Indian critical tradition after Rasa. It is the earliest and most sustained literary school but never before Bhamaha considered to be the soul of poetry. Bhamaha, Dandin, Udbhata and Rudrata are the earliest exponents of the A*laṅkāra* theory. The A*laṅkāra* theory sees the locus of literariness in the figures of speech. However, it is not here suggested that meaning is to be ignored. The A*laṅkāra* theory defines, analyses and classifies figurative utterances. Just as Bharata concentrated upon dramatic poetry, Bhamaha the founder of A*laṅkāra* school concentrated upon non-dramatic poetry. Bhamaha, a 7th - 8th century rhetorician systematically has focused on the art and craft of poetry in his treatise Kāvya*laṅkāra*. It is the first regular work on the art of poetry of Sanskrit critical tradition as *Nāṭyaśāstra* is the first systematic account on the dramaturgy. It is also called A*laṅkāra*śastra. Bhamaha stresses the pleasure came of the plurality of meaning inherent in certain figures of speech such as Arthāntara Nyāsa, Vibhāvana, and Samāsokti.

Before Bhamaha, Bharata has recognized four types of figures- Upamā, Dipaka, Rupaka and Yamaka. Bhamaha in chapter two and three of his book Kāvya*laṅkāra* talks about thirty-five kinds of figures of speech. Acharya Dandin (late 7th century and early 8th century rhetorician) in his work Kāvyadarsha engages attention on a*laṅkāra*s though he nowhere came forward affirming a*laṅkāra* as the soul of poetry. Acharya Rudrata of 9th century classifies all a*laṅkāra*s into verbal and semantic in his book bearing the same title Kāvya*laṅkāra* of Bhamaha. He classifies verbal figures into five subtypes and semantic into four. Bhoja added the third type- Ubhaya*laṅkāra* - to verbal and semantic of Rudrata. Ruyyaka, a 12th century theorist classifies figures of speech into seven classes on the basis of- similarity, opposition, chain-bound, reasoning, popular logic, poetic logic and inference of meaning. Acharya Mammata (11th

century) enumerates sixty-one kinds of figures in his book Kāvyaprakāsha. Jayadeva of 13th century in his famous work Chandraloka discusses 104 kinds of figures of speech. Out of which 87 are fundamentals and remaining are extensions of them.

3.2.3 Rīti

The Riti theory is essentially concerned with the language of literature. The earliest references to it are found in *Nāṭyaśāstra* under the heading of Vritti. It was Vamana of the second half of 8th century who theorized this aspect and developed into a theory. He is the lone supporter and founder of Riti school. Riti theory deals with problems of style in literature. Vamana considers Riti as the soul of poetry. It is Riti that makes poetry distinct from other forms of writings such as philosophy, history, science etc. Dandin and Kuntaka have used the term Mārga for Riti while Mammata used Vritti. Vamana in his Kāvya*laṅkāra*sutra defines Rīti as "Special Framing of Phrases" and this peculiarity is achieved by the incorporation of gunas (excellences). In this way, we see that both Riti and Guna are bound up together.

Dandin has identified two Ritis- Vaidarbhi and Gaudiya. Vamana identifies three types of Ritis- Vaidarbhi, Gaudi (bombastic) and Panchali (mix of two). Kuntaka has talked of Sukumara, Vichitra and Madhyama margas. Mammata has discussed in the chapter 8 of the Kāvyaprakāsha Upanagaraika, Prasada and Komala vrittis. Kapil Kapoor beautifully summarizes the whole Riti doctrine: "Basically it is a theory that handles the psychophonetic fitness of language for speakers, themes, and sentiments, and therefore becomes a study of craftsmanship and psychology of speech" (20).

3.2.4 Dhvani

The Dhvani theory deals with the problem of meaning. Literally, dhvani means sound but it does not have any concern with sound. The Dhvani theory underlines indirectly evoked or

suggested meaning as the characteristic feature of poetic expression. Anandavardhana, a 9th century Kashmiri Sanskrit scholar propounded this theory in his work Dhvanyaloka or "Light of Poetic Essence". Here, he exhaustively makes structural analysis of indirect meanings as how these meanings arise systematically. According to him, dhvani is the soul of literature. It is comprehensive enough to analyze the mechanism of meaning in literature. Where dhvani is at work there v*ā*chya (word) and v*ā*chy*ā*rtha (literal meaning) lose their independent entity and suggest another special meaning which endows undying charm and grace to the work. In 13th Karika of first Udyota of Dhvany*ā*loka, Anandavardhana defines dhvani as "Dhvani denotes a special kind of poetry in which the word or sense becomes the deserter of its commonly understood meaning and all this is suggested (rather than stated)" (K. G. Srivastava). For *Dhvani* theory, Anandavardhana acknowledges his indebtedness to Bhartrihari's *Sphota* theory. Bhartrihari and Patanjali took *sphota* and *dhvani* as synonyms in their grammar texts.

Anandavardhana accepts the supremacy of *rasa* in *k*ā*vya* but how it is to be enjoyed, he told, through suggestion. *Rasa-dhvani* is equivalent to Eliot's formula of objective-correlative. It is most satisfying approach for analysis of literary meaning. Anandavardhana by integrating Rasa and Dhvani provided an analytical framework. Dhvani is the medium to achieve the evocation of *Rasa*.

3.2.5 Vakrokti

Like *Rīti*, the *Vakrokti* theory is also interested in the language of literature. Kuntaka or Kuntala a leading aesthetician of 11th century formulated the *Vakrokti* theory in his book *Vakroktijivitam. Vakrokti*, literally means crooked speech but in the context of poetics it means unique utterance or expression. It is an expression which is more refined, elevated and appealing. R. S. Tiwari defines *vakrokti as "uniqueness of expression, born of poet's compositional skill,*

adorning both word and meaning". Before Kuntaka, the term vakrokti was used by Bharata and Bhamaha. Kuntaka proclaimed vakrokti to be the life of poetry. Kuntaka classifies forty-nine types of *vakrata* into six major heads. These are:

1. *Varṇa-vinyāsha-vakrata*: at the level of letters and syllables as, Alliteration.
2. *Pada-purvārdha-vakrata*: or at the level of the word as first half of a noun or verb.
3. *Pada-parardha-vakrata*: at the level of the grammar like number, tense, case etc.
4. *Vākya-vakrata*: at the level of sentence.
5. *Prakaraṇa-vakrata*: at the level of episodes or incidents.
6. *Prabaṅdha-vakrata*: at the level of narrative as whole.

The whole range of literary compositions are covered by them. About the role of *Rīti* (marga) and Guna (quality) in Vakrokti, Kuntaka points out that it is the object of the composition that determines the style. All three *mārga*s (styles), *Sukumāra* (elegant), Vichitra (brilliant) and *Madhyam*ā (indeterminate), for Kuntaka, are to be treated as examples of *Vakrokti.* Similarly, Kuntaka `discusses *Rasa*, *Alaṅkāra* and Guna under the *Vakrokti* doctrine. *Vakrokti* is in fact a happy blending of word and meaning in a creative utterance which finally culminates in aesthetic pleasure or relish in a competent reader or *sahridaya*. Kuntaka in this way covered total art and craft from smallest unit of language to the whole of composition. For any stylistic analysis, the *Vakrokti* doctrine seems to be most appropriate framework.

3.2.6 Guna/ *Doṣa*

The Guna- *Doṣa* doctrine studies literary compositions in terms of their virtues (Gunas) and defects (*doṣas*) with respect to form and content. Dandin and Udbhata made guna and *doṣas*

the locus of literariness. Earlier to them, Bhamaha has discussed general defects of expression and structure in chapter 3 and chapter 4 of his book Kavya*laṅkāra*. Vamana in his book K*ā*vya*laṅkāra*sutra has talked about virtues and defects of literary compositions. But he restricted defects to the figures of speeches only. Dandin has integrated Rasa and Riti while dwelling on Guna and *Doṣa*. According to him, it is Rīti that evokes Rasa. Dandin in the third chapter of his book Kāvyadarsha four types of failures. These are logical, linguistic, likelihood and communicative. However, by dint of originality and creative power, these defects can be turned into instances of excellence. Udbhata found Guna and *Doṣa* as the properties of figural compositions. He tried to connect Guna and *Doṣa* with A*laṅkāra* and Rīti. And further argued that excellences and defects are not to be examined by putting them apart. On the whole, the Guna-Dosha theory does not look at all the aspects of literary compositions. It could not achieve the status of a major doctrine.

3.2.7 Auchitya

Kshemendra, a Kashmiri scholar of 11th century in his Auchtyavichārcharca evolved his doctrine of Auchitya (propriety). The title literally means ‘a discourse on the idea of propriety.’ According to him, appropriateness is the soul of poetry. For this theory, Kshemendra took inspiration from Anandavardhana. By Auchitya, Anandavardhana understood poetic harmony or fitness of things. To Anandavardhana, the lack of propriety is one of the hurdles to the rasa-realization. It is essential for the aesthetic pleasure. As such, Anandavardhana specifically related Auchitya to Rasa. The concept of propriety with respect to costume, subject, character, sentiment, gender, verb, case, etc. is discussed by almost all theorists. But it is also seen in association with figures of speech, guna, dosa, and ritis. Thus, his stand is patronizing to rasa. Propriety is everywhere preferred and inharmony is abhorred. Kshemendra defines Auchitya as the exact similarity between signifier (expression) and signified (expressed). He made it the central element of literariness. Kshemendra believed in the paramountcy of auchitya (propriety). Kshemendra selects twenty-seven limbs or constituents of a

composition in his critical treatise *Auchityavicharacharcha* pertaining to syntactic, semantic, and socio-cultural aspects in *kāvya* or poetry where propriety is required. These are:

1*) Pada* (word and phrase); 2) *vākya* (sentence); 3*) prabandhanartha* (central theme of composition); 4) *guna* (excellence or merit); 5) *alaṅkāra* (poetic figure); 6) r*asa* (sentiment); 7) kāraka (case ending); 8) kriyā (verb); 9) linga (gender); 10) vachana (number); 11) visheshana (adjective); 12) upsarga (prefix); 13) nipata (redundances); 14) kāla (tense); 15) deśa (country); 16) kula (family); 17) vrata (custom); 18) tattva (philosophical truth); 19) sattva (spirit or inherent self); 20) *abhiprāya* (clear implication); 21) *svabhāva* (nature); 22) *sāra-sangraha* (location of essence); 23) *Pratibhā* (genius); 24*) avashthā* (age); 25) *vichāra* (thought); 26) *nāma* (name); 27) *ashirvāda* (blessing).

Like *Guna- Dosa*, the *Auchitya* theory too could not flourish as an independent approach but remained ever after its inception an important principle which is in itself a great achievement for Acharya Kshemendra.

3.4 Let Us Sum Up

To the conclusion, it is clear enough that the Indian aesthetic tradition is very deep, comprehensive and wide-ranging. No aspect of literature is left unaddressed or untouched in Indian literary critical tradition. Each Sampradāya is powerful and useful to address things at universal level.

3.5 Questions and Their Answers

Q. 1 What is poetics?

Ans. Read section no. 4.1.

Q. 2 Explain *rasa-sutra* of Bharatamuni.

Ans. Please go through section no. 4.2.1.

Q. 3 What is *Dhvani* theory?

Ans. Answer this question in the light of section no. 4.2.4.

Q. 4 Discuss types of *Vakrokti*.

Ans. Read section no. 4.2.5.

Q. 5 What is *auchitya*? Mention types of *auchitya*.

Ans. Read section no. 4.2.6.

Q. 6 Discuss *Kāvya-bheda*.

Ans. Read carefully section no. 4.3.

Q. 7 Briefly throw light upon the *Alaṅkāra* school.

Ans. Study section no. 4.2.2.

3.6 Further Reading

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MEAN -110 (N)
Indian Poetics and Aesthetics

CONTENTS

Introduction to Block II

Block II also contains four units on Indian Poetics.

This block delves into key concepts of Indian poetics, focusing on the intricate relationship between word (Shabd), its expressive power (Shabd-shakti), and meaning (Artha) as explored in Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* and Abhinavagupta's *Locana*. It further examines Kavya-hetu (causes of poetry) and Kavya-prayojana (purpose of poetry). The role of the sensitive reader (Sahrdaya), universalization (Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa), and the social context (Samajika) are discussed through Kapil Kapoor's insights. Lastly, the block addresses aesthetic experience through Rasa, Bhava, and Ramaniyatā, central to the emotional and spiritual impact of poetry.

Unit 4 of Indian Poetics introduces key concepts like Shabd (word), Shabdashakti (power of the word), and Artha (meaning), which are foundational to the understanding of Sanskrit literary theory. In the *Dhvanyaloka*, Ānandavardhana formulates the Dhvani theory, asserting that the suggested meaning (*vyaṅgyaartha*) is the soul of poetry. Abhinavagupta's *Locana* (commentary) elaborates on this, integrating Rasa theory with Dhvani. Shabdashakti explores how words convey meaning on three levels: Abhidha (literal), Lakshana (indicative), and Vyanjana (suggestive). This unit highlights how suggestion evokes emotional and aesthetic responses, making poetry a transformative experience.

Unit 5 explores Kavyahetu (cause of poetry) and Kavyaprayojana (purpose of poetry) as discussed in Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaprakāśa*. Mammaṭa identifies Dhvani, Riti, and Guna as essential causes that make poetry effective and aesthetically pleasing. The purpose of poetry, according to him, is twofold- śṛṅgāra (pleasure) and śreyas (spiritual upliftment), highlighting poetry's dual role in providing enjoyment and conveying moral or philosophical truths.

Unit 6 is focused on the concepts such as, Sahrdaya (sensitive reader), Samajika (spectators), and Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa (universalization) as discussed by Kapil Kapoor. He emphasizes that literature resonates when emotions are universalized, enabling shared experience. The Sahrdaya plays a key role in perceiving Rasa, while the Samajika connects literature to cultural and societal values.

Unit 7 introduces the aesthetic concepts such as, Rasabhāva (emotive states), Rasānubhava (experience of rasa), and Ramaniyatā (beauty). It examines how emotions are artistically transformed in literature to evoke Rasa, leading to a heightened aesthetic experience. This process creates a sense of joy, harmony, and emotional fulfillment in the reader.

UNIT 4 *ŚABDA, ŚABDAŚAKTI, ARTHA*

Structure

4.0 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the meaning and significance of *Śabda* (word) in Indian literary theory.
- ✓ Explain the concept of *ŚabdaŚakti* (the power of the word) and its different types.
- ✓ Identify how *Artha* **(**meaning) is conveyed through direct, indirect, and suggestive ways.

- ✓ Appreciate how a word is not just a sound, but something that carries deeper meanings and emotions.
- ✓ Become familiar with the key ideas presented in Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* (Light on Suggestion).
- ✓ Recognize how Abhinavagupta's *Locana* (The Eye) expands and explains the concept of *Dhvani* (suggestion).
- ✓ Understand how poetry communicates both intellectually and emotionally through suggestion.
- ✓ Learn how words can create aesthetic beauty, emotional impact, and implied meanings beyond their literal sense.
- ✓ Apply classical Indian theories to the reading and interpretation of poems.
- ✓ Develop a deeper appreciation for the art of poetic expression in both Indian and global literary traditions.

4.1 Introduction

Ānandavardhana was a 9th-century Sanskrit poet, philosopher, and literary theorist from Kashmir. He was honoured with the title of Rajanak during King Avantivarman's reign. He is best known for his seminal work *Dhvanyāloka*, in which he introduced the influential theory of *Dhvani* (suggestion) in poetry. His ideas profoundly shaped classical Indian aesthetics and were later expanded by Abhinavagupta.

Abhinavagupta was a 10th–11th century Kashmiri philosopher, aesthetician, poet, and spiritual teacher. A polymath, he wrote extensively on Tantra, philosophy, and poetics. His commentary *Locana* on Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* deepened the theory of *Dhvani*. He integrated

aesthetics with spiritual experience, making him a towering figure in Indian intellectual and artistic tradition.

Indian aesthetics primarily revolves around three major art forms—poetry, music, and architecture. Correspondingly, it recognizes three philosophical schools of art: (i) *Rasa-Brahma Vāda* (relating to poetry), (ii) *Nāda-Brahma Vāda* (relating to music), and (iii) *Vāstu-Brahma Vāda* (relating to architecture). Among these, poetry is esteemed as the highest form of artistic expression, with drama regarded as the supreme manifestation of poetry.

Indian literature has a long and rich tradition of poetry, drama, and storytelling. Along with this, Indian thinkers developed deep and detailed theories to explain how literature creates beauty and emotion. One of the most important theories in this tradition is the *Dhvani* theory, explained by the famous scholar Ānandavardhana in his book *Dhvanyāloka*. The word *Dhvani* means "suggestion" or "resonance," and the theory explains how good poetry does not just give direct meaning but also suggests deeper emotions and ideas that touch the heart.

To understand this better, we need to look at three important ideas: *Śabda***,** *Śabda**Śakti,*** and *Artha*. These three words are often used in Sanskrit poetics and are the key to understanding how meaning is created in language and poetry.

- *Śabda* means "word" or "sound." In literature, it is the language or words used by a poet or writer.
- *Shabdshakti* means the "power of words." It explains how words can give different kinds of meanings.
- *Artha* means "meaning." It is what the word or sentence wants to say or convey.

Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* begins by explaining how simple meanings are not enough in poetry. Poetry becomes beautiful and powerful when it suggests something more than what is

directly said. For example, when a poet describes a rainy evening, they may not just be talking about weather but also hinting at sadness, longing, or romance. This kind of deeper, suggested meaning is what the *Dhvani* theory focuses on.

Ānandavardhana's work became even more important because of the great philosopher and commentator Abhinavagupta, who wrote a detailed explanation of *Dhvanyāloka* called the *Locana*. In this commentary, Abhinavagupta helped readers understand how suggestion works in poetry and how it connects with human emotions and aesthetic experience. He also added many ideas from philosophy, psychology, and grammar to make the theory more complete.

In the Indian tradition, poetry is not just seen as a way to give information. It is a way to experience rasa (aesthetic emotion or flavour). And for rasa to be felt, the meaning must be more than just literal—it must be suggested through the proper use of words. That is why understanding *Śabda***,** *Śabda**Śakti*** and *Artha* is so important.

This section will help you understand how these three terms work together to create poetic beauty. You will learn how a word **(***Śabda***)** has different powers **(*Śabda**Śakti)*** to give various meanings (*Artha*), especially suggested meanings, which lead to aesthetic enjoyment.

You will find that these concepts, though based in ancient texts, are still relevant today. Whether you are reading poetry, writing stories, or watching films, the ideas of suggestion and emotional meaning are always present. This introduction sets the foundation for exploring how Indian thinkers developed a unique way of reading and feeling literature.

4.2 *Śabda*–Word

In Indian poetics, everything begins with ***Śabda***, which means "word" or "sound." Words are the basic building blocks of language, but in poetry and literature, words are not just for communication—they are tools for creating beauty, emotion, and deeper meaning.

The word ***Śabda*** in Sanskrit means both the spoken sound and the written word. In everyday life, we use words to name things, express ideas, ask questions, and share information. But in poetry, words become special. They are chosen carefully for their sound, meaning, rhythm, and emotional effect. The same sentence can feel dull in one way and magical in another, just by the way the words are used.

For example:

- *The sun sets in the west* – This is a plain statement.
- *The crimson sun kissed the horizon as it disappeared into the arms of night* – This is poetic. It uses rich words to create a visual and emotional picture.

This shows that *Śabda* is not just about what is said, but how it is said.

In Sanskrit grammar (*Vyakarana*), words are studied for their structure, form, and correct usage. But in Sanskrit poetics (*Kāvya Śastra*), scholars like Bharata, Bhamaha, Dandin, and later Ānandavardhana, study how words function in poetry.

In poetry, words must do more than just inform—they must delight. That's where the deeper power of *Śabda* comes in. This power is known as *ŚabdaŚakti* which we will study in the next section.

Śabda is also important for its sound value. In Indian tradition, sound has great significance. It is believed that the sound itself can create a spiritual or emotional effect. For example, the chanting of mantras like *Om* or *Gayatri Mantra* is believed to purify the mind.

In poetry, alliteration, rhyme, rhythm, and meter are all ways of using the sound of words to create beauty. A well-written verse not only means something but sounds beautiful.

A true poet is one who understands the power of *Śabda*. Such a poet selects words not just for their literal meaning, but also for how they sound, what they suggest, and how they affect the listener or reader. The poet becomes like a musician, using words as notes in a melody.

Ānandavardhana believed that when a poet uses *Śabda* with sensitivity, it leads to *Dhvani* or suggestion—a deeper meaning that is not directly spoken but understood through feeling. Abhinavagupta, in his *Locana* commentary, explains that a poetic sentence is powerful only when the *Śabda* used in it leads to an emotional experience or *rasa.*

In Indian philosophy, especially in the *Nyāya* and *Mimamsā* schools, *Śabda* is more than a linguistic tool—it is connected to knowledge and truth. In some traditions, *Śabda* is even seen as divine. For example, the *Vedās* are called *Shruti*—meaning "that which is heard," showing the divine status of sound.

Some schools believe that *Śabdabrahmā*—the eternal word—is a form of the ultimate reality. Thus, words are not just part of the human world but are linked to something higher and sacred.

As a learner of literature, understanding *Śabda* means paying attention to words at every level—how they are used, how they sound, what they mean, and what they suggest. When you read a poem or story, try to notice:

- Why did the poet choose this word?
- What feelings do the words create?
- Can you feel something beyond the direct meaning?

The more you pay attention to *Śabda,* the more you will enjoy literature and understand the beauty hidden in language.

Further, we will go deeper into *ŚabdaŚakti* the powers of words, and see how words can have different layers of meaning, especially the power of suggestion (*Vyanjana*) that makes poetry truly magical.

4.3 *ŚabdaŚakti* – The Powers of the Word

Now that you understand what *Śabda* (word) means in Sanskrit poetics, it's time to learn about *ŚabdaŚakti* which means the power or energy of a word. A word is not just a sound—it carries meaning. But the amazing thing is that a word can have more than one kind of meaning. The different ways in which a word gives meaning are called its ***Śaktis*** or powers.

Ānandavardhana, in his *Dhvanyāloka*, explains three main types of *ŚabdaŚakti***.**

4.3.1 *Abhidhā* – The Power of Direct Meaning

Abhidhā is the first and most basic power of a word. It gives the literal or direct meaning.

For example:

The word "lion" directly means a large, wild animal with a mane.

Sentence: *The lion lives in the forest.*

Here, the word "lion" is used with *Abhidhā **Ś**akti* to give its real, dictionary meaning.

Abhidhā is important in both everyday language and poetry. But in poetry, we often need more than just the direct meaning.

4.3.2 *Lakshanā* – The Power of Indirect or Implied Meaning

Sometimes, the direct meaning of a word does not fit the situation, so we have to look for an indirect or secondary meaning. This is called *Lakshanā.*

For example:

If someone says, *"The village is on the Ganga,"* it doesn't mean the village is floating on the

river. It means the village is on the banks of the Ganga. The word "on" here has an implied meaning.

Another example:

"He is a lion in battle."

Here, "lion" doesn't mean the animal. It means a brave person. The literal meaning is not possible, so we move to a new meaning based on context.

This shift from direct to indirect meaning is the power of *Lakshanā*. It is common in metaphors, similes, and symbolic language.

4.3.3 *Vyanjanā* – The Power of Suggestion

This is the most special and powerful kind of *ŚabdaŚakti*, and it is the heart of Ānandavardhana's *Dhvani* theory. *Vyanjanā* means suggestion—when a word or sentence suggests something deeper, beyond both the direct and indirect meanings.

For example:

The lamp flickered in the silent room.

The direct meaning is simple—a lamp is flickering. But the suggested meaning might be loneliness, sadness, or the end of something. The poet does not say it directly, but we feel it.

This feeling is created by *Vyanjanā*. It touches our emotions, our imagination, and our hearts.

Ānandavardhana believed that great poetry works through *Vyanjanā*. The real beauty of poetry lies not in what is said directly, but in what is suggested or felt through the words.

Abhinavagupta elaborates on the concept of *Dhvani* in his commentary *Locana* on Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*. According to Ānandavardhana, a literary work qualifies as true poetry only when it possesses *rasa-dhvani*—the suggestion of aesthetic flavour or emotional

essence. For Abhinavagupta, both *śabda-śakti-mūla* (power rooted in the word) and *artha-śakti-mūla* (power rooted in the meaning) are integral to the functioning of *dhvani*.

Abhinavagupta provides two etymological interpretations of the word *dhvani*. The first is **ध्वनात् इति ध्वनिः "dhvanāt iti dhvaniḥ"**—that which reverberates, resounds, or implies is called *dhvani*. The second is **ध्वन्यते इति ध्वनिः "dhvanyate iti dhvanih"**—that which is reverberated, sounded, or implied. Both interpretations underscore the idea that *dhvani* is not what is directly stated, but what is *suggested* or *implied*, resonating subtly within the consciousness of a sensitive reader or *Sahrdaya*. Abhinavagupta, in his famous commentary *Locana*, supports Ānandavardhana and explains *Vyanjanā* in more detail. He says that when the direct and indirect meanings are understood, a third level of meaning begins to rise in the mind. This is not explained in words—it is felt. This is emotional and aesthetic meaning, and it leads to rasa, the experience of beauty. He also adds that only a sensitive reader, called *Sahrdaya*, can truly feel this suggested meaning. A *Sahrdaya* is someone whose heart is tuned to literature and emotion.

In real life, we often say more than what we speak directly. For example:

I'm fine."

The words say one thing, but the tone, expression, and silence might suggest sadness, anger, or pain. In poetry, this unsaid or hidden meaning is very powerful. *Vyanjanā* helps the reader move from logic to emotion, from the mind to the heart. Ānandavardhana also classified ***Dhvani*** or suggested meaning into different types:

i. ***Vastu-Dhvani*** – Suggestion of a fact or idea.

ii. ***Alankāra-Dhvani*** – Suggestion of a figure of speech.

iii. ***Rasa-Dhvani*** – Suggestion of an emotion or mood.

This is the highest form, where poetry creates rasa—a deep feeling of love, sorrow, joy, fear, etc.

Apart from it, we will focus on ***Artha***—the meaning that comes from these powers of words. You will learn how meaning works on different levels and how it creates the experience of literature.

4.4 *Artha* – The Dimensions of Meaning

In the last two sections, you learned about ***Śabda*** (word) and *ŚabdaŚakti* (powers of the word). Now it's time to understand *Artha*, which means meaning. Every word, sentence, or poem exists to give meaning to the reader or listener. Without meaning, language is just sound.

But in Indian poetics, meaning is not just simple or one-layered. It is rich, deep, and full of emotion. Let's explore how different types of meaning work in poetry and how Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta understood *Artha*.

Artha means the sense or meaning of a word or sentence. It is what the poet wants to communicate. In poetry, *Artha* is not just about facts or information—it is about creating images, emotions, moods, and experiences in the mind of the reader.

Let's take a simple sentence:

The flower bloomed at dawn."

- The literal meaning is about a flower opening.
- But the suggested meaning could be beauty, freshness, or the beginning of something new.

So, the same line can have many levels of meaning, depending on how you read and interpret it.

According to Sanskrit poetics, *Artha* can be divided into the following main types:

4.4.1. *Vāchya Artha* – The Expressed or Direct Meaning

This is the literal meaning, given by the *Abhidhā Śakti* (denotative power) of a word.

Example:

"Ganga flows through the plains."

The river Ganga flows. This is the *Vāchya Artha*.

This kind of meaning is clear and simple, like what you find in textbooks or everyday speech.

4.4.2. *Lakṣya Artha* – The Indicated or Secondary Meaning

This meaning comes when the literal meaning doesn't make sense or is not suitable. The ***Lakṣanā Śakti*** (indicative power) helps us understand the correct intention.

Example:

"He is a lion in war."

He is not literally a lion, but brave like one.

This is *Lakṣya Artha*, where meaning is adjusted to fit the context.

4.4.3. *Vyangya Artha* – The Suggested or Implied Meaning

This is the most important kind of meaning in poetry, and it comes from *Vyanjanā Śakti* (the power of suggestion).

Example:

"The lamp burned all night beside her window."

Directly, it's about a lamp. But it may suggest sleeplessness, waiting, sadness, or hope.

Vyangya Artha is not spoken directly, but it is felt in the heart. It often leads to rasa, or aesthetic emotion.

According to Ānandavardhana, great poetry always contains *Vyangya Artha*. It creates *Dhvani*, where the deeper meaning shines through the surface. This deeper meaning is often emotional, connected to moods like love, sorrow, fear, or joy.

Abhinavagupta explains in Locana that Artha is not just information—it is a living experience. When you read a good poem, you feel something inside. That feeling is the result of Vyangya Artha.

Not everyone can see or feel the deeper meaning in poetry. That's why Indian thinkers talk about the Sahrdaya, a reader or listener who has a sensitive heart and mind. A Sahrdaya:

- Understands poetic language.
- Feels the beauty of suggestion.
- Responds emotionally and aesthetically.

Without the Sahrdaya, even the best poetry may seem flat. So, meaning is completed not just by the poet, but also by the reader.

Quick Summary of the Three Levels of Artha:

Type of Artha	**Meaning**	**Power of Word Used**	**Example**
Vāchya	Direct	Abhidhā	Ganga flows.
Lakṣya	Indirect	Lakṣanā	He is a lion (brave).
Vyangya	Suggested	Vyanjanā	The flickering lamp suggests loneliness.

For You as a Learner

Understanding Artha means training your mind to:

- Look beyond the surface.
- Catch the mood behind the words.
- Enjoy the beauty that lies between the lines.

As a student of literature, this will help you read poetry and prose with depth, clarity, and emotion. You will see how meaning is not fixed, but grows in layers, like petals of a flower.

Now, we will explore how ***Śabda***, ***ŚabdaŚ****akti*, and *Artha* come together to create *Dhvani*—the soul of poetry according to Ānandavardhana.

You have understood ***Śabda*** (word), ***ŚabdaŚ****akti* (word-power), and *Artha* (meaning), let us now move to the most important idea in Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka—Dhvani*. *Dhvani* literally means "echo" or "sound". But in literary theory, *Dhvani* refers to the suggestive power of language, where the unsaid becomes more meaningful than the said. Let's understand how ***Śabda***, ***ŚabdaŚ****akti*, and *Artha* come together to give rise to *Dhvani*, which is the soul (ātmā) of poetry according to Ānandavardhana.

4.5 Let Us Sum Up

Dhvani is a special kind of poetic expression where suggested meaning (*Vyangya Artha*) becomes more powerful than the direct or indirect meanings.

Example:

"She looked at the moon with wet eyes."

- Direct meaning: A woman is looking at the moon.
- Suggested meaning: She is full of longing, sadness, or love.

The poet does not say she is sad—he suggests it through the image. This is *Dhvani*—the deep feeling behind the words.

Let's see how the three elements—*Śabda*, *ŚabdaŚ****akti***, and *Artha*—combine to create *Dhvani*.

1. *Śabda* (Word or Sound)

This is the form—what you read or hear. Words are tools used by the poet. But in *Dhvani*, the words carry more than they seem to say.

2. *ŚabdaŚakti* (Powers of the Word)

These are the ways in which the word gives meaning:

- ***Abhidhā*** – direct meaning
- ***Lakshanā*** – implied or indirect meaning
- ***Vyanjanā*** – suggested meaning

Vyanjana is the most important for *Dhvani*. Without *Vyanjana*, *Dhvani* cannot happen.

3. *Artha* (Meaning)

This is the sense or message you receive from the words. In *Dhvani*, the suggested meaning (*Vyangya Artha*) shines brighter than the direct or implied meanings.

Types of *Dhvani*

Ānandavardhana divided ***Dhvani*** into three types:

1. *Vastu Dhvani* (Idea-Suggestion)

Where the suggested meaning is a thought, concept, or fact.

Example:

"The king is the sun of his people."

Suggests: The king brings light, life, and guidance to the people.

2. *Alankāra Dhvani* (Figure of Speech Suggestion)

Where the suggestion lies in the of expression—like metaphors, similes, or irony.

Example:

"The stars dance in joy." beauty

Suggests liveliness, celebration, and harmony with nature.

3. *Rasa Dhvani* (Emotional Suggestion)

This is the highest and most important form. The suggested meaning here gives rise to *rasa* (aesthetic emotion). It makes the reader feel love, sorrow, heroism, peace, or wonder.

Example:

"The jasmine wilted in her hands as she waited in vain."

Suggests deep sorrow and longing *(karuṇa rasa).*

Role of *Rasa* in *Dhvani*

Abhinavagupta, in his commentary *Locana*, fully supports Ānandavardhana. He says that the goal of poetry is to create *rasa*, and *rasa* can only be experienced through *Vyangya Artha*, which comes via *Vyanjanā*. He also explains that ***rasa*** is a shared emotional experience, where the reader and the poet feel the same joy or pain. This shared emotion elevates the soul and brings aesthetic pleasure.

How Dhvani Works in Poetry

Let's take an example:

"Her anklet broke in the silence of midnight."

- Vāchya Artha: Her anklet broke at night.
- Lakṣya Artha: Maybe she was walking secretly.
- Vyangya Artha: A romantic or tragic moment, a secret meeting, or a separation.

You, the reader, feel something beyond the words. That feeling is Dhvani at work.

Dhvani and the Reader (Sahrdaya)

As we discussed earlier, Dhvani needs a Sahrdaya—a person with a sensitive heart. Without such a reader, Dhvani cannot be fully appreciated.

A Sahrdaya:

- Is open to beauty and emotion.

- Has knowledge of poetic conventions.
- Can read between the lines.
- Can feel what is not directly stated.

So, Dhvani is a shared dance between the poet and the reader. The poet hides the treasure; the reader discovers it.

Importance of Dhvani in Sanskrit Poetics

Before Ānandavardhana, many thinkers focused only on figures of speech (alankāra), meter, or grammar in poetry. But Ānandavardhana shifted the focus to meaning and emotion.

His theory of Dhvani gave Indian poetics a new soul. It taught that:

- Poetry is not about what is said, but what is suggested.
- The real pleasure of poetry lies in emotional experience.
- Rasa is the final goal of poetic art.

This idea was further refined and popularised by Abhinavagupta in Locana, making Dhvani the central idea of classical Indian aesthetics.

Example from Classical Sanskrit Poetry

Let's look at a verse by Kālidāsa:

"Clouds are the messengers of love in the rainy season."

This simple line, through Dhvani, expresses:

- Longing of separated lovers.
- Romance of nature.
- The beauty of imagination.

It does not explain all this directly. It suggests—and we, the readers, feel it. So, to sum up this section before application of these devices on the poems.

- **Śabda** is the word, the body of poetry.
- **ŚabdaŚ**akti is the power that gives meaning to the word.
- Artha is the meaning, or soul, of what is being said.
- When these three come together in the form of Vyanjanā, and when this suggested meaning becomes emotional, aesthetic, and moving, it becomes Dhvani—the essence of poetry.

Let's now apply the classical Sanskrit literary concepts of **Śabda, ŚabdaŚ**akti, Artha, and Dhvani to Rabindranath Tagore's iconic poem "Where the Mind is Without Fear" (from Gitanjali)—a modern Indian English poem rich in layered meaning, suggestion, and rasa.

Application of Sanskrit Poetic Concepts to Tagore's "Where the Mind is Without Fear"

Text of the Poem:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high

Where knowledge is free

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls

Where words come out from the depth of truth

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

1. **Śabda** (Word or Sound)

- The Śabda in this poem is modern, simple, and lyrical.

- Tagore uses plain English, yet the rhythm, imagery, and repetition ("Where… Where… Where…") create a musical effect.
- Each phrase is like a mantra, filled with hope, strength, and idealism.

Example:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high"

→ The ***Śabda*** here expresses mental freedom and dignity.

2. *ŚabdaŚakti* (Powers of the Word)

Let's break down the types of word-power active in the poem:

a. *Abhidhā* (Denotative Power)

The direct meanings of words:

- *"Head is held high"* → literally means standing with confidence.
- *"Knowledge is free"* → directly means accessible education.

b. Lakṣanā (Indicative Power)

Used when literal meaning does not fully fit the context:

- *"Narrow domestic walls"* → not actual walls but divisions caused by caste, religion, and region.
- The words indicate social and cultural barriers.

c. *Vyanjanā* (Suggestive Power)

The heart of this poem lies in its *Vyangya Artha*:

- *"Clear stream of reason"* suggests rationality and enlightenment.
- *"Dreary desert sand of dead habit"* suggests intellectual stagnation and meaningless tradition.

These images evoke emotions, ideals, and philosophical reflections. Thus, the *ŚabdaŚakti* of this poem activates all three levels—especially *Vyanjanā*.

3. *Artha* (Meaning)

Each line of the poem has layered meaning:

Line	***Vāchya Artha* (Literal)**	***Lakṣya Artha* (Contextual)**	***Vyangya Artha* (Suggested)**
Where the mind is without fear	Mental freedom	Freedom from colonial rule	Awakening of national pride, liberation
Where knowledge is free	Free education	Social equality	Enlightened society
Narrow domestic walls	Family boundaries	Social divisions	Need for unity
Stream of reason / desert sand	Reason vs. habit	Modern thought vs. superstition	The need for rational reform

Tagore layers spiritual, social, and political meanings through symbolic language.

4. *Dhvani* (Suggestive Meaning or Echo/Sound)

This poem is a perfect example of Rasa *Dhvani* (emotive suggestion):

- ***Karuna Rasa* (Compassion)**: Suggesting sorrow for a divided, colonized India.
- ***Veera Rasa* (Heroism)**: Suggesting strength and action for national awakening.
- ***Śānta Rasa* (Peace)**: Suggesting a spiritual, utopian future.

The true essence of the poem lies in what is not said directly—Tagore never mentions "India," "British rule," or "colonialism," yet the reader feels all of it. This is pure *Dhvani*.

Combined Power: Unity of *Śabda*, *ŚabdaŚakti*, and *Artha*

- ***Śabda***: Simple yet symbolic language.
- ***ŚabdaŚakti***: Mainly *Vyanjana*, suggesting deep patriotic and philosophical meanings.
- ***Artha***: A spiritual and political vision for a free, rational, united India.
- ***Dhvani***: Emotional power that leaves a lasting impact on the heart and mind of a sensitive reader (*Sahrdaya*).

Like the classical Sanskrit poets, Tagore believes in poetry that touches the soul. His modern language carries ancient wisdom. By applying Sanskrit poetics, we can appreciate how even contemporary poetry can embody *Dhvani*, *Rasa,* and *Vyangya Artha*.

This poem, when seen through the lens of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, becomes not just a call for political freedom, but a spiritual awakening through the power of meaningful, suggestive, and beautiful language.

Let's now apply the key Sanskrit literary concepts—***Śabda*** (Word), ***ŚabdaŚ****akti* (Word-power), *Artha* (Meaning), and *Dhvani* (Suggestive Meaning)—to William Wordsworth's well-loved lyric, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (commonly known as *Daffodils*). This English Romantic poem, much like classical Sanskrit poetry, evokes *rasa*, or aesthetic emotion, through vivid imagery and suggestion.

In this unit, we explored foundational concepts from Indian poetics—***Śabda*** (word or sound), ***ŚabdaŚ****akti* (word-power), *Artha* (meaning), and *Dhvani* (suggestion)—with a special focus on the *Introduction* to Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*, accompanied by Abhinavagupta's commentary (*Locana*). We began by understanding that in Sanskrit literary theory, ***Śabda*** is not merely a combination of letters or sounds but a powerful medium through which emotions, ideas, and aesthetic experiences are communicated. *Śabda* becomes meaningful only when paired with *Artha*, which may be direct, implied, or suggestive.

ŚabdaŚakti, or the power of words, was divided into three types:

- ***Abhidhā*** (denotative or direct meaning),
- **Lakṣhaṇā** (indicative or contextual meaning), and
- ***Vyanjanā*** (suggestive meaning).

It is *Vyanjanā* that Ānandavardhana celebrated as the true soul of poetry, and his theory of *Dhvani* emphasized this layer of suggestion. According to him, when words and meanings hint at something deeper—without explicitly stating it—that's when poetry truly moves and transforms the reader. The success of poetry lies in what it leaves unsaid, allowing the reader (*Sahrdaya*) to perceive its *rasa* (aesthetic essence).

Through application to two iconic poems—Rabindranath Tagore's "Where the Mind is Without Fear" and William Wordsworth's "Daffodils"—we observed how these classical Indian theories can be applied to both Indian and Western literary texts. In both poems, the literal meaning (*Vāchya*), contextual meaning (Lakṣya), and suggested meaning (*Vyangya*) work together to create emotional richness. The reader does not simply understand the poem—they feel it.

Tagore's vision of a spiritually and politically awakened India is communicated not through direct political slogans but through ***Dhvani***, or suggestion. Similarly, Wordsworth's joy at encountering daffodils transforms into lasting spiritual peace, again revealed more through *rasa* and *vyanjanā* than direct statement.

In conclusion, Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta offer a timeless framework to understand how poetry affects us deeply. Their insights help us appreciate the hidden beauty in words—the unspoken meanings, the subtle emotions, and the universal truths that lie beyond language. Whether it's a Sanskrit *kāvya* or an English Romantic lyric, the principles of *Śabda*, ***ŚabdaŚ****akti*, *Artha*, and *Dhvani* allow us to read poetry not just with the eyes—but with the soul.

4.6 Questions

1. What is the literal meaning of '***Śabda***'?
2. Name the three kinds of ***ŚabdaŚ****akti*.
3. Who is the author of *Dhvanyāloka*?
4. What is '*Vyangya Artha*'?
5. Which *Rasa* is predominantly found in "Daffodils" by Wordsworth?
6. What does '*Dhvani*' literally mean?
7. Who wrote the *Locana* commentary on *Dhvanyāloka*?
8. What does '*Sahrdaya*' mean in Sanskrit poetics?
9. Give one example of Lakṣaṇā from any poem**.**
10. What kind of word power is used when a word suggests an idea indirectly?
11. Explain the three types of ***ŚabdaŚ****akti* with suitable examples from poetry.
12. Discuss Ānandavardhana's theory of *Dhvani* and its significance in Indian poetics.
13. How does Abhinavagupta elaborate upon Ānandavardhana's concept of *Dhvani* in the *Locana*?
14. Differentiate between *Vāchya*, *Lakṣya*, and *Vyangya Artha*. How do these contribute to poetic beauty?
16. How is the theory of *Dhvani* applicable to Rabindranath Tagore's poem "Where the Mind is Without Fear"?
17. Illustrate how Wordsworth's "Daffodils" exemplifies the concepts of *Dhvani* and *Rasa*.
18. What role does the *Sahrdaya* play in interpreting and appreciating suggestive meaning in poetry?

19. Compare and contrast Ānandavardhana's *Dhvani* theory with Western literary theories of metaphor or symbolism.
20. Why is *Vyanjanā* considered superior to *Abhidhā* and *Lakṣhaṇā* according to Ānandavardhana?
21. Discuss the relevance of Sanskrit poetics in understanding modern or English poetry today.

4.7 Suggested Readings

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UNIT 5 - KĀVYAHĒTU AND KĀVYA PRAYOJNA

Structure

5.0 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the fundamental concepts of *kāvyahētu* (causes of poetry) and *kāvyaprayojana* (purpose of poetry) as discussed in Sanskrit poetics.
- ✓ Gain an overview of Mammaṭa's contribution to Indian literary theory through his seminal work *Kāvyaprakāśa*.
- ✓ Identify and explain the internal and external causes that lead to the creation of *kāvya* (poetry).
- ✓ Explore the different functions and goals of poetry, including instruction, emotional relief, and aesthetic enjoyment.
- ✓ Comprehend the central role of *rasa* in Mammaṭa's theory of poetics as both a cause and an end of poetic creation.

- ✓ Compare and contrast Mammaṭa's views with earlier Sanskrit theorists such as Bharata, Bhāmaha, and Ānandavardhana.
- ✓ Appreciate the integrative approach of *Kāvyaprakāśa* and its pedagogical significance for students of Sanskrit literature and aesthetics.
- ✓ Analyze the relevance of traditional Indian literary theory in the modern academic and aesthetic context.

5.1 Introduction

Mammata Bhatta was a well-known Kashmiri scholar of Sanskrit and poet, who wrote the *Kāvyaprakāśa* (also known as "The Light of Poetry"). The work was accomplished in the 11th century CE and explores Sanskrit poetics in detail, so it is still considered a key reference for classical Indian literature. Many philosophers and scholars in Indian literature have spent much time figuring out what poetry is, what its purpose is, and what it does to readers. To deal with these questions, ancient Indians formed classical Sanskrit poetics (*kāvyaśāstra*) as a Formal and detailed tradition. Among these works, Mammaṭa Bhaṭṭa's *Kāvyaprakāśa* is important because it is very clear, short, and combines the ideas of earlier philosophers. Mammaṭa's text begins by defining poetry with remarkable precision and elegance:

"वाक्यं रसात्मकं काव्यम्"

Vākyaṁ rasātmakaṁ kāvyam

"Poetry is that utterance which is permeated by *rasa* (aesthetic essence)."

(*Kāvyaprakāśa*, I.1)

This opening sutra sets the tone for the entire work, asserting that *rasa* is both the essence and the soul of poetry. Mammaṭa's emphasis on *rasa* reflects the influence of Ānandavardhana

and Abhinavagupta, who had earlier placed *rasa* and *dhvani* (suggestion) at the center of poetic discourse. What distinguishes *Kāvyaprakāśa*, however, is its synthesis of multiple schools of thought—*alaṅkāra*, *rīti*, *dhvani*, *auchitya*, and *rasa*—into one coherent and pedagogically accessible framework.

Mammaṭa's contribution is unique in that he not only defines what poetry is but also explains what brings poetry into being (*kāraṇa* or *kāvyahētu*) and what poetry aims to achieve (*prayojana*). These two concepts—*kāvyahētu* and *kāvyaprayojana*—form the cornerstone of Sanskrit literary aesthetics. The three-fold purpose—didactic, emotional, and aesthetic—is later eclipsed and subsumed under the higher goal of *rasāsvāda*, or aesthetic relish, which becomes the parama-prayojana (ultimate purpose). Poetry, for Mammaṭa, is not merely about instructing or entertaining but inducing an immersive experience of rasa, a state that transcends worldly pain and uplifts the consciousness of the reader or listener.

As scholars like Sushil Kumar De and P. V. Kane have noted, Mammaṭa's treatise stands as a comprehensive guide to Indian poetics, second only to *Nāṭyaśāstra* in its influence and authority (De 12; Kane 157). Its enduring legacy lies in its ability to unify aesthetics, ethics, and epistemology within the artistic domain of *kāvya*. This unit, therefore, aims to critically examine the causes and purposes of poetry as presented by Mammaṭa in the *Kāvyaprakāśa*, with a focus on textual interpretation, comparative insights, and pedagogical relevance.

5.2 Mammaṭa and the *Kāvyaprakāśa*

The literary history of classical Sanskrit poetics reaches its high watermark in the works of Kashmiri scholars such as Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, and Mammaṭa. Among them, Mammaṭa Bhaṭṭa emerges as a *systematizer* rather than an originator, yet his work remains a

cornerstone of *alaṅkāraśāstra* owing to its synthesis of preceding aesthetic doctrines and its pedagogical clarity.

The *Kāvyaprakāśa*, which means "The Illumination of Poetry," is not an isolated treatise but a digest (*saṅgraha*) of major theoretical positions up to Mammaṭa's time. While the text is deeply indebted to the *dhvani* and *rasa* schools, it also absorbs elements from the *alaṅkāra* (figures of speech), *rīti* (style), *guṇa* (poetic qualities), and *auchitya* (propriety) traditions. As K. Krishnamoorthy aptly notes, the *Kāvyaprakāśa* "reconciles conflicting schools into a unified theory of poetry that gives due place to both form and content" (Krishnamoorthy 10).

Unlike his predecessors, Mammaṭa structures his exposition in a step-by-step didactic form. The text comprises eleven chapters (*prakāśas*), beginning with the nature, causes, and purposes of poetry, then advancing to more technical matters like faults (*doṣa*), ornaments (*alaṅkāra*), and suggested meanings (*vyaṅgya*). Its lucid arrangement and aphoristic style made it the most widely taught poetics manual for centuries in India. One of Mammaṭa's crucial contributions lies in his emphasis on the conditions necessary for poetic creation, which he formulates succinctly as:

"**प्रतिभाव्युत्पत्त्यभ्यासजन्यं काव्यं त्रिविधं कवेः कारणम्**"

Pratibhā-vyutpatti-abhyāsa-janyaṁ kāvyaṁ trividhaṁ kaveḥ kāraṇam

"Poetry arises from three causes in a poet: creative intuition (pratibhā), acquired learning (vyutpatti), and habitual practice (abhyāsa)."

(Kāvyaprakāśa, I.4)

Here, Mammaṭa classifies the internal preconditions (antaranga-kāraṇas) of poetic composition, thereby emphasizing the subjective and experiential foundations of literature.

Rather than reducing poetry to a mechanical art, he recognizes the importance of imaginative insight, erudition, and skill—a triad echoed in later commentaries such as Jagaddhara's Prakāśa.

Another distinctive feature of Mammaṭa's framework is his concept of the hierarchy of poetic functions. While acknowledging poetry's capacity to instruct (vyutpatti), delight (āhlāda), and amaze (chitta-vismaya), he ultimately upholds the experience of rasa as the highest poetic objective. The famous opening definition—"Vākyaṁ rasātmakaṁ kāvyam"—is not merely a definition but a declaration of *rasa* as the central organizing principle of all poetics.

Furthermore, Mammaṭa does not treat *kāvya* in a vacuum; his work demonstrates close links between literature, psychology, and moral transformation. By stating that poetry removes sorrow and delusion (*śoka-moha-vinodanaṁ*), he implies that literature holds the power to reshape human consciousness, acting as both catharsis and cognition. Although deeply steeped in the *dhvani* theory, Mammaṭa retains a catholic attitude toward other schools. He does not dismiss *alaṅkāras* (figures of speech), *guṇas* (poetic excellences), or *doṣas* (flaws) as trivial but rather integrates them into a broader aesthetic schema in which they function as secondary but essential tools for evoking *rasa*. He notes:

"अलंकारादयोऽप्युपस्कारा भवन्ति"

Alaṅkārādayo'py upaskārā bhavanti

"Figures of speech and the like serve as embellishing aids [to rasa]."

(*Kāvyaprakāśa*, I.5, commentary)

This instrumental view of poetic devices reflects his rasa-centric ontology: everything in poetry exists to serve the evocation and enjoyment of aesthetic emotion. The enduring popularity of *Kāvyaprakāśa* is partly due to its extensive commentarial tradition, ranging from the *Vivṛti* of Ruyyaka to Appayya Dīkṣita's *Kuvalayānanda-vivṛti*. These glosses not only expanded upon

Mammaṭa's concise verses but also enabled cross-generational engagement with poetics, sustaining its academic legacy in traditional Sanskrit curricula.

Indeed, as scholars like Sheldon Pollock have observed, the text marks the culmination of pre-modern Indian literary theory, just before the rise of vernacular aesthetics and colonial transformations (Pollock 125). Even today, Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaprakāśa* continues to be an indispensable resource for students and researchers, bridging rigorous theory with literary appreciation.

5.3 *Kāvyahētu* – The Causes of Poetry

The formulation of *kāvyahētu*—the causes or prerequisites of poetry—is one of Mammaṭa's significant contributions to Sanskrit poetics. In *Kāvyaprakāśa*, he provides a tripartite model of internal factors (*antaraṅga-kāraṇas*) essential for poetic composition. These factors are not merely theoretical abstractions but are meant to illuminate the mental and cognitive infrastructure of the poet. The focus here shifts from what poetry is to how poetry comes into being.

Mammaṭa identifies three primary internal cau**ses—***pratibhā* (creative intuition), *vyutpatti* (scholarly learning), and *abhyāsa* (habitual practice):

"प्रतिभा व्युत्पत्तिरभ्यास इति च कवेरन्तरङ्गं त्रयम्।"

Pratibhā vyutpattir abhyāsa iti ca kaver antaraṅgaṁ trayam

"Genius, learning, and repeated practice constitute the internal triad for a poet."

(*Kāvyaprakāśa*, I.4)

This sutra presents a psychological and educational perspective on poetic production. Let us examine each component more closely.

a) *Pratibhā* (Creative Intuition)

Pratibhā is understood as the innate genius or imaginative insight that enables a poet to conceive novel and aesthetically powerful expressions. Unlike *vyutpatti* or *abhyāsa*, which can be cultivated externally, *pratibhā* is an inborn faculty—a divine spark (*daivata-preraṇā*), according to some commentators. Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja later elaborated:

> **"प्रतिभैव काव्यस्य जीवितं"**
>
> ***Pratibhaiva kāvyasya jīvitaṁ***
>
> "Creative intuition alone is the life of poetry."
>
> (*Rasagaṅgādhara*, 1.3)

Thus, for Mammaṭa, *pratibhā* is the primary mover, without which neither learning nor effort can lead to true poetic excellence.

b*) Vyutpatti* (Learning and Exposure)

The second cause, *vyutpatti*, refers to the comprehensive knowledge of language, literature, poetics, and allied disciplines. It includes grammatical correctness, familiarity with classical texts, and understanding of aesthetic theories. This aligns with the traditional idea that a poet must also be a scholar (*kaviḥ saṃskṛta-vāgmi*).

Mammaṭa acknowledges that even with innate talent, a poet needs exposure to linguistic and cultural conventions to compose meaningful and refined poetry. As per ancient pedagogical norms, learning begins with *śāstra* (texts), but must eventually lead to anubhāva (experience).

c) *Abhyāsa* (Practice and Composition)

The third factor, *abhyāsa*, highlights the importance of regular writing, recitation, and refinement. It recognizes poetry as an art cultivated over time, not merely a spontaneous gift. Through repetition and conscious effort, the poet refines intuition and internalizes formal constraints.

This tripartite framework reflects an integrated pedagogy in which the cognitive (*pratibhā*), intellectual (*vyutpatti)*, and performative (*abhyāsa*) domains interact dynamically. It also mirrors modern educational psychology's emphasis on talent, training, and practice.

While Mammaṭa emphasizes internal causes, he also acknowledges external circumstances (*bāhya-kāraṇas*) in the creative process. Though not elaborated in detail, these include:

a) ***Deśa* (region):** Cultural and linguistic environment.

b) ***Kāla* (time):** Temporal context and literary fashion.

c) ***Jāti* (caste or class):** Social and ethical background.

d) ***Sahavāsa* (company):** Influence of fellow poets and patrons.

These situational determinants can shape a poet's themes, style, and expressive range. Later commentators and theorists expanded upon these ideas, especially in vernacular poetics.

Importantly, Mammaṭa does not treat *kāvyahētu* in isolation. His model of causation complements the teleological function of poetry (*kāvyaprayojana*) and its experiential essence (*rasātmaka*). The causes enable a poet to construct a *vākya* that is aesthetically potent and emotionally resonant.

In this sense, *kāvyahētu* is not just about origination, but about aesthetic qualification. The goal is not simply to produce verses, but to generate poetic utterances that are *rasa-nibandhana*—bound to and expressive of emotional states.

5.5 *Kāvyaprayojana* – The Purposes of Poetry

In classical Sanskrit poetics, the inquiry into the *prayojana* or purpose of poetry (*kāvya*) is central to understanding its cultural, aesthetic, and ethical functions. Mammaṭa, following the tradition of integrating aesthetics with philosophy and pedagogy, asserts that poetry is not composed in vain; it serves specific, multi-dimensional ends.

Right at the beginning of the *Kāvyaprakāśa*, Mammaṭa states:

"शोकमोहविषादाद्यपनोदनमुपशमजनकं च काव्यम्"

Śoka-moha-viṣādādya-apanodanam upaśama-janakaṁ ca kāvyam

"Poetry removes sorrow, delusion, grief, and the like, and produces calm."

(*Kāvyaprakāśa*, I.2)

This verse encapsulates the psychological and spiritual utility of poetry. For Mammaṭa, *kāvya* is not mere ornamented speech; it is a transformative experience that uplifts the human spirit, dispels negative emotions, and fosters inner tranquillity.

Mammaṭa identifies four major purposes (*prayojanāni*) of poetry, which are both individual and collective in their significance:

a) *Vyutpatti* (Instructional Value)

Poetry can educate. Through vivid narratives and poetic expression, it conveys ethical, philosophical, and practical wisdom. As Mammaṭa puts it:

"काव्यं श्रोतृणां व्युत्पत्तये"

Kāvyaṁ śrotṛṇāṁ vyutpattaye

"Poetry is for the edification of the listeners."

(*Kāvyaprakāśa*, I.2, commentary)

Unlike didactic treatises, *kāvya* teaches through delight, using stories and aesthetic pleasure as a medium for moral understanding. The *Mahākāvyas*, *Nītiśāstras*, and allegorical dramas like *Mudrārākṣasa* exemplify this didactic use of poetry.

b) *Āhlāda* (Pleasurable Enjoyment)

The aesthetic joy or *āhlāda* that poetry provides is perhaps its most immediate function. Poetry evokes *rasa*, the sublime emotional experience that transcends mundane pleasure. The capacity of poetry to delight the senses and elevate the spirit is celebrated across Indian poetics. Mammaṭa gives primacy to this function by defining poetry as:

> **"वाक्यं रसात्मकं काव्यम्"**
>
> *Vākyaṁ rasātmakaṁ kāvyam*
>
> "Poetry is a sentence endowed with *rasa*."
>
> (*Kāvyaprakāśa*, I.1)

This definition places ***rasa*** at the heart of poetry's function—delight not as superficial amusement but as **emotional-ethical cultivation**.

c) *Chittavismaya* (Astonishment and Wonder)

A third purpose is *chittavismaya*—the evocation of wonder and admiration in the minds of the readers or listeners. This corresponds to the adbhuta rasa and is often achieved through extraordinary themes, divine characters, intricate poetic devices, and verbal ingenuity. Such a function reinforces the idea that poetry allows humans to **transcend the ordinary** and imagine the sublime.

d*) Śoka-moha-nivṛtti* (Emotional Catharsis)

Mammaṭa places strong emphasis on the emotional and psychological relief provided by poetry. Drawing from *rasa* theory and aligning with concepts akin to *catharsis* in Aristotelian poetics, he

claims that poetry helps eliminate inner afflictions like grief, delusion, or depression. This idea is akin to Bharata's formulation in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*:

> **"नाट्यं भिन्नरुचीनां निखिलस्मृतिज्ञानविनोदकम्"**
>
> *Nāṭyaṁ bhinna-rucīnāṁ nikhila-smṛti-jñāna-vinodakam*
>
> "Drama (and by extension poetry) pleases people of all tastes and dispels worldly concerns." (*Nāṭyaśāstra*, I.14)

Thus, for Mammaṭa, poetry is a psychic balm, not merely for entertainment but as a source of solace and inner resolution.

While acknowledging secondary functions like ethical teaching and amusement, Mammaṭa upholds the aesthetic function as paramount. His poetic teleology is non-utilitarian in its essence, meaning that the aesthetic experience itself is the highest purpose, not a means to another end. This position brings him close to the modern idea of art for art's sake, though embedded within a moral-aesthetic framework. As V. Raghavan notes:

> "For Mammaṭa, the *rasa*-experience is not merely decorative but spiritually elevating and ontologically valid." (Raghavan 85)

By integrating *rasa* as both the essence and the aim of poetry, Mammaṭa resolves the age-old debate between pleasure vs. instruction in favor of a holistic aesthetic philosophy.

Mammaṭa's understanding of *kāvyaprayojana* builds upon and synthesizes earlier views:

- **Bhamaha and Daṇḍin** emphasized ***śabdārthau sahitau kāvyam***—poetry as the union of word and meaning—but gave less clarity on its purpose.
- **Ānandavardhana**, via the *dhvani* theory, argued that **suggestion and emotional resonance** were poetry's primary goals.

- **Abhinavagupta**, in his commentary on *Nāṭyaśāstra*, considered *rasa-svāda* (taste of aesthetic emotion) to be the spiritual consummation of human experience.

Mammaṭa harmonizes these perspectives by proposing a tripartite impact of poetry: it delights, teaches, and heals. Yet, he asserts that all these culminate in the experience of *rasa*, which remains the supreme telos of literary art.

5.5 Let Us Sum Up

The study of *Kāvyahētu* and *Kāvyaprayojana* as delineated in Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaprakāśa* reveals a rich and holistic conception of poetry that harmonizes creation, intention, and effect. Mammaṭa's model is not merely descriptive but prescriptive, aiming to shape the poet's inner cultivation and the reader's aesthetic sensibility. Through the triad of *pratibhā* (creative genius), *vyutpatti* (learning), and *abhyāsa* (practice), Mammaṭa outlines the essential qualifications of the poet. These causes—while centered on the individual—are deeply intertwined with broader cultural, ethical, and aesthetic discourses. The creative process is both personal and collective, informed by tradition yet open to innovation. In terms of *kāvyaprayojana*, Mammaṭa synthesizes the various historical approaches to the purpose of poetry. Whether poetry teaches, delights, astonishes, or consoles, all these functions are ultimately subordinate to its *rasa-dhvani*—the aesthetic experience that transforms perception and purifies emotion. In this light, poetry becomes not only a medium of expression but also a means of emotional refinement and intellectual expansion.

Mammaṭa's brilliance lies in his ability to **interweave psychological insight, philosophical rigor, and aesthetic sensitivity**, making *Kāvyaprakāśa* a timeless text for students and lovers of

literature. His treatment of *kāvyahētu* and *kāvyaprayojana* ensures that the poet is not just a technician of words but a visionary who evokes *rasa* and leads readers to deeper self-awareness.

- ***Kāvyahētu*** refers to the internal causes of poetry, namely *pratibhā* (creative intuition), *vyutpatti* (learning), and *abhyāsa* (practice).
- *Pratibhā* is the foundational power that inspires original poetic imagination.
- *Vyutpatti* enables poets to access literary traditions, grammar, and aesthetic theories.
- *Abhyāsa* denotes the refinement of poetic ability through repetition and effort.
- ***Kāvyaprayojana*** encompasses the purposes of poetry such as *vyutpatti* (instruction), *āhlāda* (aesthetic pleasure), *chittavismaya* (wonder), and *śoka-moha-nivṛtti* (emotional release).
- Mammaṭa gives primacy to the experience of ***rasa*** as the ultimate aim of poetry.
- His theory bridges the realms of psychology, morality, and aesthetic experience, establishing a comprehensive framework for poetic composition and reception.

5.6 Questions

1. Define *kāvyahētu* as per Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaprakāśa*.
2. What role does *pratibhā* play in poetic creation?
3. How does *vyutpatti* aid the poet according to Mammaṭa?
4. Explain *abhyāsa* in the context of poetic practice.
5. What are the main *kāvyaprayojanas* mentioned by Mammaṭa?
6. How does poetry provide emotional relief?
7. What is the relationship between *rasa* and *kāvyaprayojana*?
8. Which quote from *Kāvyaprakāśa* suggests poetry removes sorrow?

9. What distinguishes Mammaṭa's view of poetic purpose from earlier thinkers?
10. Mention one external (*bāhya*) cause of poetry, even if Mammaṭa focuses on internal causes.

5.7 Suggested Reading

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UNIT 6 SAHRIDAYA, SAMAJIKA AND SADHARANIKARANA

Structure

6.0 Objectives

In this Unit, we shall make you acquainted with three critical terms of Sanskrit poetics namely "Sahridaya", "Samajika", and "Sadharanikarana". These critical terms need to be discussed in detail so that learners could correlate them with their counterparts in the western literary critical tradition. These terms we come across often in Sanskrit poetics but they are used there in critical sense. They need attention to feel the purport and purpose.

6.1 Introduction

All the three terms "Sahridaya", "Samajika" and "Sadharanikarana" are connected with one another with respect to their roles and functions. In Indian poetics, the role of reader has been always recognized by aestheticians. They knew that without the engagement and

involvement of social beings; their works would avail nothing of themselves. They were careful and conscious about the readership and that is why we come across Acharyas discussing questions such as- Who can enjoy poetry? Who can savour drama? What qualifications are expected in a viewer/reader? What happens in a qualified reader/viewer while reading or viewing a piece of art?

At the end of the Unit, they will be able to discuss among their peer groups these critical terms. Even they will be able to place themselves as well on the occasions of critical evaluation and reading processes. Besides, they are supposed to write answers to the questions asked in the section no. 6.7. For more detailed study, they can go through a few more books suggested in the section no. 6.8.

6.2 A Note on Sanskrit Critical Terms

Sanskrit is one of the oldest languages of the world. It enjoys the richest treasure of critical terms. These terms are general as well as specific. Sanskrit critical tradition has never felt in the shortage of words to express upon any topic. When we talk about figures of speech in English, we find English poor compared to Sanskrit. The latter has the provisions of figures of speech double or triple to the former. Likewise, the whole of Indian intellectual tradition can contribute lakhs of critical terms to the western knowledge system. These terms can be used worldwide to address concerned situations. Need is to increase the circulation and usage of Sanskrit critical terms among literary discussions and debates. We have to bring them out of the self-imposed exile. Indian critical tradition as rich as that of the west. The knowledge about the critical nature of these terms can help significantly the currency of these terms. The global

scholarship would be benefitted significantly provided the currency of Sanskrit critical terms is increased.

6.3 Sahridaya

Rasa is believed to be the locus of literariness in Indian poetics. And it is only to be enjoyed by the competent reader or spectator. The concept of *Sahridaya* (congenial reader) in Indian poetics is very significant because it is unlike the western idea of reader. Generally, the term Sahridaya in Indian poetics is meant for some responsive or competent reader. It includes both the listener and the spectator (Prekshaka). Hence, both are required to bear the same qualities. However, in a theatre a non-responsive person (Ahridaya) turns into Sahridaya when views dance, song, setting, etc. The term Sahridaya is composed of prefix "Sa" meaning similar or with and the nominal "Hridaya" which means heart. Thus, the term denotes one who is having a heart identical to that of the writer. Kapil Kapoor writes succinctly, "A sahridaya has the competence analogous to that of the poet/composer to see, to hear, to feel, to participate, to experience" (Kapoor 44). The idea of Sahridaya is close to Bharata's Sumana (a person of polished/mirror-like heart). A person having brazen heart cannot enjoy works of fine arts. For the holistic enjoyment, the need for sensitivity/sensibility is stressed in Indian poetics. The ability to enjoy literature presupposes the adequate knowledge and familiarity with its unique features.

Anandavardhana who brought the concept of Sahridaya to the centre stage. His magnum opus the Dhvanyaloka was said to be originally titled Sahridayaloka. Anandavardhana in the

book didn't try to define Sahridaya because he might have thought of it self-expressive. Abhinavagupta in his commentary Locana on Dhvanyaloka sheds light upon the concept of Sahridaya-

…those people who are capable of identifying with the subject matter, since the mirror of their heart has been polished through constant recitation and study of poetry, and who sympathetically respond in their own heart are known as sensitive readers. (Masson and Patwardhana 6)

In fact, Abhinavagupta has here talked about the process how one tuns into Sahridaya. The "constant recitation and study of poetry" (Tanmayibhava) develops clarity about things in the mind which in turn causes the birth of empathy. The empathy develops an atmosphere in which heart-to-heart communication takes place. This kind of dialogue occurs only in cultured/refined minds. For Abhinavagupta, Sahridayata can be cultivated whereas Rajshekhara took it as innate property and it cannot be achieved by perseverance.

Bhoja used the term Rasika or connoisseur of sentiment in his work Shringaraprakasha. Acharya Visvanatha in his Sahityadarpana points out that a Rasika's capacity to savour sentiments is due to his predilection for art and this predilection arises not only from the present birth but from the previous birth also. The study of literature helps savour the aesthetic pleasure. To enjoy Rasa requires the study of literature. Thus, this capacity is believed to be partly innate and partly acquired.

Rajashekhara used the term Bhavaka and also stresses the need of a good reader otherwise all the efforts made towards creating a piece of art by the artist will go in vain. A good reader is the master, minister, friend and disciple of the poet. Rajashekhara calls the appreciative capacity of a good reader "bhavayatri pratibha" (contemplative imagination). He in his

Kavyamimansa mentions four categories of readers on the basis of the capability to appreciate a poem. These are insensitive, sensitive but indiscriminate, competitive and true reader (tatvabhiniveshi). The insensitive reader is unable to enjoy a work of art by nature. The sensitive but indiscriminate type reader likes to read everything but does not have skill to judge the true poetic excellence. The competitive reader always feels irritation towards good poets though understands their merits but never accepts. The true reader appreciates a poem duly.

Anandavardhana used the term Sahridaya to refer to a sensitive reader. Sahridaya, Rasika and Bhavaka are synonymous terms. According to Kapil Kapoor, the term Sahridaya is most satisfactory to refer to the idea of reader in Indian perspective. As a critical term it overshadows the other two terms. Indian Acharyas had used these terms in wider sense to refer to listener, reader, viewer and the critic also. But all these terms do not refer to the reading act. They refer to perceptiveness and sensibility. Abhinavagupta accords equal status to both the reader and the writer. For him, a Sahridaya is supposed to be having a consciousness which is free of all kinds of "distorting deposits (i.e. preconceptions, prejudices, and factors blocking rasa-realization)" (Arjunwadkar 51). A person having such consciousness ultimately identifies himself/herself with the author. In this way, the concept of Sahridaya seems to be elitist because it excludes all those readers who are not responsive.

6.4 Samajika

The term Samajika in general refers to one who is seen or found in social activities involved. But in dramaturgy it is used slightly differently. In dramaturgy it denotes a gathering of people in the theatre (Prekshagriha) to watch the dramatic performances. As a collective noun, it refers to the spectators of all "age-group, sex or class" (Srivastava vol. 5, 304). The Samajika is a

participant viewer who feels pulses of the performer in accordance with Rajas, Tamas and Sattvik Gunas. In a situation of Karuna, the Samajika feels emotion of sorrow and is reminded of own past tragic experiences. The locus of aesthetic emotion for sure is the sensibility. Krishna Chaitanya writes, "Identification is necessary for aesthetic experience. The reader or the spectator has to receive the represented feeling into his own soul to enjoy it" (Chaitanya 45). Bharata in 27th chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra* talks about Prekshaka (he prefers it to Samajika) in detail. In the 54th verse of it, Bharata lists qualifications of a good Prekshaka-

> [(In the theatre, while viewing a performance) one who gets happy to see (a performer or actor) happy; feels aggrieved to see him in grief and becomes miserable to see him in misery, is entitled to be called a 'Prekshaka' or Spectator.] (Srivastava vol. 5, 304)

The qualifications enlisted in the above citation seem to be inadequate because mere having fellow-feeling for the performers cannot do justice necessarily to the art. Professor Krishna Gopal Srivastava writes all about the affair categorically:

> Unless the viewer has developed his sensitivity and sensibility, the understanding and enjoyment of a play or a work of art is practically impossible. Since the theatre and theatrical performances are all for theatre-goers, the latter's role in the assessment of the success or failure of a given performance, becomes self-evident. (Srivastava vol. 5, 304).

Bharata has mentioned in the same chapter about another variant of 'Prekshaka' known as 'Prashnika'. 'Prashnika' is "a person of cultivated taste and acquainted with linguistics, poetics, dramaturgy and all other disciplines connected with the theatre". Only 'Prashnika' is entitled to adjudge the excellences of the performance in the theatre. The 'Prekshaka' is a general theatre-

goer whose aim is simply to enjoy the performance. The 'Prashnika' is akin to theatre-critic who only can enjoy Rasa in totality.

The idea of Samajika is closely linked to Sahridaya. Both concepts underline sensibility and sensitivity.

6.5 Sadharanikarana

The concept of Sadharanikarana has surfaced in the discussion on Rasa-nispatti (rasa-realization). Literally, it refers to the process of turning uncommon into common or general. This theory took birth in the efforts made towards finding an answer to the question as to how emotions of character like Rama, Krishna, Shakuntala can be enjoyed by common readers or spectators. Dr Nagendra finds seeds of it in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, chapter VII but for definite reference to the concept, credit goes to Bhatta Nayaka (9th-10th century) as the proponent. Dr Nagendra in his book Rasa-Siddhanta (Hindi commentary) quotes the following line:

Ebhyascha samanyaguna yogen rasa nispadyante.

In the above line, "ebhyascha" refers to Bhāvas and "samanyaguna yogen" to the process of universalization. In this way, when the universalization or generalization of eight Sthāyibhāvas, eight Sāttvikabhāvas and thirty-three Sanchāribhāvas occur, Rasa-realization begins materializing in a responsive spectator or reader. The Sadharanikarana is the prior procedure to the Rasa-realization. By his concept of Bhāvakatva, Bhatta Nayaka hinted the same idea and direction.

Bhatta Nayaka is the third explicator of Bharata's rasa-sutra. His explication is popular as the Bhuktivāda that is, Rasa is to be enjoyed aesthetically. He was opposed to Anandavardhana's

the Dhvani doctrine and three powers of word- literal, figural and suggestive. Bhatta Nayaka suggested three powers of word parallel to those of Anandavardhana. These are Abhidhā (literal-cum- figural which is possessed by all linguistic expressions), Bhāvakatva, and Bhojakatva. The concept of Bhāvakatva or universalizing power refers to the process that turns ordinary speeches into poetic. Bhāvakatva is the second function of poetic language. In the process of Bhavakatva, "vibhāvas, anubhāvas and vyabhicāribhāvas, all relinquish their local, individual and temporal associations and acquire a sort of generality or universality" (Kushwaha and Misra 97).

The universalization concretizes in the presence of gunas and alamkaras and in the absence of *doṣa.* In the rasa-realization he finds two obstacles- the individualistic consciousness, and the opposite effects of painful emotions. Bhāvakatva removes these two hurdles by its magic wand. The scenic representation along with song, setting, music etc. helps the spectator connect with the character or the event enacted upon the stage results in the loss of her/his individuality. This process of trans-personalization is called Sādharanikarana. Thus, Bhāvakatva directs to the same idea that Sādharanikarana does. It is the underlying principle. In fact, the concept of generalization rather universalization inheres the very process of imaginative creation. By *Bhojakatva* Bhatta Nayaka means that the poetic meanings are enjoyed by the reader apart from the verbal meanings. In the process all *rajas* and tamas gunas get naturally suppressed in the heart of the samajika. As a result, sattva gunas arise in excess and thereafter the samajika enjoys rasas fully.

Since the concept of Sadharanikarana refers to the creative activity, it engages three key players- the poet, the poem and the reader. M S Kushwaha and Sanjay Misra explain the whole idea in the following manner:

The starting point of the creative activity is usually a personal experience or personal vision, but the process of creation snaps the tie between the poet's ego and the emotions he is expressing. Once the egoistic interests of the poet cease to intrude into the process of artistic creation, the emotions are objectified in terms of the universally accessible patterns of images and symbols. (99)

6.6 Let Us Sum Up

To the conclusion, all these terms discussed in the Unit are very significant because they are reader-centric. Sahridaya and Samajika are very close to each other. The former is usually used in poetry whereas the latter in drama. the term Sadharanikarana refers to the process of the communication. If the creator of art is important, the sensitive reader (the actual evaluator and co-creator) is not less important. In fact, in the process of aesthetic pleasure both are two aspects of the said process.

6.7 Questions and Their Answers

Q. 1 Discuss characteristics of Sahridaya.

Ans. See section no. 6.3

Q. 2 What is Bhavaka?

Ans. See section no. 6.3

Q. 3 Explain the concept of Samajika.

Ans. See section no. 6.4

Q. 4 Compare concepts of Sahridaya and Samajika.

Ans. Read carefully section no. 6.3 and 6.4

Q. 5 What is Sadharanikarana?

Ans. Read section no. 6.5

6.8 Further Readings

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Unit 7 *Rasābhāva, Rasānubhāva* and *Ramaniyat*

Structure

7.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, learners will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the foundational concepts of *rasābhāva*, *rasānubhāva*, and *ramaniyat* in Indian aesthetics.

- ✓ Analyse the interrelation of emotion (*bhāva*) and aesthetic experience (*rasa*)
- ✓ Appreciate how aesthetic pleasure (*ramaniyat*) emerges in literature and art.
- ✓ Explore critical challenges in interpreting these Sanskrit-originated concepts in contemporary literary studies.
- ✓ Trace the historical development and reception of these ideas in classical and modern literary theory.

7.1 Introduction

Indian aesthetic theory, especially as articulated in *Nāṭyaśāstra* and later in *Dhvanyāloka*, offers a profound philosophical and emotional understanding of literature and art. At the heart of this tradition lies the concept of *rasa*—the essence or flavor of an aesthetic experience. This *rasa* is derived from *bhāva* (emotion), is experienced as *rasanubhāva* (the aesthetic realization of *rasa*), and culminates in *ramaniyat*—an intense, yet detached aesthetic pleasure or beauty. While Western theories often centre on form, structure, or mimesis, Indian aesthetics foregrounds the spectator's experience—what is felt, not merely what is seen or understood. This lecture delves into these interconnected terms—*Rasabhāva*, *Rasanubhāva*, and *Ramaniyat*—to unpack the intricate emotional and experiential journey that art initiates.

7.2 Conceptual Challenges in Understanding *Rasābhāva*, *Rasānubhāva*, and *Ramaniyat*

Despite their cultural richness and philosophical depth, these concepts pose interpretive challenges in contemporary literary and performance analysis, especially when translated into English or analyzed within modern frameworks.

(i) Linguistic and Cultural Translation

Terms like *rasa*, *bhāva*, and *ramaniyat* lack direct English equivalents.

Translating *rasa* as "aesthetic flavour" or *ramaniyat* as "beauty" dilutes their depth and cultural significance.

(ii) Epistemological Differences

Western aesthetics often focus on the object (text/art), while Indian aesthetics focuses on the subject's experience (reader/viewer).

The experiential, almost spiritual dimension of *rasa* resists quantification or analysis in structural terms.

(iii) Reductionism in Modern Readings

Contemporary readers may reduce *rasa* to emotional response, ignoring its meditative and transcendental quality.

Ramaniyat is often mistaken for physical beauty rather than refined aesthetic delight born of disinterested contemplation.

7.3 Solutions to Conceptual Challenges in Understanding *Rasābhāva*, *Rasānubhāva*, and *Ramaniyat*

(i) Contextualization through Comparative Aesthetics

Place Indian concepts alongside Western aesthetic categories such as Kant's idea of the "sublime" or Aristotle's catharsis to allow analogical understanding without forced equivalence.

(ii) Teaching through Performance and Art

Theatre, dance, and visual art can help students experience *rasa* in action rather than just conceptually.

(iii) Use of Original Texts and Commentaries

Engage with ***Nāṭya Śāstra***, ***Abhinavabharati***, ***Dhvanyāloka***, and Anandavardhana's writings to ground the discussion in traditional sources.

7.4 *Rasābhāva*, *Rasānubhāva*, and *Ramaniyat*: An Analytical Framework

7.4.1 *Rasābhāva*: The Origin of *Rasa* in *Bhāva*

The relationship between *rasa* and *bhāva* is akin to that between fruit and its juice. *Bhāvas* (emotions) are the psychological states portrayed in the work of art, which evoke *rasa* (aesthetic relish) in the connoisseur.

Bharata in the *Nāṭya Śāstra* outlines eight basic *rasas* (with a ninth later added)

Shringara (erotic)

Hāsya (comic)

Karuṇa (pathetic)

Raudra (furious)

Vira (heroic)

Bhayānaka (terrifying)

Bibhatsa (odious)

Adbhuta **(**marvelous)

Śānta **(t**ranquil – later addition)

Each *rasa* arises from corresponding *Sthāyi bhāvas* (permanent emotions), *Vyabhicāri bhāvas* (transitory emotions), and *Sāttvika bhāvas* (involuntary physical responses like tears or trembling). For instance, *karuṇa rasa* (pathos) arises when *śoka* (grief) is persistently evoked and supported by appropriate settings and actions.

Rasābhāva is not the raw emotion but a structured and aestheticised version of it, meant to be universally appreciated. Bhamaha's *Kāvyālaṅkāra* (Chapter 3) primarily discusses *guṇas* (poetic qualities) and *alaṅkāras* (figures of speech), but his analysis often reflects the underlying theory of emotional suggestiveness (*bhava*) and aesthetic beauty (*ramaniyat*). While *rasa* is not theorized explicitly (as in Bharata or Abhinavagupta), Bhamaha lays foundational ground for how *bhāva* is crafted through poetic language. In order to understand the concept of *Rasābhāva*, here is an example:

"*yathā rasaḥ saṃbhavanti evaṃ bhāvā api kāvyayoḥ*" (Vāmana 1.1.3)

Translation: "Just as rasas are manifest in poetry, so too are *bhavas* (emotions)."

In the above lines, Bhamaha clearly acknowledges the presence of *bhāva* in poetry. This supports the idea that *Rasābhāva* (emotion as poetic content) is essential in evoking *rasa* in the reader or spectator. Even before Abhinavagupta, this shows awareness of emotional depth in

literary creation.

The relationship between *rasa* and *bhāva* forms the cornerstone of classical Indian aesthetic theory, most prominently articulated in Bharata's *Nāṭya Śāstra.* This interdependence is often metaphorically described as the connection between fruit and its juice—one cannot extract the juice without the fruit, just as *rasa* cannot be experienced without the presence of *bhāva*. To understand this intricate connection, it is essential to first comprehend the meaning and function of *bhāva*, and then observe how it culminates in the experience of *rasa*. *Bhāva* refers to the emotional states, moods, or psychological conditions depicted within a literary or dramatic work. These are the internal experiences of characters, manifested externally through action, speech, and expression. They are not merely emotional outbursts; rather, they are structured, intentional components of aesthetic presentation designed to resonate with the viewer or reader.

Bharata categorizes *bhāva* into three main types

Sthāyibhāva (enduring emotions), *Vyabhicāri bhāva* (transitory emotions), and *Sāttvika bhāva* (involuntary physical expressions). These elements collectively serve to generate *rasa* in the spectator.

Sthāyi bhāvās are stable, lasting emotions such as love, sorrow, anger, and fear. They form the emotional bedrock of a character's experience and, when reinforced by complementary emotions and expressions, they mature into rasa. For instance, the enduring emotion of Shringara (love) emerges from the *Sthāyi bhāva* of *rati* (desire or affection). Similarly, *karuṇa rasa* (pathos) arises from the foundational emotion of *śoka* (grief). The transformation from *bhāva* to *rasa* does not happen in isolation but involves the orchestration of various supportive elements. ***Vyabhicāri bhāvās***, also known as *sancāri bhāvas*, are fleeting or auxiliary emotions that help intensify the primary emotion. These may include feelings such as doubt, fatigue, anxiety, shame, or

enthusiasm. Their role is akin to the seasoning in a dish—they enrich the emotional tone but do not dominate the overall experience. In a theatrical context, they animate the narrative and bring dynamism to the portrayal of *sthāyi bhāva*, thus aiding the transition toward the emergence of r*asa*.

Sāttvika bhāvās are involuntary physical responses such as tears, blushing, trembling, or perspiration. These are indicators of genuine emotional intensity and are believed to originate from the deepest layers of consciousness. Their inclusion signifies authenticity in performance and further bridges the emotional states of the character and the audience.

The synthesis of these three types of *bhāva* within a performance or literary text culminates in the experience of *rasa*. Importantly, *rasa* does not exist within the character or the performance alone; it arises only when the audience, prepared through sensitivity and training (*sahṛdayatva*), internalizes the emotional content and experiences aesthetic pleasure. This experience is not merely emotional but is elevated and refined—it is detached from the self and yet immersive. *Rasa* thus becomes the aesthetic essence, tasted by the *sahṛdaya* (the refined viewer or reader) much like juice is relished after being extracted from fruit.

This idea is further developed by the philosopher Abhinavagupta, who extended Bharata's theory in his commentary, the *Abhinavabharati*. Abhinavagupta asserts that *rasa* is a universalized emotion—while bh*ā*va represents personal, context-bound emotions of characters, *rasa* is their transpersonal, aestheticised version that resonates in the viewer's consciousness. He emphasizes that through *bhāvās*, the artist leads the audience to a transcendental experience where personal pain or joy is transformed into universal aesthetic delight. Thus, *bhāva* is not merely the cause of *rasa* but its very medium of expression.

In this framework, one can also appreciate the analogy between fruit and its juice more deeply.

Fruit has a tangible form and structure, just as *bhava* has definite emotional markers within the narrative. Juice, on the other hand, is the essence that is derived from the fruit, just as *rasa* is the distilled emotional flavor that emerges from the artistic enactment of *bhāvās*. The enjoyment of juice depends on the ripeness and quality of the fruit, just as the quality of *rasa* depends on the depth, balance, and authenticity of the *bhāvās* represented.

The concept of *rasa bhāva* underscores that *rasa* cannot be accessed in isolation from *bhāva*. The evocation of *rasa* in the audience is not a mechanical process but a complex, aesthetic experience cultivated through a deep engagement with the emotional fabric of the text or performance. As the juice is hidden within the fruit until it is squeezed, so too is *rasa* latent within *bhāva* until it is awakened through art and received by a responsive heart.

7.4.2 *Rasānubhāva*: Experiencing the Aesthetic Delight

Rasānubhāva is the aesthetic experience or realization of *rasa* in the heart of the spectator or reader. This experience is universalized: The emotion is not personal but becomes transpersonal through detachment (*Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*). It even involves emotional identification and cognitive distancing as well as transformative. The audience feels the emotion not with pain but with pleasure, as it is framed within art. Abhinavagupta refines Bharata's theory by emphasizing *ānanda* (bliss) as the ultimate *rasa* experience. In *Abhinavabhāratī*, he introduces the idea that the self is momentarily free from personal desires, achieving a state of pure aesthetic contemplation.

The concept of *Rasānubhāva*—the experience of *rasa*—is central to Indian aesthetic philosophy, particularly as developed in the *Nāṭya Śāstra* by Bharata and expanded upon by later thinkers such as Abhinavagupta. While *rasa* denotes the aesthetic essence or flavor derived from a work of art, *rasānubhāva* refers to the internalization and realization of that *rasa* within the consciousness of the viewer, reader, or listener. It is not a passive reception, but an active, immersive, and transformative engagement with the aesthetic object. The moment of *rasānubhāva* is often described as a peak aesthetic experience, where the perceiver transcends personal limitations and touches a deeper, universal emotional reality.

(i) Universalization of *Rasānubhāva*

One of the most defining characteristics of *rasānubhāva* is its universalization through the process called *Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*. This Sanskrit term, which loosely translates as generalization or universalization, refers to the way an individual's particular, context-specific emotions are transformed into universally relatable experiences within the framework of art. When an emotion is depicted in a play, poem, or narrative, it loses its specific connection to a particular character or situation and instead becomes applicable to all, allowing the audience to resonate with it. This transformation allows the audience to connect with emotions like love, grief, valor, or fear without being overwhelmed by personal attachments or memories. The pain of separation (*vipralambha*) depicted in a scene does not evoke the same psychological distress one might feel in real life; instead, it is experienced with a sense of aesthetic delight, even bliss. This detachment is not emotional apathy, but rather a refined, heightened sensitivity that recognizes the artistic nature of the experience. It is this process that makes *rasānubhāva* possible—emotions are not merely watched but felt, shared, and enjoyed in their aestheticised, universal form.

(ii) Cognitive and Emotional Duality

The experience of *rasānubhāva* is marked by a fascinating duality—it is both emotional and cognitive. The viewer is emotionally immersed in the portrayal, yet remains aware of the fictional or artistic context. This is what differentiates *rasānubhāva* from real-life emotion. A person watching a tragic scene in a drama may feel sorrow, but they are also subtly aware that what they are witnessing is a crafted performance. This awareness allows the emotion to be experienced fully, without the psychological distress that usually accompanies such feelings in real life. In other words, *rasānubhāva* involves a balance of identification and detachment. The viewer empathizes with the character's emotional state—crying, rejoicing, trembling—but also maintains an aesthetic distance that prevents the emotion from becoming overwhelming. This tension between participation and detachment is what gives aesthetic experience its unique flavor—it is at once personal and impersonal, deeply felt yet safely contained within the realm of art.

(iii) A Transformative Encounter

Another key feature of *raānubhāva* is its transformative nature. The emotions experienced in everyday life are often mired in ego, attachment, and desire. However, in the realm of aesthetics, these same emotions are purified and elevated. A tragedy on stage or in poetry does not depress

the viewer; instead, it uplifts them. It offers a rare opportunity to encounter human emotion in its most distilled and refined form. This transformation occurs because the experience is framed within an artistic context, wherein emotions are contemplated, not acted upon. This transformation from ordinary emotion to aesthetic emotion lies at the heart of Indian poetics. The viewer undergoes a shift in perception—from the mundane to the sublime, from individual sorrow to collective empathy. This shift is not merely intellectual; it is deeply felt and often described as *Ānanda*, or bliss.

7.4.3 Abhinavagupta's Contribution: Aesthetic Bliss (*Ānanda*)

The 10th-century philosopher Abhinavagupta offers a profound elaboration of *rasānubhāva* in his seminal commentary *Abhinavabhāratī*. While Bharata introduced the foundational idea of *rasa*, it was Abhinavagupta who deepened it by linking *rasa* to *ānanda*, the experience of transcendental bliss. According to Abhinavagupta, when the spectator engages with a work of art, they momentarily transcend their ego-bound self. The viewer's personal desires, worries, and distractions are suspended, and the consciousness is absorbed in pure contemplation. This suspension of ego and the immersion in a universalized emotional state allows for the emergence of bliss. Abhinavagupta maintains that *rasānubhāva* is akin to a spiritual experience—it is not merely about appreciating beauty, but about encountering a deeper reality beyond the self. In that moment of aesthetic absorption, the boundaries between subject and object dissolve. What remains is a luminous awareness, suffused with emotional intensity and serenity. This state, Abhinavagupta argues, is not far removed from the experience of the self in spiritual liberation, making *rasānubhāva* not just a literary or artistic concept, but a deeply philosophical one.

In essence, *rasānubhāva* is the culmination of artistic communication—the point where the emotion embedded in the artwork resonates within the viewer in a purified, universalized, and blissful form. Through *Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, the emotions depicted become detached from individual context and acquire a collective, aesthetic form. This dual movement of emotional immersion and cognitive detachment leads to a profound transformation, allowing art to be both touching and elevating. Abhinavagupta's integration of *ānanda* into this framework further highlights how *rasānubhāva* is not just an emotional reaction, but a window into the deepest layers of human consciousness and spiritual realization. For instance, watching a tragic play, the

viewer may feel grief, but his grief is suffused with pleasure. It is not personal sorrow but an aesthetic one. In order to understand the concept of Rasanubhava, here is an example:

"Kāvyasya phalabhūtā tu rasādi-sukhadā yā kā" (Vāmana 1.1.3)

Translation: "The purpose of poetry is to produce rasa and other delights that give pleasure."

The above lines point to the pleasure born from refined poetic creation. Bhamaha recognizes that the culmination of a successful poem lies in the aesthetic pleasure it delivers, aligning directly with the final outcome of *rasānubhāva* leading to *ramaniyat*.

7.4.4 *Ramaniyat*: The Culmination of Aesthetic Beauty

Ramaniyat denotes the beauty and charm inherent in an aesthetic object or experience. However, it is more than surface-level beauty:

> It is the result of harmonious composition, meaningful expression, and emotive evocation. It is not physical or sensual beauty alone but the beauty that touches the mind and soul. It emerges when *rasa* is perfectly evoked, allowing the viewer to experience the sublime.

Ramaniyat therefore becomes the final fruit of the artistic process—it is the ineffable charm that lingers after the *rasānubhāva* has subsided. In the realm of Indian aesthetics, *ramaniyat* represents the ultimate culmination of the aesthetic process. Though often translated as "charm," "grace," or "beauty," *ramaniyat* signifies far more than mere physical attractiveness or decorative appeal. It refers to a quality of aesthetic beauty that arises not from surface features alone but from a profound and harmonious integration of artistic elements—composition, emotion, expression, and suggestion. It is this elevated notion of beauty that gives enduring power to art, making the experience memorable, transformative, and deeply resonant.

At its core, *ramaniyat* is the outcome of an art form that succeeds in blending form and meaning, emotion and intellect, technique and spontaneity. A painting that simply mimics external beauty may impress the senses but lacks *ramaniyat* unless it evokes a deeper emotional or contemplative response. A poem may be rhythmically perfect and rich in imagery, yet it only attains *ramaniyat* when the arrangement of its words harmonizes with the sentiment it seeks to convey, when its emotional undertones stir something within the reader's soul.

Thus, *ramaniyat* is not rooted in the sensory alone. While it may begin with a sensory stimulus—visual, auditory, or linguistic—it ultimately transcends the senses. It is beauty refined through artistic skill and elevated by its ability to evoke *rasa*. The presence of *ramaniyat* in an

artwork testifies to the artist's capacity to balance technique and intuition, form and feeling. It does not shout but whispers; it does not overwhelm but invites contemplation. Its charm is subtle, quiet, and yet unforgettable.

(i) Harmony, Meaning, and Emotional Resonance

One of the essential features of *ramaniyat* is that it arises from the harmonious integration of various artistic components. In literature, this may mean the fitting use of *alankāras* (figures of speech), rhythmic patterns, character development, and narrative pacing. In music, it might be the perfect alignment of melody and rhythm with the mood of the piece. In dance or drama, it could be the seamless coordination of gesture, expression, and movement to embody a particular emotional state. This harmonious composition leads to beauty that is not accidental but deliberate, shaped by an aesthetic intelligence.

However, *ramaniyat* is not merely the product of formal excellence. It must also carry meaning—not necessarily didactic or moral, but something that resonates with the human condition, that speaks to the viewer's inner life. A painting of a desolate landscape may possess *ramaniyat* not because it depicts natural beauty, but because it subtly evokes emotions of solitude, loss, or transcendence. It is this emotive evocation—this capacity to speak to the heart—that elevates an artwork from mere ornamentation to true aesthetic experience.

(ii) Beyond Physical Beauty: Aesthetic Depth

Ramaniyat is distinct from sensual or physical beauty. While a flower, a face, or a sunset may all be beautiful in a natural, instinctive sense, ramaniyat refers to beauty that is crafted, contextual, and felt in a deeply intellectual and emotional way. It is the beauty that lingers in the mind long after the senses have ceased to engage with the object. In this sense, *ramaniyat* is closely linked with the inner faculties—*mānas* (mind), *citta* (consciousness), and *ātman* (self). It is the beauty that penetrates beyond perception into introspection, inviting reflection and subtle joy. This makes *ramaniyat a* subjective yet sharable experience. While each viewer or reader may interpret and respond to a work of art differently, *ramaniyat* allows for a kind of silent agreement among *sahṛdayas*—those with refined aesthetic sensibilities—that a certain composition or performance contains within it an ineffable grace, a charm that cannot be reduced to technical explanation.

(iii) The Emergence of the Sublime through Rasa

Ramaniyat reaches its zenith when *rasa* is perfectly evoked and fully experienced. In fact, one might say that *ramaniyat* is the final impression left behind after the aesthetic experience has unfolded. Once the viewer or reader has undergone *rasānubhāva*—the emotional and cognitive realization of *rasa*—*ramaniyat* is what remains in the aftermath. It is the aesthetic afterglow, the sublime residue that continues to stir the soul, often in silence. This aligns with classical Indian notions of the sublime—a state not of intellectual awe alone but of emotional and spiritual elevation. The sublime in Indian aesthetics is not aggressive or dramatic; it is serene, suggestive, and elevating. When an artwork achieves *ramaniyat*, it allows the audience to touch this sublime realm. It opens the doors of aesthetic contemplation where the self is momentarily stilled, absorbed in beauty beyond time, ego, or purpose.

(iv) **The Final Fruit of Artistic Creation**

In this context, *ramaniyat* can be understood as the culmination of the entire aesthetic process. From the generation of *bhāva* (emotion), through the experience of rasa, to the moment of aesthetic bliss (*ānanda*), it is *ramaniyat* that encapsulates the success of the artist's vision. It is not an isolated aesthetic category, but a holistic expression of beauty achieved through emotional depth, intellectual clarity, and artistic unity.

It is, in essence, the final fruit of artistic endeavor—the quiet, radiant beauty that lingers after the intensity of *rasānubhāva* has passed. It is not just what the eyes see or the ears hear, but what the soul remembers. In this sense, *ramaniyat* is both an aesthetic ideal and an experiential reality, the graceful echo of art's highest possibilities. In order to understand the concept of *Ramniyat*, here is an example:

"*saṃsargād vākyasāmarthyāt padārthasya ca darśanāt*
bhāvasaṃsparśajaḥ kāvye bhāvaḥ svapratyayīkṛtaḥ" (Vāmana 3.1, Vṛtti)

Translation:

"Through contextual connection, sentence power, and associative meaning, the emotional essence (bhāva) is made perceptible and convincing in poetry."

The above lines resonate with Abhinavagupta's Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa—how language, when employed aesthetically, leads to emotional identification and rasānubhāva. Bhamaha hints at how poetic craft turns emotion into something universally perceivable.

7.5 Examples to Understand the Concepts of *Rasa*

Example 1:

"rītir ātman kāvyasya" (Vāmana 1.2.1)

Translation:

"Style is the very soul of poetry."

The above lines convey the idea that style (rīti) defines the essence of poetry relates to *ramaniyat*. A refined style facilitates the emergence of *rasa* and the pleasure derived (*rasānubhāva*). *Vamana* implies that poetic beauty—*ramaniyat*—depends on a harmonious and expressive form.

Example 2:

"*mādhurya ojaḥ prasāda iti guṇās trayaḥ*" (Vāmana 3.1)

Translation:

"Sweetness (*mādhurya*), vigor (*ojaḥ*), and clarity (*prasāda*) are the three primary poetic qualities."

These *guṇās* are essential to achieve *ramaniyat*. These also convey poetic qualities that enable emotional resonance. *Madhurya* evokes gentle emotions like love or compassion (Shṛingara, karuṇa), ojaḥ evokes heroism or fury (vira, raudra), and prasāda ensures the clarity needed for aesthetic experience. Thus, these qualities aid the reader's or viewer's transition from bhāva to rasa and ultimately to aesthetic delight.

Example 3:

"*guṇavān rītiyukto vākyam kāvyaṃ*" (Vāmana 1.1)

Translation:

"A statement endowed with style and poetic quality becomes *kāvya* (poetry)." The above lines convey how emotion works as aesthetic power. For a text to generate *rasānubhāva* and *ramaniyat*, it must combine emotional charge (*bhāva*) with expressive skill (*riti*, *guṇa*). This reinforces that emotional resonance (*rasābhāva*) is aesthetically meaningful only when supported by compositional finesse.

7.6 Historical Development of the Concepts

7.6.1 Classical Period

Nāṭya Śāstra (c. 200 BCE – 200 CE) by Bharata is the foundational text of Indian aesthetics. It formalized the *rasa* theory with eight *rasas*. *Bhāva-rasa* correlation was clearly defined.

Abhinavagupta (c. 950–1016 CE) in his commentary *Abhinavabhāratī* introduced key ideas like *Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* (universalization), *ānanda* (bliss), and the significance of the spectator's inner consciousness in *rasa*-realization.

7.6.2 Medieval to Pre-modern Thinkers

Ānandavardhana in *Dhvanyāloka* connected *rasa* with *dhvani* (suggestion), arguing that poetry works primarily through suggestion, not denotation or connotation.

Kuntaka emphasized *vakrokti* (deviation in expression) as the soul of poetry.

These ideas were synthesized over centuries to provide a nuanced understanding of the aesthetic experience.

7.7 Modern Reception

In the colonial and postcolonial periods, thinkers such as Ananda Coomaraswamy, S. K. De, and T. S. Rukmani revived interest in Indian aesthetics. In contemporary criticism, the *rasa* theory is used to:

→Analyse literature beyond Western paradigms.

→Apply indigenous modes of interpretation in theatre and dance.

→Understand emotion in film and performance studies.

Modern dramatists and novelists, including Girish Karnad and Rabindranath Tagore, have consciously infused their works with *rasa* elements.

7.8 Let Us Sum Up

This unit has explored the intricate tapestry of Indian aesthetic theory through the concepts of *Rasābhāva*, *Rasānubhāva*, and *Ramaniyat*. We have examined:

→How *bhāva* (emotion) is artistically transmuted into *rasa*.

→How the viewer's experience (*rasānubhāva*) leads to *ānanda* (aesthetic bliss).

→How *ramaniyat* manifests as the ultimate beauty and pleasure of art.

The historical trajectory from Nāṭya Śāstra to modern critical engagements with these ideas. The challenges and potential solutions in interpreting these ancient concepts today. Understanding these concepts enables deeper engagement with Indian literature, performance, and theory. It also encourages a culturally rooted lens to appreciate global art forms.

7.9 Questions

Q 1. Define *Rasa* and its relation to *Bhāva*.

Q 2. What is *Rasānubhāva*? How is it different from ordinary emotion?

Q 3. Explain *Ramaniyat* with an example.

Q 4. What is *Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* according to Abhinavagupta?

Q 5. List the nine *rasas* as proposed in Indian aesthetics.

Q 6. Discuss the relationship between *Rasābhāva* and *Rasānubhāva* in the context of Indian poetics.

Q 7. Critically examine the challenges of interpreting *Rasa* theory in modern literary criticism.

Q 8. Trace the historical development of Indian aesthetic theory from *Nāṭyaśāstra* to *Abhinavabhāratī*.

Q 9. How does *Ramaniyat* relate to the idea of beauty in Indian literature?

Q 10. Compare and contrast Western aesthetic theories with Indian theories of *rasa* and *ramaniyat*.

7.10 Suggested Readings

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उ० प्र० राजर्षि टण्डन
मुक्त विश्वविद्यालय, प्रयागराज

MEAN -110 (N)
Indian Poetics and Aesthetics

CONTENTS

Introduction to Block III

Block III includes three units on Indian Aesthetics.

This block explores foundational concepts of Indian aesthetics, focusing on classical theories like Rasa, Bhava, and Rasanubhava. It highlights Bharata's *Natyashastra* and critical interpretations by scholars like S.N. Dasgupta. The unit emphasizes the aesthetic experience and emotional engagement central to Indian artistic and literary traditions.

Unit 8 focuses on Rasa Siddhanta, primarily derived from Chapters 6 and 7 of Bharata's *Natyashastra*. It introduces the concept of Rasa (aesthetic relish) as central to drama and poetry, and explores how Bhavas (emotions) transform into Rasa through performance. S.N. Dasgupta's essay "The Theory of Rasa" further clarifies its psychological and philosophical dimensions, emphasizing aesthetic realization.

Unit 9 shifts to the Dhvani Siddhanta, as developed by Anandavardhana in *Dhvanyaloka* and interpreted by Abhinavagupta in his *Locana*. This theory introduces the idea of Dhvani (suggestion) as the soul of poetry, where meaning transcends the literal and emerges through implication. This unit emphasizes how subtle emotional and aesthetic meanings are evoked in literature.

Unit 10 examines Guna (poetic qualities) and Dosa (flaws) in poetry, as presented in Bhamaha's *Kavyalankara* and Vamana's *Kavyalankarsutra*. These works provide systematic frameworks for evaluating poetic excellence and defects, highlighting style, structure, and ornamentation in classical Sanskrit poetics.

UNIT 8 THE RASA SIDDHANTA

Structure

8.0 Objectives

In the previous three units, we studied basics of Indian poetics and aesthetics and came to know about the literary critical heritage of India. In the present Unit, we propose to look at the doctrine of *Rasa*. For the students of English studies, the study of Indian poetics and aesthetics will be definitely an adding and new experience of indigenous form of knowledge to their treasure of knowledge. In this Unit, we shall be trying to deal with the following key concerns:

- ✓ What is *Rasa*?
- ✓ What is *Rasa* Theory?
- ✓ How does the *Rasa* Theory work?
- ✓ What is the scope of *Rasa* Theory?
- ✓ Is *Rasa* Theory relevant today?

8.1 Introduction

The *Rasa*-doctrine is the most significant contribution of Indian aestheticians. It enjoys global recognition. All forms of fine art can be evaluated through the criterion of *Rasa*. The *Rasa* Theory opens up various ways to how emotions are evoked, transmitted and generated in a text as well as in a sensitive reader.

Having studied this Unit, we hope that learners will be able to understand the theory of *Rasa*, its required conditions, its applicability and its relevance. Along with it is also expected from them that they will prepare their own answers of the questions asked in section 4.8 in the light of given hints and suggestions. And it is also hoped that they will make sure the study of a few more books suggested in the section 4.9.

8.2 Origin and Meanings of *Rasa*

Prof. S. N. Dasgupta (1885-1952) in his essay titled “The Theory of Rasa” provides a commentary on the *Rasa* theory. He defines *Rasa* and focusses on the psychological process and physical symptoms involved in the evocation of *Rasa*. He comments on the place of *Rasa* theory in Indian poetics. He talks about the historical roots of the theory. Different types of *rasas* are also discussed by him in the essay.

The earliest use of the word *Rasa* is found in *Rigveda* where it was used to denote the juice of *Soma* plant, water, cow's milk and sweet flavor. The *Atharvaveda* used it in regard to the sap of grain and taste. In *Shaiva Darshana*, *Rasa* is used to mean mercury (*Parada*) in regard to the semen of Lord Shiva. The Indian medical science that is, Ayurveda recognizes six *Rasas* or components necessary for treatment. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* equates *Rasa* with the Ultimate Reality. On the achievement of that one enters into the spiritual world. It stresses the attainment of ultimate essence.

After the *Vedic* era, the era of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* begins. Valmiki is considered to be the heralder of poetic tradition in India. Some scholars find the earliest seed of the *Rasa*-doctrine in *Krauncha-episode* of *Balkanda*, the second chapter of the *Ramayana*. Anandavardhana hails Valmiki as a poet and critic with respect to *Krauncha* verse.

Bharatamuni who is believed to have propounded the theory of *Rasa* also claims that he has taken the idea of sentiment from the *Atharvaveda* in the seventeenth verse of the first chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It shows that the Vedic tradition had already established the concept of *Rasa*. Bharatamuni has used the term *Rasa* in two contexts- culinary and aesthetic. In the culinary context, Bharata meant it for flavor. When one mixes the food made of rice, wheat, etc. with some condiments of different tastes, a peculiar taste like *Shadava* (a combination of six flavors) is produced. *Rasa* in the aesthetic context is very much interesting. In this context, it is believed to be the transcendental experience. Bharata has used it to mean the aesthetic relish or pleasure. In regard to the readers, *Rasa* is aesthetic experience and aesthetic meaning with respect to the text. Bharata in the sixth chapter "*Rasdhyāya*" of *Nāṭyaśāstra* states that *na hi rasad rite kascid arthah pravartate*. Simply it means that no work of art will be appealing in the absence of *Rasa.*

In fact, *Rasa* is the be-all and the end-all of *nāṭya* which includes *kāvya*. Aesthetic delight is the bottom-line purpose of any work of art. Without *rasa*, no outcome will be met.

8.3 The Nature of *Rasa*

What is the nature of *Rasa*? To answer this question, we see two categories of aestheticians. The first category of aestheticians takes *Rasa* as a *laukikavastu* that is, it is composed of pain and pleasure and is identical with pain and pleasures of senses. In this category, Ramachandra and Gunachandra, authors of Kāvyaprakāshakhandana are recognized by Sanskrit acharyas. Abhinavagupta, Mammata, Vishwanatha, and Pandita Jagannatha belong to the second category of aestheticians who take *Rasa* as something past the physical limit of time and space. For them, *Rasa* is *alaukikavastu*. Abhinavagupta argues that the *laukika-rasa-pratiti* is narrow whereas *alaukikatva* is comprehensive. He in his two commentaries *Abhinavabhārati* and *Lochana* based on *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Dhvanyaloka* respectively argues that all things of the world are either *Kārya-rupa* or *Jnapya-rupa*. *Rasa* is neither of them. If *Rasa* is *Kārya-rupa*, then it should stay even after their *vibhāvādi*. If it is taken for Jn*ā*pya-*rupa*, then it should remain before and after the realization. *Rasa* is absolutely different from all kinds of *laukikavastu*. *Rasa*-realisation is akin to some blissful state of mind. It happens in quite generalized form. It is the matter of taste and feeling. It cannot be exactly expressed in words. It is something unique and transcendental.

8.4 *Rasa-sutra* and Its Constituents

Professor S. N. Dasgupta begins his essay with Bharata's *Rasa-sutra*. Bharatamuni propounded the theory of *Rasa* in his book the *Nāṭyaśāstra* which is often hailed as the fifth *Veda*. All the theorists of *Alaṅkāra* school accept Bharata as the earliest exponent on *rasa* doctrine. Bharata puts forward his *Rasa*-formula right after declaring the significance of *Rasa* in the 6th chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra*: *tatra vibhavanubhava-vabhicari-samyogad rasa-nispattih* (VI: 31). That is, out of the conjunction of *vibhāvas* (determinants or causes), *anubhāvas* (ensuants or consequents) and *vyabhicāribhāvas* (transitory or ancillary feelings,), a particular *Rasa* is generated or evoked in a competent or sensitive reader.

The first critical term needing explanation is *Vibhāva*. It is a mood-building device. It is chiefly of two types- *Ālambana* (attractant) and *Uddipana* (excitant). The former may be a person, scene, object or thought that activates hero or heroine's particular emotion; but the latter refers to some suitable atmospheric setting that helps considerably in determining tone. Thus, for any emotive discourse or situation, there must be an object that works up an emotion in a person and that person must express it (emotion) in outward behaviour (*Anubhāva*). And the ancillary feelings (*Vyabhicāribhāva*s) are only associates that merely help in nourishing an emotion. *Vyabhichāribhāvas* are also known as *sanchāribhāvas* (fleeting or transitory *bhāvas*) because these emotions change from person to person in association with the permanent emotion (*sthāyibhāvas*).

Bharatamuni in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* has discussed total forty-nine *bhāvas* Bharata has identified thirty-three *vyabhicāribhāvas*. These are indifference (*nirveda*), debility (*glaani*), apprehension (*shankaa*), envy (*asuya*), intoxication of pride (*mada*), weariness (*shrama*), indolence (*aalasya*), depression (*dainya*), painful reflection (*chintā*), delusion of mind (*moha*), recollection (*smriti*), contentment (*dhriti*), shame (*vrida*), unsteadiness (*chapalata*), joy (*harsha*),

agitation or flurry (*aavega*), stupefaction (*jadatā*), arrogance (*garva*), despondency (*vishāda*), impatience (*autsukya*), sleep (*nidra*), dementedness (*apasmāra*), dreaming (*supta*), awakening (*vibodha*), indignation (*amarsha*), dissimulation (*avahittha*), ferocity (*ugrata*), resolve (*mati*), sickness (*vyaadhi*), madness (*unmaada*), demise (*marana*), alarm (*traasa*), and trepidation (*vitarka*).

Bharata has identified eight involuntary bodily responses knows as *Sāttvikbhāvas* which are- paralysis (*stambha*), perspiration (*sveda*), horripilation (romaanchit), change of voice (*svarabhanga*), trembling (*vepathu*), change of colour (*vaivarnya*), weeping (*ashru*), loss of consciousness (*pralaya*).

Bharata has identified eight-fold basic human emotions (*Srngara, Hāsya Karuna, Raudra, Vira, Bhayānaka, Bibhatsa* and *Adbhuta*) which represent most basic and instinctual human emotions. Their respective *Sthāyibhāvas* are love (*rati*), laughter (*hāsya*), sorrow (*Shoka*), anger (*krodha*), enthusiasm (*utsāha*), fear (*bhaya*), disgust (*jugupsha*), astonishment (*vishmaya*).

Srngāra Rasa focuses on erotic impulses between man and woman leading to the alter of physical union. But mere lust cannot generate emotions of *Srngāra* in totality (Abhinavagupta). *Srngāra* is generally divided into *Sambhoga* and *Vipralambha*. The former depicts the warmth of love when lover and beloved are together and the second type depicts the situation of love-in-separation. Here sadness, longing etc., are intermixed with the expectation of future union. *Vipralambha* is closer to *Karuna*. In *Kuruna*, we see the permanent end of love-in-union. Thus, in *Karuna*, there exists no possibility of reunion while in *Vipralambha* this possibility always persists. In case of *Hāsya*, emotion of laughter is communicated and the state of well-being is pre-supposed. *Raudra* depicts emotions of fury resulting in death, damage or destruction. The dynamic energy or *Utsāha* is dominant *Vira*. *Adbhuta* arises out of some extra-ordinary heroic

deed. *Bibhatsa* and *Bhayānaka* are the most neglected *Rasas*. In *Nāṭyaśāstra* (VI.39), it is clearly stated that *Bhayānaka* is the secondary *Rasa* which has its source in *Bibhatsa*. The difference, in *Bhayānaka*, fear is dominant and in *Bibhatsa*, incomprehension, disorder lurk that give rise to the emotions of disgust.

The ninth *rasa* namely, *Śānta*, is certainly a later addition lies in the beginning and in the end too. There has been great controversy over it. A majority of writers have accepted it. *Śā*nta implies the aesthetic experience of spiritual serenity. It is the state of bliss into which all other emotions subside. Abhinavagupta recognized and stabilized *Śānta Rasa* in Sanskrit criticism. According to him, *Śānta* is the chief and all other eight *rasas* are just transformations (*Vikaras*). *Śānta* implies a state of calmness or tranquility where sympathetic mind enjoys final bliss or *Moksha*. Joys and sorrows have no meaning for him. That's why the *Vibhāva* for this *rasa* is the knowledge of truth, detachment or purity of mind etc., *Anubhāva* is self-control, meditation, universal sympathy and the like; while the *Vyabhicāribhāva* is purity, firmness, thrill etc. *Sama* (right knowledge) is *Sthāyibhāva. Sama* is the state where one has complete control over his senses or desires. *Sama* is the primary requirement to have the state of bliss.

8.5 Interpretations of *Rasa-sutra*

Bharatamuni has used two terms in his Rasa-sutra nispatti and sanyoga. These two terms developed confusion in the minds of commentators of subsequent centuries. These terms categorically could not hint about the process of rasa-generation and its location. However, Bharatamuni has used two contexts to drive home his point of view. Bharatamuni writes for explanation: "just as (flavor) comes from a combination of many spices, herbs and other substances, so Rasa… from many Bhavas" (Masson and Patwardhan 20). In later centuries,

nispatti and sanyoga found four explicators, namely Lollata, Sankuka, Bhatta Nayaka, and Abhinavagupta.

8.5.1 Bhatta Lollata

Bhatta Lollata (9th Century) gave naturalistic exposition making no attempt at distinction between art emotion and life emotion. According to him, *Rasa* is produced secondarily in the characters on the stage and it is pleasurable to spectator. He denies *rasa*-realization in the spectator or social beings which is a serious flaw of his approach. According to him, the *sthāyins* (permanent emotions) reside in original character like R*ā*ma (*anukārya)* although an actor by his sustained training in acting can make spectator to attribute it (*sthāyins)* to the actor (*anukarta*). The *sthāyins* are produced in the character on the stage by the operation of *vibhāvadi*. This approach is called in Sanskrit poetics *Utpattivāda.* For Lollata, *nispatti* means production or generation and *sanyoga* meant for *utpadya-utpadaka-bhāva*. Say otherwise, *sanyoga* means the relationship of *vibhāvadi* with *sthāyibhāva*. For him, *vibhāva*, *anubhāva* and *sanchāribhāva* are *utpadya-utpadaka*, *gamya-gamaka* and *poshya-poshaka bhāvas*. Lollata's explanation is very close to Bharata but it seems to be unsatisfactory about the location and state of *Rasa*.

8.5.2 Sankuka

Sankuka (9th Century) was junior to Bhatta Lollata. He does not agree with Lollata on the point that *sthāyins* culminate into *rasas*. Sankuka thinks *Rasa* a product of the cognitive or inferential act, and is made relishable by the charm of art. He believes that the spectator relishes *sthāyins* but only by an act of inference. Such type of relishing I think cannot be whole. For him, *Rasa* is imitated emotion. He distinguishes art emotion from that of real-life. This approach is known as *Anumitivāda*. Sankuka's idea of precise inference does not satisfy scholars of Sanskrit

poetics. His approach does not explain how the act of inference produces aesthetic pleasure. Sankuka took *nispatti* for *anumiti* (inference) and *sanyoga* for *jnāpya-jnapaka-bhāva* that is, *Rasa* is to be inferred and the *vibhāvādi* are only characteristic signs. Abhinavagupta following his master Bhatta Tauta criticizes Sankuka's notion that *Rasa* is the reproduction of permanent emotion. He further says that Bharata nowhere has suggested that *Rasa* is the reproduction of *sthāyins. Rasa* is not something to be perceived directly; it is to be inferred by the spectators or readers and hence this approach is called *Anumitivada*.

8.5.3 Bhatta Nayaka

Bhatta Nayaka (9^{th}-10^{th} century) has related *Rasa* to mystic-like ecstasy. His theory of *rasa-nispatti* known as *Bhuktivāda* simply propagates that *Rasa* is to be enjoyed aesthetically. It is neither perceived, nor produced at will, nor manifested. Abhinavagupta approves of the point that *Rasa* is not to be created at will. He does not approve of *dhvani* theory, and the three powers of language- *vacya* (literal), *laksya* (figural), and *vyangya* (suggestive). In place of them Nayaka forwarded three powers- *abhidha* (literal-cum- figural which is possessed by all linguistic expression), *bhāvakatva,* and *bhojakatva*. *bhāvakatva* or universalizing power makes ordinary speeches poetic. This quality is acquired by the inclusion of *gunas*, *alamkaras* etc. In the *rasa*-realization he identifies two hurdles- the individualistic consciousness, and opposite effects of painful emotions. *Bhāvakatva* removes these two hurdles by its magic wand. The vivid representation aided by verse, music etc. identifies the spectator with the character or event on the stage, and as such loses her/his individuality. This process of trans-personalization is called *Sādharanikarana*. By *bhojakatva*, Bhatta Nayaka means that the poetic meanings are enjoyed by the reader apart from the verbal meanings. In the process all *rajas* and *tamas gunas* get naturally suppressed in the heart of the *samājik*. Consequently, *sattva gunās* arise in excess and the

samājik enjoys *rasa*s in totality. This approach is named *Bhuktivāda*. It accepts the existence of spectator.

8.5.4 Abhinavagupta

Abhinavagupta (10th and 11th Century) understood *Rasa* as the highest subjective-cum-spiritual bliss. His approach in Sanskrit poetics flourished as *Abhivyaktivāda*. Since, *Rasa* is *vyangya* or suggested meaning; and *nispatti*, *abhivyakti* or manifestation. For Abhinavagupta, *Sanyoga* denotes the relation that exists among *vibhāvas*. It is *vyangya-vyanjaka-bhāva*. He explained *Rasa* in terms of *swarupananda* or *brahmeswar* of the *yogins*. Abhinavagupta disapproves of *bhojakatva* but approves of *bhāvakatva.* According to him, soul is immortal; and all souls particularly of sahridayas or cultivated readers have basic implanted impulses or vasanas which in the jargon of poetics are called sthayibhāvas. With the vivid and due representation of *vibhāvadi*, the corresponding impulses are evoked and rises to the pitch where it is realized in the form of an overwhelming thrill or joy. Thus, *Rasa* is revelation or manifestation of the inherent basic implanted impulses freed from all limitations of time and space by magic of poetic art that is *pratibhā* that elevates the representation. The effective scenic-representations, and the creator who elevates ordinary utterances by employing *guna, alaṅkāra, vritti, rīti* etc. As a result, the *sāmājik* feels stripped off personal peculiarities. The emotions thus get generalized, for example mutual love becomes love-in-general between man and woman. Generalization is impossible if individuality is let in.

8.6 Scope and Relevance of the *Rasa* Theory

A literary theory is valid provided it is applied otherwise it will bear little practical relevance and soon will stagnate and die ultimately. A literary theory essentially deals in

literature. Any relevant theory is noted for its general applicability and flexibility so that it could cover a wide area of knowledge and discipline. The *Rasa* Theory seems to be fulfilling all these conditions. The *Rasa* theorists consider *Rasa* as the soul of literature. The *Rasa* Theory gives equal importance to both writer and reader. In it, both enjoy indispensable status. The *Rasa* Theory bears tremendous linguistic capacity to suggest a particular emotion. The theory of *Rasa* essentially deals with human emotions, feelings and sentiments which are common to whole mankind. Literature is the most safe and secure origin of human mind for the artistic transfer of emotions, feelings and sentiments. The very concern of the *Rasa* -doctrine that is, emotions and feelings, makes sure its comprehensiveness and universality. Edwin Gerow writes about the *Rasa* Theory:

> There is little that can be said to be necessarily Indian about Rasa; it just happens that this view of art has had a rather fuller development in India than in the West. (Baumer and Brandon 251)

8.7 Let Us Sum Up

Indian aesthetic tradition since its beginning has been very wide, deep, comprehensive, and all-encompassing. No aspect of literature seems left unaddressed in this critical tradition. The *Rasa* Theory is the major break-through of the Indian poetics. It has determined its global presence among academicians. Our attempt in this Unit has been simply to give you an introductory knowledge on the doctrine of Rasa. The rasa-doctrine lays emphasis on the emotionality of the text. In this regard, biographies and sermons may be least significant forms of writings.

8.8 Questions and Their Answers

Q. 1 What is Rasa Theory?

Ans. Read section no. 4.4.

Q. 2 Explain Rasa-sutra of Bharatamuni.

Ans. Please go through section no. 4.4.

Q. 3 What is Vyabhichāribhāva?

Ans. Answer this question in the light of section no. 4.4.

Q. 4 Discuss the nature of Rasa.

Ans. Read section no. 4.3.

Q. 5 Discuss the relevance of Rasa doctrine.

Ans. Read section no. 4.6.

Q. 6 Discuss various meanings of Rasa.

Ans. Read carefully section no. 4.2.

Q. 7 What is Sāttvikabhāva?

Ans. Study section no. 4.4.

8.9 Further Readings

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UNIT 9 THE *DHVANI SIDDHANTA*

Structure

9.0 Objectives

In this Unit, we shall be trying to familiarize students with the theory of *Dhvani*. The edifice of the *Dhvani* theory is built upon the powers of words hence it is semantic. It is quite comprehensive and hair-splitting approach. No aspect of poetry is outside the *Dhvani* approach. In this Unit, we shall be trying to deal with the following key concerns:

- ✓ Meaning of the term *Dhvani*.
- ✓ Types of meaning.
- ✓ What is *Dhvani* Theory?
- ✓ Types of *Kāvya*.

- ✓ Types of *Dhvani*.

9.1 Introduction

The *Dhvani* theory got definite shape and recognition in Anandavardhana's book the *Dhvanyaloka* in 9th century. Anandavardhana was a poet, critic and philosopher of Kashmir. He himself acknowledges that he is not the originator of the *Dhvani-siddhanta*. The idea of *Dhvani* was existed in critical as well as general usage prior to him. Udbhata studied it under figures of speech but assiduously avoided using Dhvani for suggestibility. In literal sense, the term *Dhvani* is meant for sound or tone but in critical contexts it meant for the potential or virtue of suggestiveness. The way Anandavardhana used *Dhvani* was laughed off by other critics.

After Having gone through this Unit thoroughly, we hope that learners will be able to understand the theory of *Dhvani*, its required conditions and its applicability. Along with it is also expected from them that they will prepare their own answers of the questions asked in section 6.6 in the light of given hints and suggestions. And it is also hoped that they will make sure the study of a few more books suggested in the section 6.7.

9.2 Types of Meaning

The *Dhvani* theory is basically semantic and is based on the power of words. Earlier to Anandavardhana there were recognized *Abhidhā* (denotative) and *Lakshanā* (indication) as two powers of words. In a drama, Rasa-realization occurs on the account of the operation of incidents and images (vi Bhāvadi) but in poetry it is to be accomplished depending on verbal expressions only. Anandavardhana to make Rasa-realization a reality in poetry introduced a new function of word that is, Vyanjanā or Dhvani. It is different to Abhidhā and Lakshanā. He gave paramount

importance to Dhvani. On the basis of Dhvani, Anandavardhana classifies three types of poetry- Dhvani-Kāvya, Gunibhutavyangya- Kāvya and Chitra-Kāvya.

In the Dhvani- Kāvya, Vyangyārtha (suggested sense) overpowers *Vāchyārtha* (literal sense) and in *Gunibhutavyangya- Kāvya*, *Vyangyārtha* is subordinated to *Vāchyārtha Dhvani Kāvya* (Suggestive poetry) is the first-rate poetry. The third kind of poetry is Chitra- Kāvya. It lacks in Rasa and Bhāva. It does not have potential to evoke Vyangyārtha. The very arrangement of words gives an impression of a picture. Mammata has called the Chitra- Kāvya, Adhama in his Kāvya -Prakasha. Similarly, he called Dhvani- Kāvya and *Gunibhutavyangya- Kāvya*, *Uttama* and *Madhyama* respectively.

9.3 Defining *Dhvani*

Bharatamuni in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* has very clearly stated that *Rasas* are not something to be communicated by their names. They are always suggested through subjective-cum-objective factors that is, *Vibhāvas*, *Anubhāvas* and Vyabhicharibhāvas. The best and effective transmission of a particular emotion requires suitable images and situations which could strike and serve as equivalence to the concerned emotion. This shows that poeticians before Anandavardhana were well acquainted with the virtue of suggestion. While formulating the *Dhvani* theory, Anandavardhana may have taken inspiration from Bharatamuni. P. V. Kane looks at the *Dhvani* theory just as an extension of the *Rasa* theory. As Bharatamuni introduced the doctrine of *Rasa* into the field of drama, Anandavardhana introduced the idea of *Rasa* into the field of poetry in the name of the *Dhvani* theory. The *Rasa* criterion plays crucial role in the evolution of the *Dhvani* theory. According to Abhinavagupta, *Rasa* and *Dhvani* collectively constitute the soul of poetry.

Anandavardhana took the title and its meaning from the *Sphota* theory developed by Grammarians- Patanjali and Bhatrihari. Bhartrihari in his book *Vākyapadiya* has elaborately discussed the *Sphota* theory. In the *Sphota* theory, the term *Dhvani* is used to refer to *varnās* (letters) as suggestive of it. In the *Dhvani* theory, the term *Dhvani* is used to refer to words and meanings which are suggestive of another unique meanings.

The *Dhvanyāloka* or the "Light of poetic essence" is considered to be the magnum opus of Anandavardhana. It is also known by two other titles- *Sahridayāloka* and *Kāvyāloka*. The whole text is divided into four *Udyotas*. In the first *Udyota*, Anandavardhana explains the concept of *Dhvani* and its majesty and in remaining *Udyotās*, there are hair-splitting analyses of more than ten thousand kinds of *Dhvani*. Anandavardhana by all his might and main put forth the criterion of Dhvani with an intention to set up as a school in the Indian critical aesthetic tradition. It is consisted of *kārikas* (aphorisms in verse) and each *kārika* is followed by *vritti* (analysis in prose) with appropriate examples.

Anandavardhana in the thirtieth *Kārika* of the first *Udyota* of the *Dhvanāyloka* defines *Dhvani* as a special kind of poetry in which the traditional meaning is deserted or subordinated to the suggested meaning. Abhinavagupta in his commentary on Anandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* titled as *Locana* explains how variously the word *Dhvani*, Anandavardhana has used in different contexts:

1. *Dhvanatiti dhvanih* that is, that which suggests. In this sense both word and meaning can be taken for *Dhvani*.
2. *Dhvanyate iti dhvanih* that is, that which is suggested. This includes only meaning.
3. *Dhvananam dhvanih* that is, the process of suggestion.

These three seems to be as the functions of the *Dhvani* theory. Abhinavagupta lastly mentions that Anandavardhana has used in the sense of the whole poetic composition- *Dhvani-samudayah dhvanih kavyam*.

Where *Dhvani* works there *vāchya* (word) and *vāchyārtha* (literal meaning) lose their independent entity and suggest another special meaning which endows extraordinary charm to the work. If say precisely, *Dhvani* is "illumination in a flash" (*Aestheticians* 36). It is "illuminatingly revealed in a flash whether in a syllable or a word or a pronoun or a phrase or a sentence or a whole poem itself" (*Aestheticians* 37).

Thus, the *Dhvani* theory seems to be "an all-embracing principle that explains the structure and function of the other major elements of literature- the aesthetic effect (rasa), the figural mode and devices (alamkara), the stylistic values (riti) and excellences and defects (guna-dosa)" (Kapoor 20). All elements of poetry such as rasa, riti, guna, etc. "come within the purview of "Dhvani", for the best forms of these, without exception, are obtained in their suggested manifestations, and not in their straight and normally accepted expressions. Not only these, but other items of poetry also- case-endings, tense, voice, number, prefix, suffix, comma, full-stop and even exclamations- are covered in "*Dhvani*" because even these can be suggestive of something unsaid and unstated" (Srivastava 108-9).

9.4 Types of *Dhvani*

The *Dhvani* theory exclusively moves around the concerns of meaning. Meaning by the power of suggestion, Anandavardhana used as the yardstick to evaluate poetry. Words are not as much important as their suggestions though suggestions are dependent on words. *Dhvani* is basically indivisible. Anandavardhana in his *Dhvanyāloka* has accepted fifty-one primary

divisions of *Dhvanis*. This number was acceptable to Mammata and Visvanatha. Acharya Visvanatha while accepting the number of primary divisions picked up mix type of varieties also which amounted to 5304. In this way, we get total 5355 types of *Dhvanis*. Acharya Mammata likewise identifies 10404 mixed varieties of *Dhvanis*. Thus, the number of *Dhvanis* reaches up to 10455. Any discussion on more than ten thousand types of *Dhvanis* seems to be very much unmanageable to any scholar. The division and sub-division show how much Anandavardhana was committed and at the same time it raises the level of complication and difficulty multiple times.

For all intents and purposes, we here would like to discuss types of *Dhvani* in broader sense. Anandavardhana at first classifies *Dhvani* into two broad categories:

1. *Vivakshitānyaparā-vāchya dhvani*.
2. *Avivakshita-vāchya dhvani*.

The *Vivakshitānyaparā-vāchya dhvani* is *abhidhā-mula* whereas the *Avivakshita-vāchya dhvani* is *lakshanā-mula*. In the first category, *vāchyartha* (primary or literal sense) is desired in its original form whereas in the second category, the *vāchyartha* is not wished in its original form.

Avivakshita-vāchya dhvani which is based on literal sense is again divided into two types:

1. *Arthāntara-Sankramita*.
2. *Atyanta-Tiraskrita*.

In the former, the *vāchyartha* is transferred because it undergoes partial transformation and, in the latter, it is totally ignored or disregarded due to the complete transformation of it. In both cases, the *dhvanyārtha* is achieved out of the force of *lakshanā*.

Vivakshitānyapara-vāchya dhvani which is *abhidhā-mula* is divided into two kinds:

1. *Sanlakshakrama-Vyangya*.
2. *Asanlakshakrama-Vyangya*.

In the first category, *vāchyartha* is perceptible to the reader when it turns into *vyangyartha* and hence this process is called *Sanlakshakrama*. Here, the reader can draw a line in-between. Anandavardhana called it *Anurananopama-vyangya* (sound produced after a sound). For instance; the echoes generally produce *vyangyārtha*.

In the second category, the transition of *vāchyartha* into *vyangyārtha* occurs without being noticed or perceived by the reader. This order is called *Asanlakshakrama*.

Sanlakshakrama-Vyangya contains two important varieties of *dhvani*:

1. *Vastu-Dhvani* (suggestion of fact or idea).
2. *Alaṅkāra -Dhvani* (suggestion of a poetic figure).

9.4.1 *Vastu-Dhvani*

When an idea or fact is suggested and seems to be more powerful and charming than the *vāchyartha* (literal meaning), there is *Vastu-Dhvani*. *Vastu-Dhvani* is of two types, first *Kavipraudhokti-matra-siddha dhvani* (fanciful or fantastic suggestion) and *Svatah-sambhavi* (possibility-based fact-suggestion). The *Kavipraudhokti-matra-siddha dhvani* suggestion arises out of inventive and ornate expressions of the poet. It is poet's own invention. And the second, *Svatah-sāmbhavi* arises out of existing material possibilities. When a piece of poem bears inherent possibilities for being interpreted and analyzed variously in terms of ideas or facts, there is *Svatah-sā*m*bhavi dhvani*.

9.4.2 *Alaṅkāra -Dhvani*

Where an *Alaṅkāra* is suggested through another *Alaṅkāra* or where an *Alaṅkāra* is suggested through *Vyangyārtha* and dominates the scene, there is the suggestion of *Alaṅkāra* -

Dhvani. If the suggested sense refers to some figure of speech, it is *Alaṅkāra -Dhvani*. Words, contexts or both in literal sense hint upon some figure of speech, it is known as *Alaṅkāra*. When these factors lead to a new figure of speech through the power of suggestion, there happens *Alaṅkāra -Dhvani*. Hereafter, let us move on to *Asanlakshyakrama-Vyangya*.

9.4.3 *Rasa-Dhvani*

Asanlakshyakrama-Vyangya (where transition remains unperceived) is commonly known as hyphenated *Rasa-dhvani* or unhyphenated *Rasadhvani*. It falls under the class of *Vivakshitanyapara-vachya dhvani*. In it, some emotional content, *rasa* or *bhāva* is suggested that causes the arising of a unique charm. Anandavardhana included all constituents and kinds of *Rasas* and *Bhāvas as* in *Rasadhvani*. *Rasa*, *Rasābhāsas*, *bhāva*, *bhāvabhāsas*, *bhāvaśānti*, *bhāvodaya*, *bhāvaprashama* and *bhāvasabalata* are sub-types *Rasa-dhvani*. *Rasa-dhvani* is possible only if there is superior *vyangyārtha*. Anandavardhana clarifies, if the "*rasa*" is subordinate, there will be "*Rasavadalaṅkāra*"; if the "*bhāva*" is subordinate, there will be "Preysalank*ā*ra"; if '*rasābhāsa*' and '*bhāvabhāsa*' have the subordinate positions, there will be "*Urjasvi alānkara*" and in case "*Bhāvaśānti*" is having a subordinate position, there will be "*Samahita Alānkara*" (Srivastava 124). *Rasa-dhvani* covers the whole range of emotional complex.

The suggested meaning (*vyangyārtha*) is the very core and basis of the *Dhvani* doctrine. The best kind of poetry always lets the suggested meaning take over the expressed meaning. In later centuries, Mammata, Visvanatha and Jagannatha gave due momentum to the Dhvani doctrine.

9.5 Let Us Sum Up

As *Rasa* is affective, *Dhvani* is semantic. Critics who were against Anandavardhana's idea of *Vyanjanā* could not dismiss it except replacing it by import or intention (*Tātparya*) and inference (*Anumāna*). The core of *Dhvani* theory that is *Pratiyamān* or suggestibility remained intact largely. The *Dhvani* theory offers critical tools to reveal the hidden beauties of poetry so that connoisseurs could savor poetic flavors. The *Dhvani* theory "is not simply a theory of suggestion; it is a comprehensive theory of literature endowed with universal significance" (Kushwaha and Misra 62).

9.6 Questions and Their Answers

Q. 1 Define *Dhvani*.

Ans. See carefully the section no. 6.3.

Q. 2 Discuss types of poetry according to Anandavardhana.

Ans. Read section no. 6.2.

Q. 3 Write an essay on the types of *Dhvani*.

Ans. See section no. 6.4.

Q. 4 Discuss *Rasa-Dhvani* as the soul of poetry.

Ans. Read carefully section 6.4.

Q. 5 What is *Vastu-Dhvani*?

Ans. See section no. 6.4.

Q. 6 Discuss two broad categories of *Dhvani*.

Ans. Read section no. 6.4.

9.7 Further Readings

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Unit 10 - *GUNA* AND *DOṢA*

Structure

10.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, learners will be able to:

- ✓ Comprehend the classical Indian concepts of *Guṇa* (merit) and *Doṣa* (flaw) in poetic composition.
- ✓ Examine how these concepts evolved and were codified by major Sanskrit theorists like Bhamaha and Vāmana.
- ✓ Identify the three fundamental poetic *guṇas*: *Mādhurya*, *Ojaḥ*, and *Prasāda*.
- ✓ Recognize and critically evaluate major *doṣas* as categorized by classical poets.
- ✓ Analyze the interrelationship of *Guṇas* and *Doṣas* with poetic excellence.
- ✓ Apply these classical criteria to assess literary merit in Sanskrit and vernacular literatures.

10.1 Introduction

The appreciation of poetry in classical Sanskrit poetics rests not merely on subjective taste but on a meticulously articulated system of aesthetics. Among the earliest and most enduring categories for judging the merit of a poetic work are *Guṇas* (qualities) and *Doṣas* (flaws). These notions are foundational to the entire edifice of Sanskrit literary theory. Derived from early *Vedic* references and matured through treatises like Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the doctrines of *Guṇa* and *Doṣa* became more rigorously defined by later theorists such as Bhamaha, Daṇḍin, and Vāmana.

In essence, *Guṇas* elevate the aesthetic value of poetry, while Doṣas hinder its expressive efficacy. Just as a gem is judged both by its luster and the absence of blemish, a *kāvya* is appreciated for its positive qualities and its freedom from defects. This unit explores the conceptual depth and application of these critical categories in detail.

10.2 Concept of *Guṇa* in Sanskrit Poetics

10.2.1 Definition and Meaning

In classical aesthetics, *Guṇa* refers to an intrinsic poetic excellence that contributes to the aesthetic charm of a poem. The Sanskrit word *Guṇa* literally means "quality" or "virtue," and in the context of *kāvya*, it denotes those stylistic and linguistic traits that make a poetic utterance delightful, impactful, and resonant.

While *Guṇa* in other classical Indian philosophies often denotes a component of nature (*prakṛti*), in the domain of *K*āvyaśāstra (poetic theory), it refers specifically to the qualitative attributes of poetic expression that enhance both its rasa (aesthetic relish) and *bhāva* (emotional tenor). From the earliest conceptualizations, it was acknowledged that poetic language does not merely communicate but also transforms the reader's experience through style, rhythm, and emotive resonance. *Guṇas* are the textual elements that contribute to this transformation.

These qualities are not ornamental like *alaṅkāras***,** nor are they emotional like *rasas*, but rather stylistic textures that enable the *rasa* to manifest fully. Thus, a poem may fail to touch the reader if the *rasa* is present but the style lacks lucidity, elegance, or vigor. In this sense, *Guṇas* are indispensable to the success of *rasa-anubhāva*—the actual aesthetic experience. It is important to emphasize that the notion of *Guṇa* is *normative***,** not merely descriptive. It tells us what makes poetry *good* or *beautiful*, forming part of the prescriptive aesthetics of classical Sanskrit literature.

10.2.2 Bhamaha's View on *Guṇa*

Bhamaha, in his seminal work *Kāvyālaṅkāra* (Chapter 3), identifies *Guṇas* as qualities that embellish a sentence (*vākya*), but he does not provide an exhaustive list. He considers *Guṇas* to be inherent in *alankāras* (figures of speech), suggesting that the two are interdependent. For Bhamaha, *Guṇas* make a poetic composition luminous and aesthetically engaging. Though Bhamaha refrains from formal enumeration, later interpretations align his view with the understanding that *Mādhurya* (sweetness), *Ojaḥ* (vigor), and *Prasāda* (clarity) are the principal

*Guṇas.*Bhamaha, a pioneering figure in Sanskrit poetics from the early centuries CE, offers foundational reflections on the role of *Guṇas* in poetic craft. His text, *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, does not treat *Guṇas* as a separate or dominant category but integrates them into a broader aesthetics where *alaṅkāras* (figures of speech) take precedence**.**

Bhamaha does not formally enumerate the *Guṇas* in the systematic way that later theorists like Vāmana do. However, he repeatedly emphasizes that *Guṇas* are essential for elevating the poetic sentence. In his view, a composition qualifies as *kāvya* only when it is infused with both *Guṇas* and *alaṅkāras*.

In Chapter 3, verse 1 of *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, Bhamaha affirms:

"guṇālaṅkārasaṃpannaṃ vākyaṃ kāvyam iti sthitiḥ"

Translation- *A sentence adorned with Guṇas and Alaṅkāra*s *is considered kāvya.*

This indicates that while *Guṇas* may not be isolated or categorized, they are fundamental. They form the substratum of poetic excellence**,** much like the musicality beneath a melody. What is significant in Bhamaha's position is his understanding of the interdependence of *Guṇa* and *Alaṅkāra*. One does not exist without the other. A mere string of poetic figures without the grounding elegance of *Guṇas* results in forced artifice. Similarly, plain sentences with good intention but lacking vivid style or emotional luster fall flat. For Bhamaha, *Guṇas* are both facilitators and moderators of **poetic** quality.

10.2.3 Vāmana's Perspective on *Guṇa*

In contrast to Bhamaha, Vāmana—who composed the *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtra* several centuries later—offers **a** systematic and highly influential theory of *Guṇas*, integrating them into his broader concept of *rīti* (style or mode of expression). For Vāmana, *Guṇas* are not peripheral; they are the soul of style, and style is, in turn, the soul of poetry**.**

His famous aphorism, *rītir ātmā kāvyasya* (style is the soul of poetry), lays the foundation for his theory. Vāmana asserts that for a *rīti* to be effective and poetic, it must be infused with *Guṇas*. Without them, style is barren and uninspired.

In ***Kāvyālaṅkārasūtra*, 3.1**, he defines

> *mādhurya ojaḥ prasāda iti guṇās trayaḥ*
>
> *(Sweetness, vigor, and lucidity—these are the three Guṇas.)*

Each of these *Guṇas* is directly linked to specific emotional and aesthetic functions

> *Mādhurya* (Sweetness): Brings softness, grace, and emotional subtlety—ideal for evoking *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa*rasas.
>
> *Ojaḥ* (Vigor): Imbues poetry with strength, density, and grandeur—perfect for vīra and raudra *rasas*.
>
> *Prasāda* (Clarity): Ensures ease of comprehension and elegance—supporting *śānta, nīti*, and reflective themes.

What distinguishes Vāmana is not just his classification but his normative emphasis: a poem lacking *Guṇas* is not merely imperfect—it is not *kāvya* at all. *Guṇas* become not just aesthetic features but ontological preconditions for poetic existence.

Furthermore, Vāmana sees *Guṇas* as objective features of language and style, observable in diction, syntax, and the emotive texture of the poem. Unlike *rasa*, which depends on *sahṛdayatā* (empathetic response), *Guṇas* are more concretely demonstrable and thus provide a critical tool for poetic evaluation**.**

10.3 Types of *Guṇa*: *Mādhurya*, *Ojaḥ*, *Prasāda*

10.3.1 *Mādhurya* (Sweetness)

Mādhurya is characterized by smooth, melodious, and fluid expression. It arises from the use of soft consonants, graceful compounds, and aesthetically appealing imagery. *Mādhurya* is often associated with emotions like *śṛṅgāra* (romantic love) and *karuṇa* (compassion).

Textual Reference: Meghadūta by Kālidāsa, *Pūrvamegha* Section

Among the finest examples of poetic sweetness is Kālidāsa's Meghadūta, where the exiled *Yakṣa* addresses a passing cloud to carry his message of longing. The verses flow with a delicate cadence, abundant in soft syllables and gentle imagery. Consider the passage where the cloud is likened to a slow-moving elephant ascending the Himalayas, its dark form blending with the mountain mist. This imaginative comparison, combined with fluid compounds and tender emotion, creates a melodic rhythm that typifies *Mādhurya*. The natural ease of diction and the mood of refined sorrow further accentuate this quality.

Why it reflects *Mādhurya*:

→Use of soft consonants and liquid sounds

→Graceful metaphors with romantic and melancholic undertones

→Absence of harsh or jarring elements in phonetics or sentiment

→Emotional resonance aligned with *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa* rasas.

10.3.2 *Ojaḥ* (Vigor)

Ojaḥ denotes energy, strength, and grandeur in expression. It is achieved through the use of powerful verbs, strong alliteration, and short, emphatic compounds. It suits heroic (*vīra*) or wrathful (*raudra*) rasas.

Textual Reference: Kirātārjunīya by Bhāravi, Canto II

Bhāravi's epic stands as a monument to poetic force. His verses carry a certain weight, marked by complex compounds and assertive tone. In a particular scene from the early cantos, warriors are described preparing for battle. The diction is tight, the rhythm sharp, and the choice of words forceful. This intensity—both in meaning and construction—manifests *Ojaḥ*. The syntax avoids softness or subtlety, instead using terse phrasing and dense alliteration to project grandeur and heroic fervor.

Why it reflects *Ojaḥ*

→ Compact and muscular expression, avoiding ornamentation for its own sake.

→ Strong consonantal combinations and deliberate heaviness of sound.

→ Thematic alignment with *vīra* (heroic) or *raudra* (furious) rasas.

→ Greater emphasis on action, strength, and intellectual complexity.

10.3.3 *Prasāda* (Clarity)

Prasāda refers to lucidity and transparency of expression. A verse imbued with *Prasāda* is immediately comprehensible, elegant, and unobstructed by complex constructions.

Textual Reference: Śatakatraya by Bhartṛhari, especially Nītiśataka

Bhartṛhari's aphoristic poetry, especially in his reflections on ethics and worldly wisdom, exemplifies *Prasāda*. The construction of his verses is simple yet elegant; the messages are accessible, yet profound. In one notable verse, he reflects on the futility of knowledge if it remains unappreciated or unused—a sentiment conveyed without ornamentation, but with enormous philosophical weight. The lines do not depend on figures of speech or elaborate imagery; their power lies in their transparency.

Why it reflects *Prasāda*:

→Uncomplicated syntax and vocabulary.

→Thematic clarity and directness of moral or reflective thought.

→Absence of ambiguity or forced poetic devices.

→Immediate comprehension without sacrificing poetic dignity.

10.4 Illustrations of *Guṇas* in *Kāvya*

Let us consider this verse from Kalidasa:

"Mandākinīṃ darśayati sma śailaḥ
snigdhachāyātarusaṃhatīnām"

Translation: The mountain revealed the *Mandākinī* with groves of lush, shady trees.

Here, the imagery, the soft cadence, and the gentle consonants exhibit ***Mādhurya***.

In contrast, the following showcases ***Ojaḥ***:

"Jayati samaraśīrṣaścchinnagātrairarātīn
pratidiśamabhitaptān vyāpibhirvāhinībhiḥ"

Translation: Victory to the hero who crushes enemies and scorches the quarters with his forces.

10.5 Concept of *Doṣa* in Sanskit Poetics

10.5.1 Definition and Meaning

The term ***Doṣa*** (Sanskrit *dus*) literally denotes a *fault*, *flaw*, or *defect*. In the domain of Sanskrit literary theory**,** it refers specifically to those features in a poetic composition that impede or diminish aesthetic pleasure**,** obstruct the realization of *rasa* (emotive essence), or disrupt the stylistic harmony essential to *kāvya* (poetic art). The recognition and classification of *Doṣas* form an integral part of the evaluative criteria employed by ancient critics and rhetoricians to judge the merit or demerit of literary works.

Unlike *Guṇas*, which enhance poetic quality, *Doṣas* represent negative linguistic or conceptual features—elements that deviate from the ideal and thereby render a poetic utterance aesthetically or structurally inferior. The discipline of *Kāvyaśāstra* (science of poetics) considers the identification of *Doṣas* not merely a pedantic exercise but a critical component of poetic training**,** guiding poets and critics in the art of refinement, revision, and excellence.

Several theorists—including Bhamaha, Dandin, Vāmana, and later Mammaṭa and Viśvanātha—contributed to the understanding of *Doṣas*, each offering nuanced definitions, classifications, and illustrations. While some considered *Doṣas* as faults at the *word level* (*śabda-doṣa*) and others at the *meaning level* (*artha-doṣa*), later poets emphasized their contextual nature**,** observing that what may be a flaw in one setting could be an ornament in another if handled artistically.

The study of *Doṣa* is thus not only about prohibitions or fixed rules, but also about cultivating sensitivity to poetic appropriateness (*aucitya*), elegance (*saukumārya*), and subtlety (*sūkṣmatā*).

10.5.2 Historical development of the concept of *Dosa*

The evolution of *Doṣa* theory mirrors the broader development of Sanskrit poetics from formalist to *rasa*-centric paradigms. In early treatises like Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the concern was primarily with performance, dramatic coherence, and the generation of *rasa*. Faults were largely defined in terms of stageability and psychological improbability. For instance, actions that disrupted the natural flow of emotions or were considered inconsistent with character were termed *doṣas* in dramaturgy.

The first systematic treatment of poetic *Doṣas*, however, is found in Bhamaha's *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, where the emphasis is on linguistic precision, syntactic harmony, and semantic clarity. Bhamaha's approach reflects a grammatical-aesthetic lens, concerned with how language functions within poetic form. He identifies various types of *Doṣas* and insists that even a single fault can negate poetic merit—*ekadoṣo'pi hanti kāvyam* (Even a single flaw can ruin a poem).

Dandin, in his *Kāvyādarśa*, follows a similar path but with a more stylistic orientation. While agreeing with Bhamaha in principle, Dandin is more permissive and highlights that some flaws may be excused if they contribute to higher poetic objectives, such as emotional power or dramatic realism. The most balanced and synthesized view comes from Mammaṭa, whose *Kāvyaprakāśa* attempts to reconcile earlier positions. He affirms that *rasa* is the ultimate criterion and that a *Doṣa* is that which detracts from *rasa-anubhāva*, or the aesthetic experience of the reader. This definition allows for a more nuanced, context-sensitive understanding of poetic flaws.

Thus, the historical trajectory moves from a rigid fault-based approach to a more organic, aesthetic model where context, intention, and emotive impact become essential in determining whether something is a *Doṣa.*At its core, a *Doṣa* in poetry implies a departure from poetic fitness—an element that fails to cohere with the thematic, stylistic, or emotional structure of the

work. Understanding *Doṣas* requires not only linguistic acuity but also aesthetic maturity—a capacity to feel when something is amiss even if technically correct.

Key Characteristics of *Doṣas*:

(i) They Obstruct *Rasa*

The most critical marker of a *Doṣa* is that it impairs or nullifies the evocation of *rasa*. Even if a line is grammatically correct, it may be faulty if it does not stir the intended emotion or violates the reader's aesthetic expectations.

(ii) They Violate *Aucitya* (Propriety)

Sanskrit poetics repeatedly emphasizes *aucitya*, or the appropriateness of style, imagery, diction, and emotion to the context. Any deviation from this sense of fitness becomes a *Doṣa*, even if technically artful.

(iii) They Can Be Lexical or Structural

Doṣas may arise at the level of word-choice (*śabda*)**,** sentence construction (*vākya)***,* or** conceptual meaning (*artha*)**.** Some arise from redundancy, others from vagueness or syntactic disarray.

(iv) They Are Often Subtle

Many *Doṣas* are not immediately obvious and may exist in works that are otherwise poetic. It is only under the refined gaze of a *sahṛdaya* (sensitive reader) or an *alamkārika* (poetician) that they are discerned.

(v) They Are Not Always Absolute

As later theorists point out, a poetic fault is not always universal. A *doṣa* in one genre or context may be acceptable in another, especially in *nāṭya* (drama)**,** where psychological realism sometimes overrides poetic polish.

Educational Value of *Doṣa* Analysis

→ Encourages critical refinement of poetic language.

→ Cultivates editorial discrimination**.**

→ Fosters a deep awareness of the interrelationship between word, meaning, and emotion.

→ Promotes a tradition of disciplined creativity**,** where poetic freedom is balanced by artistic responsibility.

→Thus, *Doṣa* analysis is not about curbing creativity, but about shaping it towards excellence.

10.5.3 Major Classifications of *Doṣas*

Classical rhetoricians offer various ways to classify *Doṣas*. While there is some variation across texts, most accept a broad tripartite division of *Doṣas* as arising from:

***Śabda* (Phonetic / Verbal Faults)**

***Artha* (Semantic / Meaning Faults)**

***Vākya* (Syntactic / Compositional Faults)**

Each category includes several sub-types. Below is a detailed overview:

(i) *Śabdadoṣa* (Faults in Expression or Sound)

These occur at the level of diction and verbal construction. They include:

Avimṛṣṭa-vidheyāṃśaḥ: Where the verb or predicate does not adequately relate to the subject.

Prāsa-kopaḥ: Where excessive or inappropriate alliteration disrupts meaning.

Pāruṣya: Harsh, unpleasing sounds that jar the ear.

Grāmya: Colloquial, vulgar, or provincial usage inappropriate in literary contexts.

Example (original):

"khāda khāda iti vadati mukhaṃ cūrṇitaṃ tena"

Translation– The repetition of "*khāda*" (eat!) and the coarse imagery violates poetic dignity, exemplifying *Grāmya-doṣa***.**

(ii) *Arthadoṣa* (Faults in Meaning or Concept)

These faults emerge from confusion, inconsistency, or illogical meaning in the poetic statement. Examples include:

Apārthaka: Utterance that carries no sensible meaning.

Viruddhārtha: Contradictory ideas presented without resolution.

Punarukta: Redundant repetition of the same idea.

Atyarthatā: Excessive exaggeration beyond the limits of plausibility.

Asaṃbhāva: Description of events that are impossible in nature or logic.

Example (original):

"padmaṃ na jale, jale na padmaṃ, śuṣkaṃ dāhena śītaḥ"
Translation– The line makes no coherent natural sense. It is *Apārthaka,* a fault of conceptual meaninglessness.

(iii) *Vākyadoṣa* (Faults in Sentence Construction)

Here, the problem lies in how words are syntactically arranged—i.e., sentence structure is awkward, misleading, or grammatically broken.

Viruddha-karaka: Where a grammatical role (like subject or object) is wrongly assigned.

Avācyārtha: When a sentence expresses something absurd or unintelligible.

Sandeha: Ambiguity not artfully employed, leading to confusion.

Example :

"gacchan vṛkṣaḥ meghaṃ patati"

Translation- The participle "gacchan" (going) relates illogically to "vṛkṣaḥ" (tree), while the verb "patati" (falls) mismatches both subject and context. A clear ***Vākyadoṣa***.

10.6 Bhamaha's View on *Doṣa*

Bhamaha is among the earliest to articulate a detailed taxonomy of *Doṣas*. In *Kāvyālaṅkāra* (Chapter 3), he asserts that even a well-decorated poem *(*alaṅkāravān kāvya) cannot be considered excellent if it contains *doṣas*.

He lists several *doṣas*, among which some of the principal ones are:

(i) ***Apārthaka*** – Meaningless expression

(ii) ***Avimṛṣṭa-vidheyāṁśa*** – Lack of semantic clarity

(iii) ***Grāmya*** – Vulgar or low diction

(iv) ***Punarukta*** – Redundancy

(v) ***Atyarthatā*** – Excessiveness or overstatement

Example from *Kāvyālaṅkāra 3.22*:

"Doṣeṇa guṇinaḥ kāvyam apīṣṭaṃ na pramodate"

Translation- "Even a poem rich in merits fails to delight if it is flawed."

10.6.1 Vāmana's Perspective on *Doṣa*

Vāmana in his *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtra*, though more focused on *Guṇas* and *Rīti*, does not dismiss *Doṣas*. He agrees with earlier theorists that *Doṣas* vitiate poetic excellence but does not devote extensive *sutras* to them. Instead, his focus lies in establishing *Guṇas* and *Rīti* as essential to poetry.

10.6.2 Major Types of *Doṣa*

Here is a brief elaboration on some key *Doṣas:*

a) *Apārthaka* (Meaninglessness): A line or phrase that fails to make sense logically or grammatically.

"*Padmam na jale na ca jale padmam, Taruno nirjala sita-vahnina dahyate*."

Translation:

"The lotus is not in water, nor is water in the lotus;
The tender sapling, without water, burns in a cold fire."

Explanation:

The verse combines impossible states (cold fire, a waterless lotus) without metaphorical clarity or poetic purpose. The ideas contradict natural laws without enhancing *rasa*. Hence, it exemplifies ***Apārthaka Doṣa***—a flaw of *meaninglessness*.

b) *Punarukta* (Redundancy):

Unnecessary repetition of the same idea, leading to monotony.

"*Sitalam himam, ,sitalam jalam , sitalah pavanah api*."

Translation:

"Cold is the snow, cold is the water, and cold is the wind as well."

Explanation

Each noun restates the same quality (*śītalaṃ*), offering no aesthetic or semantic progression. The

poetic energy becomes dull and predictable, marking it as ***Punarukta Doṣa***, or redundant repetition.

c) *Grāmya* (Vulgarity):

Use of coarse expressions or colloquial diction that detracts from poetic elegance.

"*Mukhenā khādāmi, khāda khāda iti vadāmi*."

Translation

"I devour with my mouth, and say 'Eat, eat!' as I do so."

Explanation

The coarse diction (*khada khada*) and direct bodily imagery are unsuitable for refined *Kāvy*a. Such expressions breach poetic decorum and introduce a ***Grāmya Doṣa***, which refers to rustic or vulgar style.

d) *Atyarthatā* (Exaggeration):

Hyperbole that goes beyond aesthetic tolerance

"*Taya vilokitah raja muhurtena caksuso vimuktah,*
sa bhumau patitah murcchitah netrabhyam api sunyah."

Translation

"Glanced at by her, the king at once lost vision,
Collapsed to the earth, and swooned senseless."

Explanation:

A mere glance leading to fainting and blindness oversteps the poetic license for exaggeration. It becomes hyperbolic to the point of absurdity, illustrating ***Atyarthatā Doṣa-*** **t**he flaw of excess.

e) *Vākya-doṣa* (Syntactical error):

Improper sentence construction leading to confusion or awkwardness.

"*Gacchan vrksah megham patati*."

Translation

"The tree going, the cloud falls."

Explanation

The participle gacchan incorrectly modifies *vraksh* (tree),
and the sentence lacks syntactic coherence. This confusing and structurally faulty expression demonstrates, *Vākyadoṣa*, a major flaw in poetic construction.

10.7 Comparative Analysis: Bhamaha vs. Vāmana

In classical Sanskrit poetics, ***Guṇa*** (virtue) and ***Doṣa*** (flaw) represent the two opposing poles of poetic quality. Their interrelationship is not merely one of binary opposition but of mutual definition and aesthetic interdependence. To fully appreciate poetic excellence, one must understand not only what constitutes beauty and merit, but also what detracts from it. *Guṇa* and *Doṣa*, therefore, serve as critical coordinates in the evaluative framework of *Kāvyaśāstra*.

At the most basic level, *Guṇas* are those features that enhance the expressive, emotive, and stylistic value of poetry. They contribute to the smooth realization of *rasa* and reflect the poet's mastery over language and emotional nuance. *Doṣas*, conversely, are elements that obstruct, distort, or dilute that aesthetic experience. However, their relationship is not that of simple negation. A poem does not become virtuous merely by lacking faults; *Guṇa* is not the mere absence of *Doṣa***.** Rather, *Guṇas* must actively elevate the poetic experience. Similarly, the presence of a *Doṣa* does not always destroy poetic worth if counterbalanced by powerful *Guṇas* or justified by *aucitya* (contextual propriety).

Bhamaha and Vāmana differ not just in their emphasis but also in their poetic philosophy. Bhamaha gives prominence to *Alaṅkāra*, with *Guṇas* and *Doṣas* playing a supporting role. Vāmana, on the other hand, elevates *Rīti* (style) to the level of the soul (*ātman*) of poetry and considers *Guṇas* as indispensable to *Rīti*.

Bhamaha systematically catalogues *Doṣas* and sees them as critical to avoid. Vāmana prefers a positive approach — focusing on *Guṇa* cultivation rather than *Doṣa* elimination.

Vāmana's key aphorism

"Rītir ātmā kāvyasya" (*Kāvyālaṅkārasūtra 1.2.1*)

Translation- "Style is the soul of poetry."

Furthermore, *Guṇas* can suppress or neutralize *Doṣas* if the overall poetic effect is compelling. A harsh word may be tolerated within a vivid emotional outburst, while a structurally complex compound may be praised for its vigor, even if it strains syntactic clarity. The recognition of such complexities reveals the sophistication of classical Indian aesthetic theory.

In essence, *Guṇa* and *Doṣa* are not separate entities but dialectical partners in the making of poetic art. Together, they guide both the poet and the critic—defining the limits of expression, encouraging innovation within bounds, and shaping the subtle art of discerning not just what is said, but how and why it moves the heart.

ASPECT	**BHAMAHA**	**VAMANA**
Emphasis	*Alaṅkāra* centric aesthetics	*Riti* and *Guna* are central
View on *Guna*	Integral but not enumerated	Explicitly defined and categorized
Number of *Guna*	Implied (linked to *Alaṅkāras*)	Three: *Mādhurya, Ojah, Prasāda*
Function of *Guna*	Enhances poetic beauty alongside a*laṅkāra s*	Constitutes the essence of style and poetic soul
Relationship to *Rasa*	Indirect	Direct- *Gunās* facilitate *rasa* realization

10.8 Let Us Sum UP

In the rich tradition of Sanskrit poetics, *Guṇās* and *Doṣās* serve as complementary categories — the former beautifies poetic expression, while the latter warns against aesthetic pitfalls. Classical

theorists like Bhamaha and Vāmana have given us frameworks to analyze and appreciate poetic quality with precision.

Guṇās such as *Mādhurya*, *Ojaḥ*, and *Prasāda* continue to inform literary criticism not only in Sanskrit but across Indian regional literatures. Likewise, awareness of *Doṣas* guards poets against stylistic and thematic lapses. The two together form a holistic criterion for poetic excellence.

10.9 Questions

1. Define *Guṇa* and *Doṣa* in your own words.
2. List and explain the three *Guṇās* as per Vāmana.
3. How does Bhamaha's approach to *Doṣas* differ from that of Vāmana?
4. Provide examples to illustrate *Mādhurya* and *Ojaḥ*.
5. Identify and explain two major *Doṣas* with original examples.
6. What is the difference between *Mādhurya* and *Prasāda as poetic* Gunas?
7. *How does Vamana's notion of rīti relate to the classification of Gunas? Can a rīti exist independently of Gunās?*

10.10 Glossary

Guṇa: Aesthetic quality or poetic excellence

Doṣa: Poetic flaw or defect

Mādhurya*:* Sweetness or smoothness in poetic style

Ojaḥ: Energy or vigor

Prasāda: Lucidity or clarity

Rīti: Style or mode of expression in poetry

Punarukta: Redundancy

Apārthaka: Meaninglessness

10.10 Suggested Readings

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MEAN -110 (N)
Indian Poetics and Aesthetics

CONTENTS

Introduction to Block IV

Block IV contains four units.

This block focusses on Riti, Alamkara, Vakrokti, and Auchitya Siddhantas. Units of the Block examine the stylistic, figurative, and appropriateness-based aspects of poetry, featuring key theorists like Vamana, Bhamaha, Kuntaka, and Ksemendra, with critical insights from scholars like S.K. De and V. Raghavan.

Unit 11 focuses on the Riti Siddhanta, where Vamana, through his *Kavyalankarsutra*, defines Riti (style) as the soul (Atma) of poetry. S.K. De's essay elaborates on how Vamana associates literary excellence with the graceful arrangement of words and stylistic beauty.

Unit 12 examines the Alamkar Siddhanta, emphasizing alamkaras or poetic figures such as simile, metaphor, and pun. Bhamaha and Udbhata's works, alongside V. Raghavan's essay "Use and Abuse of Alamkara," reflect on the ornamental aspect of poetry and the balance required to avoid excessive embellishment.

Unit 13 discusses the Vakrokti Siddhanta, as proposed by Kuntaka. Vakrokti means oblique or striking expression, and S.K. De's analysis highlights how this theory attributes poetic charm to creative deviation in language and thought, giving each literary piece a unique flavor.

Finally,

Unit 14 introduces the Auchitya Siddhanta, which upholds auchitya (propriety or appropriateness) as the guiding principle of literary composition. Through Ksemendra's verses and V. Raghavan's essay, this unit underscores how harmony in character, theme, expression, etc., ensures poetic excellence.

UNIT 11: THE *RĪTI SIDDHANTA*

Structure

11.0 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the central concept of *Rīti* as the soul (*ātman*) of poetry.
- Explore the classification of *Rīti* and its regional variations- *Vaidarbhī*, *Gauḍī*, and *Pāñcālī Rītis*, and understand their linguistic and aesthetic features.
- Analyze the role of *Guṇas* (poetic qualities) in the formation of *Rīti* and Study how features like *mādhurya* (sweetness), *prasāda* (clarity), and *ojaḥ* (vigor) contribute to different stylistic effects.
- Compare his focus on *Rīti* with other major theories such as *Rasa* (Bharata), *Alankāra* (Bhamaha/Dandin), and *Dhvani* (Anandavardhana).
- Appreciate the historical and philosophical significance of Vāmana's theory**.**
- Develop critical thinking about the aesthetics of poetic language. Reflect on how Vāmana's theory can be applied to analyze classical or modern poetry through the lens of diction and stylistic arrangement.
- Build a foundational understanding of Sanskrit poetics for further study

11.1 Introduction

Hello dear learners, in this unit we step into an interesting world of Indian aesthetics—a tradition that does not just ask *what* is beautiful, but *why* it moves us, and *how* language creates emotion, expression, and meaning. Now, you have been following the journey of Sanskrit poetics, you know you have read some powerful concepts already**:** *Rasa***,** the flavour of emotion; the *Dhvani Sidhdhanta*, in the previous units. But in this unit, we meet a thinker who shook things up. Do you know his name? Yes, exactly his name is Vāmana—a literary pioneer from the 8th century. Vāmana gave us a radical idea*:* Poetry is not just about emotion or decoration. It is about structure. About style. About how words are arranged to create beauty. He boldly declared: "*Rītir ātma kāvyasya*" —what does it mean? It means that Style is the soul of poetry. So *Rīti* means style. Now what is *Rīti***?** According to Vāmana, it's not enough for a poem to just *feel* beautiful or be adorned with fancy figures of speech. According to him it must be crafted- its words and meanings must be arranged with skill and subtlety. That arrangement is what makes it poetry is *Rīti***.** So, in simple terms, *Rīti* refers to the 'style' or the specific arrangement of words in poetry that creates beauty, clarity, and emotional impact.

In this unit, we are going to explore this idea of Vāmana. We will discuss "Vamana's Theory of *Riti*" by S. K. De as discussed in the book *Indian Aesthetics: An Introduction,* where he lays out a full framework of poetic style. In this essay, De has talked about three main types of *Rīti* given by Vamana:

1. *Vaidarbhī* (graceful and sweet),
2. *Gauḍī* (bold and complex), and
3. *Pāñcālī* (balanced and mixed).

But it's not just about types of style—it is about what style does to meaning. We will see how Vāmana connects *Rīti* with *Guṇas*—the poetic qualities that lift language from the ordinary to the extraordinary.

Further, we will bring Vāmana into conversation with other major theories—from Bharata's *Rasa*, to Dandin's *Alankāra*, to Anandavardhana's *Dhvani*—and ask: Is style more important than emotion? Can good style exist without *rasa*? And what does all this mean for how we read poetry today—ancient or modern? So, dear learners get ready- this is not just a study of an old theory. It is a journey into the soul of poetry.

11.2 Introduction to Vāmana's Theory of *Rīti* in Indian Aesthetics

Dear learners now buckle up and start understanding What is the theory of Rīti? Let us start. When you read a text, you focus on the content. The content made from two things- first, what has been written and second, how it has been written. So Rīti is the language of literature which focus on how the text has been written, which style has been used. *Rīti*—meaning "style" or "mode of expression" with the help of diction. It is important to note that diction of a poem changes with the subject matter, characterization and descriptions in the poem. In the essay *"*Vāmana's Theory of *Rīti",* published in the book *Indian Aesthetics: An Introduction,* S. K. De discusses Vāmana's concept of *Rīti* in detail. De highlights that Vāmana was the first Sanskrit literary theorist to systematically discuss *Rīti* (style) as the essential principle of poetic beauty. This was a significant shift from earlier critics who focused more on *alamkāra* (figures of speech) or *rasa* (emotion).

Now the question arises, who was Vāmana? So, dear learners, Vāmana was an 8th-century literary scholar who stands out as a pioneering theorist and offered one of the earliest

systematic discussions on *Rīti* in his treatise *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtra*. In this work, he famously declared: *"Rītirātmā kāvyasya"*— "Style is the soul of poetry". Vāmana proposed that *Rīti* (style or diction) is not merely an ornament but the very soul (*ātman*) of poetry. According to him, it is the unique arrangement of words, their harmonious selection, and the refined use of language that give poetry its distinct charm and beauty. He sees *Rīti* not as a mere embellishment in poetry, but as its very soul — its essential core. Just as the soul brings the body to life, *Rīti* fills poetry with charm, flow, lucidity, and elegance. In this book, he emphasized that poetic excellence lies not only in *alamkāras* (figures of speech) or emotions (*rasas*), but primarily in the stylistic manner of expression. For Vāmana, it is through *Rīti* that the emotional depth, aesthetic pleasure, and artistic merit of a poem are fully realized. By elevating style to such a central position, he laid the foundation for a theory of poetry that privileges linguistic elegance, grace, and structural harmony.

However, you should know that *Rīti* or style is already discussed in Nātyashāstra by Bharat Muni. In this book, Bharat Muni said that Rīti can be linked to the theory of *dosa-guna* when different kinds of *vācikabhinay* are discussed. The impact of a composition depends on how various *gunās* are combined. Each aesthetic emotion necessitates a distinct mode of expression—some demand a soft and soothing style, while others require a more forceful or intense approach. Although Vāmana formulated this concept in the context of poetry, its applicability extends naturally to other art forms. For instance, the performance of the *nava-rasas* in classical dance requires different stylistic treatments for each individual *rasa*. (*urbanpro*). Let us come back to Vamana's *rīti*. This book has been divided into five chapters where he strongly supported doctrine of *rīti*. These chapters are called as *Adhikarnas*-

1. *Śārīra*
2. *Doṣadarśana*,
3. *Guṇavivecaṇa*,
4. *Ālaṃkārika* and
5. *Prāyogika*.

These chapters are further divided into twelve (12) smaller sections called *adhyāyas*. Interestingly, earlier *sūtra* writers treated *adhyāyas* as the main divisions of their texts and placed *adhikaraṇas* under them. But Vāmana does the opposite- he gives more importance to *adhikaraṇas* and places *adhyāyas* under them. (WISDOM LIBRARY)

The first chapter of the *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtra-vritti*, called *'Śārīra'*, explains Vāmana's basic ideas about the main concepts of Poetics. This chapter is very important in Sanskrit Poetics because it is where the well-known *Rīti* theory is fully developed and clearly explained.

11.3 Vamana's Concept of *Rīti* Theory

In Vāmana's view, *Rīti* is the arrangement of words with qualities (*guṇas*) like: *Mādhurya* (sweetness), *Ojas* (strength or vigor), and *Prasāda* (clarity and simplicity). These *guṇās* are what give poetry beauty, elegance, and impact. *Rīti* is not just about external decoration—it's the very life of the poem**,** shaping how its message and emotions are received. According to him, poetry is beautiful and effective not because of the theme alone, or emotions or figures of speech, but because of how it is expressed — the style**.** In simple words, you can say that how something is said in poetry (the style or *Rīti*) is more important than what is said. Style gives poetry its beauty, power, and soul. Do you know Vāmana has classified *Rīti* into three parts: *Vaidarbhī Rīti, Mādhurya Rīti* and *Prasāda Rīti*. In the next section, we will discuss about these three types of *Rītis*.

11.4 Classification of *Rīti*

In the second *Adhāyaya* of Vāmana's *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtra-vritti* there are 22 *sūtras*. In these *sūtras* the concept of *Rīti* and types of *Rīti*, the superiority of *Vaidarbhī Rīti* is discussed. Let us begin with the first and the most highly praised one—*Vaidarbhī Rīti***.** This Rīti originates from the *Vidarbha* region and is considered the most refined and superior style by Vāmana.

11.4.1 *Vaidarbhī Rīti* (Graceful and Sweet)

Vaidarbhī Rīti is *Mādhurya* and *Prasāda* dominated. Now what is *Mādhurya* and *Prasāda*? Dear learners, *Mādhurya* is the "sweetness" and *Prasāda* means "clarity and lucidity". Following are the key features of *Vaidarbhī Rīti*:

- It uses simple and melodious language
- Sentences are free from harshness, long compounds, and unnecessary complexity.
- Employs elegant metaphors and similes.

- Ideal for emotional and aesthetic experiences (especially *Śṛṅgāra rasa* or love poetry).

What is the effect of this *Rīti*? The answer is- it pleases the ear and the heart. The style is smooth and beautiful, almost musical. For example: poetic descriptions of nature, love, or devotion with soft, harmonious expressions. You will often see this style used in love poetry or devotional poetry where emotions need to be expressed with elegance and delicacy. Think of it like soft music—pleasant and easy to listen to.

Next, we have ***Gauḍī Rīti,*** which is completely different in character.

11.4.2 *Gauḍī Rīti* (Bold, Complex and Forceful)

This style is associated with the *Gauda* region (modern Bengal). Following are the key features of *Gauḍī Rīti*:

- Rich in compound words (*samāsa*) and figure of speech (*alaṅkāras*).
- Characterized by ornamentation, grandeur, and strength.
- Language is more elaborate, sometimes dense, and heavy.
- Shows intellectual brilliance and verbal power.

Now what is the effect of this *Rīti*? The answer is it evokes a sense of majesty and vigour. Suitable for heroic (*vīra*) or serious themes like war, politics, and valour**.** Imagine a loud, energetic drumbeat compared to the soft flute of *Vaidarbhī*. For example: Descriptions of kings, battles, or the power of truth expressed in robust Sanskrit diction**.**

And then comes the *Pāñcālī Rīti***,** which is a balanced combination of the two**.**

11.4.3 *Pāñcālī Rīti* (Balanced and Mixed)

Pāñcālī Rīti originating from the *Pāñcāla* region, this style strikes a balance between the elegance of *Vaidarbhī* and the boldness of *Gauḍī*. The following are the key features of *Pāñcālī Rīti*:

- Language is neither too simple nor overly complex.
- It uses moderate amount of ornamentation, keeping the *rasa* (aesthetic flavour) intact.
- Style is versatile and adaptable to different themes.

What is the effect of this *Rīti*? The answer is *Pāñcālī Rīti* has balanced appeal. It is neither too heavy nor too light, which makes it suitable for a wide range of topics and emotions. So, *Pāñcālī* is like a well-balanced meal—not too spicy, not too bland.

For example: Narratives involving both action and emotion, like epic stories or moral fables.

To sum up, *Vaidarbhī* is sweet and simple, *Gauḍī* is strong and ornate, and *Pāñcālī* is balanced and versatile. And according to Vāmana, the best poetry is that which follows the *Vaidarbhī Rīti*, because it creates the most pleasing aesthetic experience.

Isn't it fascinating how ancient scholars thought so deeply about the structure of language and beauty in poetry? Really it is very interesting and amazing. Let us move to the ***Guṇas.***

11.5 The Role of *Guṇas* (Qualities)

Dear learners let us continue our exciting journey into Indian aesthetics with something very central to Vāmana's theory— the role of *Guṇas*, or poetic qualities, in the formation of *Rīti*. Now first, let me ask you: What makes a poem beautiful? Is it just the emotion or the theme? Or is it also about how that emotion is expressed?

According to Vāmana, it is the *style*—the *Rīti*—that gives a poem its soul. And what forms this style? The answer is: *Guṇas***,** the poetic qualities. So, let us look at the three most important *guṇas* that Vāmana talks about:

11.5.1 *Mādhurya* (Sweetness)

Imagine reading a poem where the words flow like soft music, where each line feels gentle and melodic. That is *Mādhurya*. It gives poetry smoothness, elegance, and emotional charm. You will find this quality in poems about love, devotion, or nature—where beauty is expressed tenderly. This is a major feature of *Vaidarbhī Rīti***,** the most refined style according to Vāmana.

11.5.2 *Prasāda* (Clarity)

Now think about a poem that is not only beautiful but also crystal clear. You read it once and the meaning gently enters your mind without confusion. That is *Prasāda*. It ensures the message is delivered clearly—with grace and simplicity. When combined with *Mādhurya*, it makes the poem both touching and understandable. Again, this is seen best in *Vaidarbhī Rīti***.**

11.5.3 *Ojaḥ* (Vigor)

Let us switch the mood. Picture a poem in your mind about war, bravery, or a king's triumph. How would be the language? The language is bold, full of energy and complex expressions. This is where *Ojaḥ* comes in—force, power, and grandeur**.** It makes the poem

impactful, stirring, and commanding. You will see this strongly in *Gauḍī Rīti***,** which uses long compounds and rhetorical embellishments to create strength in language.

So now, can you see how these *guṇās* shape a poem's style? According to Vāmana, these are not just decorative touches—they are the very soul of poetry. Just as a person is defined by the qualities of their character, a poem is defined by the qualities of its expression. *Guṇās* like *Mādhurya***,** *Prasāda*, and *Ojaḥ* are the key ingredients that shape the different *Rītis*. These styles in turn create the emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic experience of poetry. And Vāmana's unique contribution is to show that *how* something is said is just as, if not more, important than *what* is said. Isn't that a beautiful way of thinking about poetry?

11.6 Comparison between Vāmana's focus on *Rīti* with other major theories- *Rasa, Alankāra* and *Dhvani*

In this section, we are going to compare Vāmana's theory of *Rīti* with three other major ideas that you have likely encountered in your earlier units: *Rasa*, *Alaṅkāra***,** and *Dhvani*. Now do you remember what bold claim Vāmana made? Yes! absolutely right. He says: "*Rītir ātmā kāvyasya*" **–** Style is the soul of poetry**.** That means the way a poem is written—the arrangement of words, the tone, the diction—is more important than even *rasa* or *alaṅkāra*. Now, how does Vāmana fit into the broader picture of Indian literary theory? Let us quickly compare:

- Bharata focused on *rasa*—emotion and performance.
- Dandin and Bhamaha focused on *alaṅkāra*—figures of speech and ornamentation.
- But Vāmana? He turned our attention to structure and style**,** to how language is used artfully.

Each of these theories tries to answer the same core question: What makes poetry beautiful and powerful? Let us look at how each theorist answers that question—and how Vāmana offers a different, yet complementary, perspective. Let's begin with the most foundational: Bharata's *Rasa* theory, from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

11.6.1 *Rasa* Theory – Bharata

Bharata says: **"***Rasa* is the essence of poetry and drama". According to him, the ultimate goal of poetry is to evoke emotions**—***Śṛṅgāra* (love), *Vīra* (heroism), *Karuṇa* (compassion), and so on. The poet's job is to prepare the stage so the reader or viewer can fully experience these

emotions. So, *Rasa* is emotional experience—*bhāva se rasa nikalta hai.* But Vāmana is not satisfied with just emotion. He asks: "How are these emotions conveyed effectively? Through style—through the way language is used!" So, while *Rasa* is the soul of emotion, *Rīti* is the soul of expression. One focuses on what is felt, the other on how it is said.

Next, let's move to the *Alaṅkāra* school, led by Bhamaha and Daṇḍin.

11.6.2 *Alaṅkāra* Theory – Bhamaha and Daṇḍin

They say: "*Alaṅkāra*—figures of speech—are the ornaments of poetry." For them, the beauty of poetry lies in its metaphors, similes, alliteration, and rhetorical brilliance. It is like dressing up the language so it dazzles the reader. The more sophisticated the ornaments, the more powerful the poetry. Vāmana, however, says: "Ornaments are good, but they are secondary. The real beauty lies in the structure, in the arrangement of words and qualities—that is, the *Rīti*."

So again, we see a shift from the external decoration of language (*alaṅkāra*) to the internal framework (*rīti*). One dresses up the poetry; the other builds its skeleton. Finally, let's turn to Ānandavardhana, who gave us the brilliant concept of *Dhvani*, or suggestion.

11.6.3 Dhvani Theory – Ānandavardhana

He says: "The real power of poetry lies in what it suggests, not just in what it says" In *Dhvani*, the emphasis is on implied meaning—the hidden layers beneath the surface. So, poetry becomes deep, multi-layered, and rich in resonance. It is not just about beauty or feeling—it is about depth.

How does this relate to Vāmana? Vāmana does not deny suggestion. But again, his question is: "How is suggestion even possible if the style is poor?" He insists that language must be arranged skilfully—that means clarity (*Prasāda*), sweetness (*Mādhurya*), and strength (*Ojas*) must be present. Only then can suggestion (*dhvani*) or emotion (*rasa*) work effectively. So, in this sense, *Rīti* becomes the foundation that supports other elements like *rasa*, *alaṅkāra*, and *dhvani*.

Theory	Key Focus	Proponent	Core Idea
Rasa	Emotion	Bharata	Poetry evokes *rasa* (emotional essence)
Alaṅkāra	Ornamentation	Bhamaha, Daṇḍin	Poetry is beautiful through figures of speech

Theory	Key Focus	Proponent	Core Idea
Dhvani	Suggestion	Ānandavardhana	True meaning lies in what is implied
Rīti	Style / Structure	Vāmana	Style is the soul of poetry—language makes beauty possible

So, dear learners, now you see how Vāmana fits into the grand tradition of Indian poetics—not by opposing these great thinkers, but by complementing them. His contribution reminds us that for a poem to truly succeed, it must be built with care, balance, and elegance in style.And that is what makes him so important. His *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtra* not only presented a new theory but also showed a more systematic way of thinking about literature using *sūtras* and *adhikaraṇās*.

11.7 Application on John Keats' "Ode on A Gracian Urn"

Let us do something very exciting. Let us take a celebrated English poem—John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" which you have read in first semester, i.e. MAEN 106 (N), Block I, Unit 4 —and see how well it fits into our classical Indian literary theories: *Rīti, Rasa, Alaṅkāra*, and *Dhvani*. Let's get started!

11.7.1 *Rīti* – Vāmana's Theory of Style

First, according to Vāmana, poetry is not just about what is said, but *how* it is said. He says: "*Rītir ātmā kāvyasya*" – "Style is the soul of poetry." So, let's examine the style and diction of Keats's poem.

"Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,"

Look at the smoothness of the line—no harsh sounds, no long compound words, no jarring images. The language flows gently—this is *Mādhurya* (sweetness).

"When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe"

Here, we sense a tone of grandeur and reflection—that's *Ojaḥ* (vigor). The message is weighty and timeless.

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on"

This line is clear and graceful—which reflects *Prasāda* (clarity).

Now tell me which *Rīti* do you see? Yes, you are right. Mainly *Vaidarbhī Rīti*. It is rich in sweetness and clarity. But at times, it leans toward *Pāñcālī*, when deeper and heavier reflections arise. This shows how Keats masterfully blends form, diction, and rhythm—just as Vāmana would admire.

11.7.2 *Rasa* – Bharata's Theory of Emotion

Now let's talk about *Rasa*—the flavour or emotional experience evoked by poetry. Bharata identifies nine *rasas*, and multiple are present in Keats's ode.

"Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,

Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!"

This is a beautiful example of *Śṛṅgāra Rasa* (romantic love), but it is tinged with *Vipralambha* (separation). There's longing, tension, and suspended desire—the kind that never resolves.

"When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain…"

This line touches on *Śānta Rasa*—a feeling of philosophical calm, detachment, and eternity.

"Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu"

We find *Hāsya Rasa* slightly, in the joy of permanence. But mostly, *Śṛṅgāra* and *Śānta* dominate the poem.

11.7.3 *Alaṅkāra* – Figures of Speech (Bhamaha and Daṇḍin)

Let's now look at the ornamental beauty—what Bhamaha and Daṇḍin celebrated. Keats is full of *alaṅkāras*. Let's identify a few:

Apostrophe (direct address): *"Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness…"*

The urn is addressed as a person—an eternal being.

Metaphor: *"Foster-child of Silence and slow Time"*

Silence and Time are personified as parents. Beautiful imagery!

Alliteration: *"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter"*

The repetition of "s" creates a soft sound.

Anaphora: *"Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair! / Forever piping songs forever new"*

The repetition of "forever" emphasizes the unchanging nature of art.

These poetic devices elevate the aesthetic charm, aligning beautifully with the *Alaṅkāra* school.

11.7.4 *Dhvani* – Ānandavardhana's Theory of Suggestion

Now we move to the deepest layer—*Dhvani*. Ānandavardhana said: "The power of poetry lies not in what is stated, but in what is suggested." Let's look at the suggestive meaning in Keats' final lines:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty, —that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

This is not just an aesthetic comment—it's a philosophical suggestion. Keats is hinting that in a world of change and decay, the eternal beauty of art offers a kind of truth—an anchor of meaning. The urn is not just a painted pot—it is: A symbol of timeless art, a contrast to human mortality, a metaphor for stillness amidst chaos. These meanings are not stated directly—they emerge through *Dhvani*. So, dear learners, by applying these Indian aesthetic theories, we see that:

- *Rīti* shows us how Keats' style creates beauty,
- *Rasa* helps us feel the emotional landscape,
- *Alaṅkāra* draws our attention to craft and technique, and
- *Dhvani* uncovers the hidden message of the poem—art is eternal, life is fleeting.

This is how we can read Western poetry through an Indian lens—and build a rich, comparative understanding of aesthetics.

11.8 Significance of *Rīti* in Indian Aesthetics

Now that we have explored what *Rīti* means, how Vāmana classifies it, and how it compares with other poetic theories like *Rasa* and *Dhvani*, it's time to ask the big question: Why is Vāmana's theory so significant in the larger world of Indian aesthetics? Let us answer this in final discussion.

Vāmana's *Rīti* theory represents a foundational shift in literary criticism, emphasizing the structural and stylistic elements of poetry over ornamental or emotive aspects. By identifying *Rīti* as the soul of poetry, he lays the groundwork for a more analytical and systematic approach to literary aesthetics. This perspective influenced subsequent scholars and remains a cornerstone in the study of Sanskrit poetics.

11.9 Let Us Sum Up

Vāmana's theory is foundational**.** Why? Because before him, scholars like Bharata or Bhamaha were primarily concerned with emotions (*Rasa*) or ornaments (*Alaṅkāra*). But Vāmana says: "Let's not just look at what emotions are stirred or what figures are used—let us look at the very structure of the poem itself." He shifts the lens to the style, to the arrangement of words**.** In this way, he provides us with a formal lens to appreciate poetry—not just from the heart, but also from the head. So, when we study *Rīti*, we begin to see how Sanskrit poetics is not only about feeling, but also about **form** and expression**.** Once we understand ***Rīti***, we begin to see how style interacts with other elements**:**

- When *Rīti* (style) supports *Rasa* (emotion), the poem becomes more powerful.
- When *Rīti* is enhanced by *Alaṅkāras* (ornaments), the expression becomes more vivid.
- When *Rīti* gives rise to subtle *Dhvani* (suggestion), the poem gains depth and resonance.

Think of it like this:

- *Rīti* is the body of the poem,
- *Rasa* is the heart*,*
- *Alaṅkāra* is the jewelry,
- *Dhvani* is the soul's whisper.

Vāmana helps us begin with the body—the structure of beauty—so we can eventually explore the whole living form of poetry.

What is the historical and intellectual significance? Another important point: Vāmana writes in the *sūtra* style—a format used for deep theoretical work, like grammar or logic. This shows us that Sanskrit literary criticism was moving towards systematic philosophy—it was not just appreciation, it was a science of beauty**.** His classification of *Rīti* into *Vaidarbhī*, *Gauḍī*, and *Pāñcālī***,** and his identification of ***Guṇās*** (like *Mādhurya*, *Ojaḥ*, and *Prasāda*), gave scholars a

vocabulary to analyze poetry. Later theorists—like Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta—could then combine this foundation with *Dhvani* and ***Rasa*** to build deeper systems.

So, dear students, as you continue your journey into Sanskrit poetics, keep Vāmana with you. He teaches us that:

- A poem's beauty begins with its form**.**
- Style is not decoration—it is *meaning* shaped with elegance.
- *Rīti* can be studied on its own**,** or in combination with *Rasa*, *Alaṅkāra*, and *Dhvani*.
- Understanding *Rīti* prepares you to read any poem—ancient or modern—with greater sensitivity.

In conclusion, it can be said that "Just as architecture combines strength, design, and artistry, so does poetry—and Vāmana teaches us how to see the blueprint." Until then, try reading a poem—classical or modern—and just focus on the style. How are the words arranged? What mood does the flow create? That is your *Rīti* lens in action.

11.10 Questions

1. What does Vāmana mean when he says "*Rītirātmā kāvyasya*"? How does this statement reflect his overall theory of poetic style?
2. Explain the significance of the term '*Rīti'* in Sanskrit poetics. How does Vāmana define and distinguish it from other literary elements like *rasa* or *alaṅkāra*?
3. What role do the poetic qualities (***guṇas***)—*Mādhurya*, *Prasāda*, and *Ojas*—play in shaping different types of *Rīti* according to Vāmana?
4. Discuss how Vāmana's approach to style (***Rīti***) differs from Bharata's theory of *rasa* or Dandin's focus on *alaṅkāra*.
5. Compare and contrast the three major *Rītis—Vaidarbhī*, *Gauḍī*, and *Pāñcālī*—in terms of their language, aesthetic appeal, and suitability for different themes.

11.11 Suggested Readings

- *An Introduction to Indian Aesthetics: History, Theory, and Theoreticians*. EBIN. https://ebin.pub/an-introduction-to-indian-aesthetics-history-th-eory-and-th-eoreticians-9789389812145-9789389165128.html?

- Dr. Sreenath VS "Rati or the Theory of Poetic Styles". *An Introduction to Indian Literary Theory*. http://elearn.psgcas.ac.in/nptel/courses/video/109106195/lec44.pdf

- "Kavya and Indian Poetics- Part Ten". *sreenivasarao's blogs*. https://sreenivasaraos.com/tag/riti/
- Urbanpro.https://p.urbanpro.com>documents>null-Riti
- Upadhyay, Prof. (Dr.) Amy. A Handbook of the Indian Poetics and Aesthetics. Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly.
- WISDOMLIBRARY.https://www.wisdomlib.org/hinduism/essay/alamkaras-mentioned-by-vamana/d/doc1143379.html
- De, S. K. – *Indian Aesthetics: An Introduction*
- K. Krishnamoorthy – *Essays in Sanskrit Criticism*

UNIT 12 THE *ALAṄKĀRA SIDDHĀNTA*

Structure

12.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, the students will be able to:

- Understand the origin and development (genesis) of the concept of*Alaṅkāra* in Sanskrit literary theory.
- Identify major schools (*sampradāyas*) of *Alaṅkāra* and their key thinkers.
- Examine the nature, types, and classification of *Alaṅkāras.*
- Assess the role and importance of *Alaṅkāra* in the context of *Kāvya* (poetry/literature).
- Develop a critical perspective on the aesthetic function of figures of speech in enhancing poetic beauty.

12.1 Introduction

Despite the long tradition of Indian poetics, there is a dearth of works that can be described as works of practical criticism. It was only after the initial, well-known expositions of Indian poetics such as those by Krishna Chaitanya, M Hiriyana,

Kupuswamy Sastri, Raghvan and Sankaran that the scholars of English in the eighties, believing in the viability and validity of Indian poetics in the modern context, felt the need for further systematic translations and expositions of the treatises of Indian poetics in English so that a reader of English could understand and apply them to a variety of compositions in English. But these translations and expositions of Indian literary theories, while serving a major purpose of lucid exposition, could not much help the readers as the illustrations came from the original Sanskrit texts rendered into English. Considering the limitation of the work done so far based on the theoretical aspects of Indian poetics, Indian Professors of English have emphasized the need for practical formulations of Indian poetics and produced tracts/articles/books outlining the application models based on different Indian schools.

Today with a large body of literature in English, questions are naturally asked about the critical applicability of Indian theories to modern literature. Not only the opponents but also the advocates of Indian poetics insist, from different points of view, on the need for applying Indian theories to modern or Western compositions. The opponents argue that Indian poetics is a product of a literary culture confined to India and hence it cannot be applied to a Western composition which originates in a different cultural context. The advocates of Indian poetics hold that Indian theories are universal as well as specific, as is the case with Western theories. Despite their differences, they all emphasized the need of sustained criticism of compositions in the light of Indian literary theories.

However, in spite of this new emphasis, most of the studies focus on the theoretical aspects of Indian poetics. There are only a few articles, here and there, devoted to the practical aspect of Indian poetics. Such studies do not help the student use Indian theories in practical criticism because:

i) the focus is on theory without taking proper cognizance of the brilliant interpretations of various kinds of poetic graces scattered in all the major treatises of Indian poetics;
ii) the translations of treatises on Indian poetics have been done giving illustrations from the original Sanskrit texts only;

The students need to acquire the essentials of Indian poetics to use Indian literary theories in the analysis of a wide variety of compositions in English. There is a need, therefore of providing the key concepts of Indian literary theories in an application mode in one place.

12.2 Genesis of *Alaṅkāra*

Etymologically, the word, *'alaṅkāra'* which comes from the *Ṛgaveda*, is formed by the combination of *alam+kṛ.*Its etymology is given in two ways—one is *alaṅkarotītialaṅkāraḥ,*i.e. the one which adorns is *alaṅkāra* and another is--*alaṅkriyateyanenetyalaṅkāra,* i.e. by which any object is embellished, is called *alaṅkāra.* Both definitions are important to know the development of *alaṅkāra.* But both the ways of etymology unfold how *alaṅkāra* which was being accepted earlier, began to be used as means.

The word '*alaṅkāra*' literally means ornament or embellishment. In a restricted sense, the word '*alaṅkāra*' also means 'the figures of speech' such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole and so on. In *kāvya, alaṅkāras* are not its essential or common qualities but its beautifiers/decorators/adorners. It means that the language of *kāvya* is not possible without *alaṅkāras*. The writer makes the language creative by the proper use of *alaṅkāras.* Thus, *alaṅkāras* are assimilative aspects of literary expression. They enhance the beauty of each other and strengthen the meaning of *kāvya*. Hence, a literary activity requires assiduous use of *alaṅkāras* to make the language of *kāvya* express its meaning adequately.

12.3 *Alaṅkāra Sampradāya* (School)

After *Rasasampradāya*, the second most important place is of *Alaṅkārasampradāya*. This *sampradāya* has considered *alaṅkāra* as the main basis of *kāvya* (literature/literary composition), not *rasa* or any other element. Bharata (2nd century BCE) propounded the essentiality of *rasa* in *kāvya* by saying "*na hi rasādṛtekaścidarthapravartate*" and accepted *rasa* as the soul of *kāvya*, but Bharata had said this only after considering the inseparableness of *nāṭya*(drama) and *kāvya*. He has used *kāvya* for *nāṭya* at many places. According to *Alaṅkāra sampradaya, alaṅkāra* is the main thing in *kāvya*; it is a necessary factor in the creation of *kāvyasaundarya* (beauty of a literary composition).

12.3.1 Bharata's *Nāṭya-śāstra* (2nd Century BCE)

Bhāmaha is the earliest exponent of the theory of *alaṅkāra* and school, although he is not the originator as Bharata, the first aesthetician of Sanskrit poetics, in *Nāṭya-śāstra* (2nd Century BCE) has already discussed four types of *alaṅkāras*, namely, *upamā*(simile), *rūpaka* (metaphor), *dīpaka* (illuminator) *and yamaka* (rhyme) *alaṅkāras* in 45 verses (43-87) of the sixteenth chapter of *Nāṭya-śāstra.* namely, *upamā*(simile), *rūpaka* (metaphor), *dīpaka* (illuminator) *and yamaka* (rhyme). He has described five types of *upamā* which are *praśanśā*(praise), *nindā*(blame or condemnation), *kalpitā* (imagination), *sadṛśī*(uniqueness)and *kincanasadṛśī* (partial uniqueness) in the verses (45-49). *Rūpaka* and *dīpaka* are briefly described. He has adequately discussed ten types of *yamaka* in the verse (68-87).

12.3.2 Bhāmaha's *Kāvyālaṅkāra* (6th Century)

After Bharata, the first text exclusively written on *alaṅkāra* is Bhāmaha's *Kāvyālaṅkāra* (6th Century). According to Bhāmaha, *alaṅkāra* is the most essential element of *kāvya* and it consists in the striking manner of putting a striking idea in equally striking words. To him, *alaṅkāras* are as necessary factors in the creation of *kāvya*'s beauty as ornaments contribute to the charm of the lovely face of a young damsel. Thus, *kāvya* should be possessed of some charm created by the *alaṅkāras*.

Bhāmaha in his *Kāvyālaṅkāra* talks of forty-two *alaṅkāras.* After four types of *alaṅkāras*, *upamā, rūpaka, dīpaka and yamaka* (rhyme) mentioned by Bharata, thirty-eight *alaṅkāras* mentioned by Bhāmaha are self- evident to establish Bhāmaha's importance. These *alaṅkāras* are:

Name	**Meaning/English equivalent**
1.*Śabdālaṅkāras*	**(verbal figures)**
Anuprāsa	(alliteration)
Yamaka	(rhyme)
2.*Arthālaṅkāra*	**(semantic figures)**
ākṣepa	(paralipsis, an apparent denial)
ananvaya	(typical comparison, a description of *upameya,* object compared, as its own *upamana,* object compared to)

apahnuti	(poetic concealment, denial of character or nature of the subject)
aprastutapraśanṣā	(indirect description, a suggestion of the subject by the description of the non-subject)
arthāntaranyāsa	(an inference from particular to general and vice *versa)*
āśīḥ	(benediction)
atiśayokti	(hyperbole, excellence, excessiveness)
bhāvikatva	(an attribute embracing the whole composition and presenting the past and future things as though they exist at present)
dīpaka	(illuminator)
kāvyadṛṣṭānta	(a rhetorical illustration)
kāvyapratijñā	(an assertive statement)
kāvyahetu	(a rhetorical reason)
nidaraśana	(illustration)
parivṛtti	(a description of an exchange of superior and inferior objects supported by *athāntaranyāsa*)
paryāyokta	(periphrasis, circumlocution)
prativastupamā	(realization of parallel ideas in different sentences)
preyas	(an indication of the sentiments or emotional states)
rasavat	(a statement of the sentiments or emotional states)
rūpaka	(metaphor)
sahokti	(equal pairing, a description by the same phrase of two simultaneous actions)
samāhita	(a description of unexpected happening)
samāsokti	(condensed metaphor, a brief equivocal description)
saṁsṛṣṭi	(a combination of many figures of speech)
sasandeha	(a description of a doubt)
śliṣṭa	(pun)
svabhāvokti	(natural expression or description)

tulyayogita	(a description of several objects having the same attribute)
udātta	(sublime expression or description of noble actions)
upamā	(simile)
upamārūpaka	(a simile with an embedded metaphor)
upameyopamā	(a reciprocal comparison of the *upamāna* and *upameya*)
ūrjasvīn	(improper emotional states and sentiments, vigorous description)
utpreksā	(poetical fancy)
utprekṣāvayava	(a mixture of *śliṣṭa, utprekṣā* and *rūpaka*)
vibhāvanā	(genesis, a description of the effects taking place in spite of the absence of the causes)
virodha	(contradiction)
viśesokti	(a description of the presence of cause but the absence of the effect)
vyāja –stuti	(artful praise or an apparent praise implying censure or vice versa*)*
vyatireka	(a description of the superiority of the *upameya* object compared)
yathāsaṁkhya	(same order of different things)

A close examination of Bhāmaha's *Kāvyālaṅkāra* reveals that he has used the term *alaṅkāra* in two senses i.e. a figure of speech or a device designed to achieve poetic beauty and poetic beauty itself. In order to convey these two meanings Bhāmaha has used, besides the very word *alaṅkāra*, many other expressions. W. K. Lele gives a table of such expressions in his book, *Bhāmaha's Kāvyālaṇkāra: A Stylistical and Methodological Study*. The table is reproduced below:

Figures of Speech	**Poetic Beauty**
1.*abhidheyālaṅkāra*	1.*atitarāmbhati*
2.*alaṅkāra*	2.*arthavyutpattiḥ*
3.*alaṅkṛtiḥ*	3.*alaṅkāra*

4.*vāgalaṅkṛtiḥ*
5.*vibhuṣā*
6.*śabdālaṃkāra*

4. *alaṅkārāya*
5.*alaṅkurvate*
6. *giraṁalaṅkāravidhiḥ*
7.*cāravogiraḥ*
8. *cārutāgiraṁ*
9.*bhūśyante*
10. *vyanjanacārutā*
11. *śobhate*
12. *śobhā*
13.*saundarya*
14.*sausabdyaṁ*

12.4 Nature of *Alaṅkāras*

(i) A damsel's face, though beautiful, does not shine if it is devoid of ornaments.
Bhāmaha I. 13

(ii) We accept *vakratā* (obliquity) as ornaments of speech in sound and sense.
Bhāmaha I. 36

(iii) This peculiar method of statement, *vakrokti*, is found everywhere [even in other *alaṅkāras*]. By this, meanings are rendered beautiful. Writers should be assiduous in cultivating it. Where is the *alaṅkāra* without it?
Bhāmaha I. 85

(iv) In fact, in the case of all descriptions, *atiśayokti* should be understood as existing as far as possible. Bhāmaha I. 84

(v) All beautifying properties of *kāvya (kāvyaśobhākaraṇa)* are called *alaṅkāras.*
Daṇḍina II.1.

(vi) (*Kāvya* literary composition) becomes acceptable by virtue of *alaṅkāra.*
(*Saundaryam* Beauty or charm) is *alaṅkāra. Alaṅkāra*is basically synonymous with beauty.
It is only in the secondary sense that it is applied to *upamā*, etc. which are instrumental in creating beauty. Vāmana I.I.1-2.

(vii) (Beauty of a literary composition) *kāvya-śobhā* is produced by *guṇas*. *Alaṅkāras* are the enhancer of that beauty. *Guṇas* are indispensable (*nitya*); the beauty of *kāvya* cannot be produced without them. Vāmana III.I.1-2.

(viii) Only that is admitted as *alaṅkāra* in *dhvanikāvya* (a suggestive literary composition) whose employment is rendered possible just by the emotional suffusion of the writer and which does not require any other extra effort on his part. Ānandavardhana II, 16.

(ix) Those which inhere in this principal element (i.e., *rasa* is regarded as *guàas*. And *alaṅkāras* are those that depend on its parts (i.e., words and meanings), and are just like ornaments such as a bracelet. Ānandavardhana II, 16.

(x) Those who sometimes contribute to *rasa* through their components as the neckless and the like (do for the soul, through the body), are *alaṅkāras* such as *anuprāsa, upamā* etc.

Where *rasa* does not exist, *alaṅkāras* tend to become *uktivaicitrya* (fanciful expressions)

In certain cases, even when the *rasa* is present, they do not serve to adorn it.

Mammaṭa VIII.67 (with *vṛtti*).

(xi) Those non-permanent attributes of a word and its sense are called *alaṅkāras,* which like bracelets etc., aid to their beauty, and (indirectly) contribute to the expression of *rasādi* (*rasa*, *bhāva* etc.)

Viswanatha Kavirāj X.1.

(xii) If a scholar accepts *kāvya* as just unadorned (*analaṅkṛti)* sound and sense, why does he not accept that fire has no heat? Jayadeva I. 8.

12.5 Place and Importance of *Alaṅkāra* in *Kāvya*

From very early times, the question as to what constitutes *kāvya* and what distinguishes it from the rest of utterances such as the *Vedas*, the *Purānas*, or the *Śāstras*, has been attracting the

attention of Indian aestheticians. Mammaṭa (11th Century) says that *śabda* (the word or sound) is important in the Vedas, and *artha* (meaning) is important in the *Purāṇas*, but in *kāvya* both *śabda* and *artha*(the word and the sense) are equally important. Anandakoomaarswāmi, an important thinker of modern India, believes that *alaṅkāras* are not mere ornaments of style to be used or to dispense with at will. They are natural expressions of emotions to build images, by their different shades and overtones or suggestions based on which *alaṅkāras* have been classified. Croce also establishes the same view about *alaṅkār-alaṅkārya* (literary figures and the quality of adorning), by saying that is indistinguishable. He holds this in his *Expression and Rhetoric:* "One can ask oneself how an ornament can be joined to expression externally. In that case, it must always remain separate. Internally? In that case either it does not express and mars it or it does form part of it and is not an ornament but a constituent element of expression indistinguishable from the whole. Ignalls is impressed by the use of *alaṅkāras.* He remarks: "Western rhetoric centres its attention on the manner of presentation: on words, the connection of parts, emphasis, and emotional effect. The science of alaṅkāra is concerned rather with image-building, with the shades of similarity and with the techniques of overtone or suggestion" (Ingalls 12).

Bhāmaha, in his *Kāvyalaṅkāra*, Bhāmaha, defining *kāvya* as '*śabdārthausahitaukāvyam*' (togetherness of sound and sense) in his *Kāvyalaṅkāra*, says that it is possessed of some charm created by the *alaṅkāras.* According to him, *kāvya* has *vakratā* (obliquity), the essential *kāvyasaundaraya* (beauty of literary composition), caused by *alaṅkāras.* He adds that figurativeness lies in *vakrokti* whether *alaṅkāra* is of word or sense '*vakrābhidheya-śabdotiriṭāvācāmalaṅkṛti'* (1/37). Daṇḍina (7th Century) in his *Kāvyadarśa* considers *alaṅkāra* as attributes of *kāvya* (*kāvyaśobhākarānadharmānalaṅkāranpracakṣate*, *2/1.*Vāmana, in his *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtra* identifies *alaṅkāra* with *saundarya*. He defines it as *saundaryamālaṅkāra* (1/2). Kuntaka (10th Century) in his *Vakroktijīvitam* states *"vakroktiraivavaidagdhyabhṅgībhaṇitiuccyate"* i.e. the delightful union of word and meaning which is characterized by the infusion of unique poetic art is *vakrokti* and is *alaṅkāra* only

(1/10). According to Vishwanatha, the quality of ornamentation which enhances the beauty of word and meaning is *alaṅkāra* (*abhivānaprakāraviśeṣāeva caalaṅkārāḥ*). Mammaṭa (11thCentury) in his *Kāvyaprakāśa* says "*taddoṣauśabdārthausaguṇavanalaṅkṛtipunaḥkvi*"(*Kāvyaprakāśa* 1. 1) (i.e. *kāvya* is flawless words and meanings, containing *alaṅkāra* generally but exceptionally even without them). In the considered view of Mammaṭa, *kāvya* is nothing but words and meaning which are devoid of all defects and are full of *alaṅkāras* generally but sometimes existing even in the absence of *alaṅkāras.* Jayadeva finds this '*sūtra*' of Mammaṭa unacceptable. He says that *kāvya* cannot exist without *alaṅkāra,* for it is *alaṅkāra* which goes to make words and meanings assume the character of *kāvya.*

12.6 Let Us Sum Up

The word '*alaṅkāra*' which means ornament or embellishment, denotes 'the figures of speech' such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole and so on. *Alaṅkāras* are not essential or common qualities but beautifiers/decorators/adorners of *kāvya*. They are employed to produce a mental form impregnated with images, symbols, and metaphors, which are the accessories in the function of language. The writer uses them to increase the beauty, enhance the qualities, depict nature, heighten the feelings, delineate the action or activities, and circumstances, expose the internal state, delineate the character, describe the physical beauty, exhibit the objective, depict the scene, characterize the spontaneous movements, and put thoughts in tune with feelings. In a word, they are employed to underline an integral part of a literal meaning; to nourish the literal meaning to its climax; to beautify the expression and give a different meaning to achieve excellence by its own splendour, and to express some impossible meaning. *Alaṅkāras* have been described, analyzed and classified minutely based on *śabdaparivṛtisaha* (the nature of the word) in the two-thousand-year-old history of Sanskrit poetics. From Bharata onward the number of *alaṅkāras* has gone from four to one hundred-twenty-five. It is remarkable to note that some of the *alaṅkāras* have been divided into hundreds of sub-kinds.

12.7 Questions

1. Discuss the genesis and development of the *alaṅkāra* school in Indian poetics.
2. Examine the classification of *alaṅkāras*.
3. How does *alaṅkāra* contribute to the aesthetic beauty of Kavya?
4. Name four major scholars associated with the *alaṅkāra* school.
5. Differentiate between śabda*ālankāra* and *Arthālankāra*.
6. What is the role of *Upamā* in Sanskrit poetry?

12.8 Suggested Readings

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UNIT 13 THE VAKROKTI SIDDHANTA

Structure

13.0 Objectives

Learners, after reading this unit, will be able

1. To understand the *vakrokti* theory.
2. To gain knowledge of different kinds of *vakrokti siddhānta*.
3. To understand or interpret the literature by using the framework of *vakrokt*i.

13.1 Introduction

Have you ever wondered, what makes poetry so beautiful, aesthetic, and charming? For ages, there has always been a conflict on what exactly poetry is. There are, even today, a variety of

meanings of poetry as per the understanding of intellectuals. There are so many thinkers from the West that tried to answer this debatable question. Every scholar has a vision for the greatness of poetry. Not only in Western theories but also in India several theories have attempted to give their views on the language of poetry. For many ages, poets have been using this amazing tool of writing known as *vakrokti*. *Vakrokti* is an anomalous language. It means it is not easy, direct, and clear. The linguistic quality of poetry should be different from ordinary language. For example, if a poet is writing a poem in an ordinary and straightforward language then the message of the poem would lose its sparkles, and the reader will find it boring or develop less interest in it. So, it becomes important that the language of poetry must be indirect, crooked, and twisted. There must be creativity and imagination. We all know that poetry is the combination of many components, such as words, figurative devices, and many more. A poet must use his skill of writing to compose a beautiful yet convincing poem that makes the audience connect with the poem. As we know William Wordsworth said that "poetry is a spontaneous flow of emotions," but it is also important to carefully deal with the various aspects of poems.

Indian poetics, popularly considered as *Kāvyashāstra,* is known for its elaborative and complex framework of literary theory. It has had a great impact on Indian artistic expression for ages. It has included so many schools of theories, such as *Rasa, Riti, Auchitya, Vakrokti, Dhvani*, and many more. All these theories play a vital role in understanding literature. One of the most significant theories is *vakrokti* which was given by *Acārya Kuntaka*

In poetry, language plays a significant role that creating aesthetic pleasure. In poetry we always see that language is no simpler, it always deals with indirectness, and crooked and twisted language that makes readers contemplate that carefully. So, it is the skilful use of language that creates wonderful literature. Language plays a crucial role when it comes to communication be it someone's ideas, thoughts, and emotions. As far as literature is concerned, it become more important to use language very appropriately. Indian scholar acknowledges the importance of indirect language in poetry to create the essence of aesthetic pleasure which is known as *rasa*. According to *Kuntaka, vakrokti* can be understood as an oblique expression and figurative.

Among the different theories, one of the famous theories is *vakrokti.* Here we come to the point of the chapter, *vakrokti sidhhānta*. Yes, *vakrokti*, a Sanskrit literary theory on poetry, was given by *Acārya Kuntaka* First, we will discuss the author of the text *"Vakroktijivitam*" from where the theory of *vakrokti* had been arising.

About the Author:

Acāraya Kunataka is the founder of *vakrokti* theory in his work "*Vakroktijivitam"* which means. He belongs to the period which considered to be the peak of Indian poetry. He appeared somewhere between 950-1050, after *Anandavaddhana* (9th century) and before *Abhinavagupta* (10th century).his contemporary theorists were *Dhananjaya* and *Rajashekhara*, who had given significant contributions to the language of poetry basically in literature. *Kunataka* has discussed in his most renounced work "*Vakroktijivitam*" about the language of poetry and how someone composes a great poem by ushing his theory of *vakrokti*.

13.2 What is *vakrokti siddhānta* or theory?

According to *Kuntaka, vakrokti* can be understood as an oblique expression and figurative. The word *vakrokti* is made of two words- '*vakra*' and '*ukti*.' Here '*vakra*' means indirect, twisted, or unique and the second word '*ukti*' means speech of poetic expression. So, vakrotki theory deals with the art of the use of language or speech in crooked, indirect, and oblique ways that create *rasa*, which means aesthetic pleasure to the reader. This theory has given a unique technique to deal with poetry. It changes the method of understanding poetry. It gives a new lens for understanding poetry. *Kuntaka* had said in his work "*Vakroktijivitam*," about a good poem that a good poem should have a good balance of juxtaposition, puns as well as the appropriateness of *sabdā* (word) and its *arthā* (meaning). Simultaneously he also accepted that there is equal importance of *vakratā,* which is the significant quality of the poem to create aesthetic pleasure in the mind of the reader.

In another way, we can say *vakrokti* is a striking expression. It is not a new theory instead there were many scholars who had already discussed about it. It is believed that the first one who talked about this theory was *Banabhattā*, a *Sanskrit* intellectual. There were *Dandin, Vaman, Anandvardhana, Abhinav Gupta* and many more. Different scholars have given their thoughts,

interpretations, and perspectives on the *vakrokti* principle. Among the different perceptions and interpretations of *vakrokti*, one thing in common they all are that every piece of poetry has a linguistic structure. It focuses on the skilful use of language but in a different way not in straightforward or ordinary speech. To use language in a creative way that creates aesthetic pleasure in the poetry. It differs from simple speech and creates a new, indirect yet interesting composition of the poem which attracts the reader more effectively and actively involves the reader to interpret the poem.

For instance, there is a difference in simply saying things like, my beloved is beautiful. But the same sentence was written in a slightly crooked way, my beloved is a moon. The first one is so simple in saying and does not involve any creativity, but the second sentence has a deviation, it uses the metaphor for creating aesthetic pleasure by using evocative and poetic images. So, this is the example of *vakrokti* which emphasizes the deliberate uses of figurative language and artful deviation.

At its centre, *vakrokti siddhānata* or theory is concerned with poetic language which is characterized by a unique way of expressing of poet's thoughts as it is different from normal and straightforward language. This way of unique expression has a "charming crookedness" which creates aesthetic pleasure for the reader or audience after or while reading the poem. He believed in the difference between the everyday language and the language of poetry. According to him, normal life uses *swabhokti.* Here *swabhokti* means straightforward elucidation of everyday activities. He said *swabhokti* is important but it makes poetry less creative.

13.3 Kinds of *vakrokti siddhānta*

According to *Acāraya Kuntaka*, there are six kinds of *vakrokti* and shows the significance present of these categorized *vakrokti* in the language of poetry. It also shows how this obliquity is important for composing sublime poetry.

i. *Varna-vinyāsa vakratā* (वर्णविन्यासवक्रता) (Phonetic obliquity)

ii. *Pada-pūrvārdha vakratā* (पदपूर्वार्धवकता) (Lexical obliquity)

iii. *Pada-parārdha vakratā* (पदपरार्धवकता) (Grammatical obliquity)

iv. *Vākya-vakratā* (वाक्यवक्रता) (Sentential obliquity)

v. *Prakarana-vakratā* (प्रकरणवक्रता (Episodic obliquity)

vi. *Prabandha-vakratā* (प्रबन्धवक्रता) (Compositional obliquity)

13.3.1 *Varna-vinyāsa vakratā* (वर्णविन्यासवक्रता) (Phonetic obliquity)

In this category, *kuntaka* has discussed the smallest unit of linguistics which is the sound of a word phoneme which means *varnās*. There is a close relationship between sound and thought. Its emphasis is on the creative use and propriety arrangement of phonemes in the composition. This includes alliteration (repetition of a consonant sound at the beginning of the words), assonance (repetition of vowel sounds within the words), onomatopoeia (words that show the natural sound) and many more phonemes which are very helpful for creating poetry. It attempts to show how the repetition sound of consonants, vowels and phonemes creates musical effects and rhythm in the mind of the reader.

For example, *Gerard Manley Hopkin*'s poem titled as "*Pied Beauty*"

"All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him."

In the above lines, there is a repetition of the sound /s/ in the first line. The repetition of /f/ sound has a musical effect. There is the repetition of the/s/ sound once again in the third line which creates a charming and striking effect in the poem and makes the poem musical. In the fourth line, there is a repetition/ sound. There is a certain sequence. The sound of /s/ is repeated in the first and third lines of the poem and the repetition of /is found in the second and fourth lines of the poem.

According to *Kuntaka,* there should be unity in the sound of a word and its meaning, so that it can balance the appropriateness of the theme and create aesthetic pleasure. This obliquity can be

created when similar phonemes or varna are arranged on regular intervals, a phoneme is arranged without interval and new consonants and vowels sound is repeated.

13.3.2 *Pada-pūrvārdha vakratā* (पदपूर्वार्धवकता) (Lexical obliquity)

In any poetry, the first component is phoneme or varna and the second most important component is words. Without words one cannot write and speak. The second kind of *vakratā is Pada-pūrvārdha vakratā* which means lexical obliquity. The role of words is significant in composing poetry. It is through the choice of words made by the artist or poet that creates beautiful poetry and helps to develop the aesthetic pleasure or *rasa* in the mind of the reader. There is denotative and connotative meaning of a word. Similarly, every poem has two meanings like the words. According to *Kuntaka*, the usage of ordinary language or words to create a hidden or connotative and suggestive meaning that differs from the denotative meaning is known as lexical obliquity. The choice of words for composing the poem is based on the thought, experience and understanding of the poet. It is a play with words. Through the choice of vocabulary for the poem, we can understand the linguistic skill of the poet and how a poet can wisely choose the appropriate words that convey the exact meaning and have multiple meanings which create the rhythm and striking charm in the poem. This is through the choice of words that bind the interest of the reader. A denotative meaning can be the same but the connotative meaning of the poem may vary from individual to individual.

For example, "*The Road Not Taken*" written by *Robert Frost*

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel to both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;"

Here, in the first stanza of the poem, see the beauty of words and their impact. The denotative meaning of the poem is about the two roads in front of the poet, seems poet was going somewhere, then suddenly he saw two roads and he could not walk on both roads

simultaneously. He is trying to watch the road's end where it is bent. This is the dictionary or denotative meaning. If we look at the same stanza and try to interpret the poem's connotative meaning then we will understand that here, by two roads, the poet means the options that come in our life and we cannot choose both options. The lines that "I could not travel both" suggest that one must make choices and must choose one road means one option among the both.

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."

These are the last few lines of the same poem, where we can see its literal meaning is that the poet has chosen to travel on the road which is less travelled by people and he chose a different road that is responsible for all the changes in his path. But at the same time, if we try to interpret these lines or try to get it is suggestive meaning then it is about the decision that the poet has made. The poet is talking about the moments in everyone's life where one must choose between the two things. He had two options in his life and had to choose only one as it is not possible to choose both, and he chose the road, option, which is different. He chose the road that was less travelled by people means he made a choice that is the opposite of what people think. And that decision has changed his life. So, every choice that the poet has made has clear consequences and the poet must face the consequences of his choices.

So here, we can see how the words have the power to convey the meaning or a message that is complex easily and lucidly. *Rober Frost* did not use sophisticated or extraordinary language, words, and terms but his skill of choosing the words wisely made his message clear and created a charming effect in the poem even though he used normal words.

The Lexical Obliquity has its sub-variety, namely,

- ***Rūdhi-vaicitrya vakratā* (Obliquity of usage)**
- ***Paryāya–vakratā* (Obliquity of Synonym)**
- ***Upcāra–vakratā* (Obliquity of transference)**
- ***Viśesana–vakratā* (Obliquity of Adjectives):**
- ***Sanvrti-vakratā* (Obliquity of Concealment)**

- ***Linga-vaicitrya vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Gender)**
- ***Kriyā–vaicitrya-vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Action)**

13.3.3 *Pada-parārdha vakratā* (पदपरार्धवकता) (Grammatical obliquity)

As the names suggest this *Pada-paratha vakratā* is dealing with all the aspects of Grammar. Crooked and striking and different grammatical arrangement of words in sentences. Grammatical obliquity includes tense, suffix, prefix, case, numbers, voice, person, and particle. In this, a poet uses the unconventional pattern of all these aspects of grammar to create *vakrokti.* It breaks the conventional rule of writing and creates a deviated way of using the above aspect of grammatical obliquity. These tenses, suffixes, prefixes, cases, numbers, voices, persons, and particles are arranged or used in such a manner that it composes a beautiful poem that creates striking charm and aesthetic pleasure while or after reading the poem. The *Pada-parārdha vakratā* or Grammatical obliquity has many varieties such as

- ***Kāla-vaicitrya-vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Tense)**
- ***Kāraka-vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Case)**
- ***Sankhyā-vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Number)**
- ***Purusa-vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Person)**
- ***Upgraha-vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Voice**
- ***Pratyaya-vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Particle or Affix)**
- ***Pada-vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Prefix)**

Example of *Pada-parārdha vakratā* or Grammatical obliquity

"Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound

Is overflowing with the sound."

The above stanza has been taken from "*The Solitary Reaper*" by *William Wordsworth*., which shows the grammatical obliquity. Here, the poet has used the present tense to share his experience and to establish a real-time connection with the reader and employed the second person by using the words "Behold her," and "Stop here" as they refer to the reader.

Wordsworth continues...

"Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more."

Above is the last stanza of the poem, which shows that the poet has used the past tense to show that the act of singing a song has been passed and everything related to that Scottish girl's song has become a memory. To show that everything becomes past he used I saw, I listened, and it was heard no more. This stanza also shows the first person because the poet or speaker has the words like I and my.

13.3.4 *Vākya-vakratā* (वाक्यवक्रता) (Sentential obliquity)

The fourth *vakratā* is *Vākya-vakratā* or sentential obliquity related to the obliquity in the content and matter of the poem. Although this *vakrat*ā includes the phonetic, lexical, and grammatical obliquity still it is different from them. It is represented as a whole and the other as the element of this sentential obliquity. The deviated combination of words makes sentential obliquity which creates a charming, beautiful, and striking effect on the poetry. ***sahajān vakratā*** (natural obliquity) and ***āhārya vakratā*** (imposed obliquity) are the two types of *Vākya-vakratā*

For example,

"Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice."

The above lines have been taken from the poem "*Fire and Ice*" written by *Robert Frost*, shows the *sahajān vakratā*, where there is no extra decoration of language to make the poem beautiful. *Frost* has used simple language and no aggregation. He has not taken any references from history and mythology. He is simply presenting his view and experience on the ending of the world. *Robert Frost* is talking about the possible end of the world and he is personally in favour of fire.

"A hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,"

The above poem "*To His Coy Mistress*" by *Andrew Marvell* is an example of *āhārya vakratā*, which means that to make the poem beautiful and create aesthetic pleasure, the poet uses embellishment and his/her skill. Similarly, in the above poem, *Andrew Marvell* has used his writing skills and his command over literary devices. He has created the charming effect by using hyperbole to impress his mistress. Such a hundred years have passed for praising her eyes and forehead. He praises her breast for two hundred years and he praised her rest of the beauty for the thirty thousand years

In this poem, he has also used metaphor(direct comparison between two things without using like and as)such as,

"my vegetable love should grow"

here he has compared his love's growth with the growth of vegetables.

There are also examples of similes from the same poem line like,

Sits on thy skin like morning dew,

And while thy willing soul transpires

At every pore with instant fires,"

In the above lines poet has used the simile(comparison between two things to show similarity by using like and as) such as," Sits on thy skin like morning dew," here poet has compared the beautiful skin of his beloved with morning dew.

13.3.5 *Prakarana-vakratā* (प्रकरणवक्रता (Episodic obliquity)

This *vakratā* is also known as contextual obliquity. It deals with the creative and skilful use of language and deviated arrangements of episodes and incidents in the story. It includes sudden twists and creates suspense in the plot, which creates a striking and charming effect in the poem. There should be appropriate arrangement and positioning of incidents or episodes. It is based on the linguistic skill and technique of the figure of speech of the poet. The plot construction should be original and the proper placement of events of series in episodes and then the correct sequence of episodes in the long narrative is significant for attaining episodic obliquity. It includes obliquity of emotions, modified source story, episodic relationship, dominant rasa, secondary episodes, harmonious whole and the episodes within episodes.

The episodic obliquity has many components such as

- ***Bhāvapūrnasthiti vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Emotional State)**
- ***Utpādya lāvanya vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Modified Source Story)**
- ***Upakārya-upkāraka bhāva vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Episodic Relationship)**
- ***Angīrasa nisyandanikasa vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Dominant Rasa)**
- ***Apradhāna prasanga vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Secondary Episode)**
- ***Prakarāntara vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Play within Play)**
- ***Sandhi viniveśa vakratā*** **(Obliquity of Juncture)**

Let takes the **example** of "*The Sleeper in the Valley*," written by *Arthur Rimbaud*, for understanding episodic obliquity.

"It's a green hollow where a river sings
Madly catching white tatters in the grass.
Where the sun on the proud mountain rings:
It's a little valley, foaming like light in a glass.

A conscript, open-mouthed, his bare head
And bare neck bathed in the cool blue cress,
Sleeps: stretched out, under the sky, on grass,
Pale where the light rains down on his green bed.

Feet in the yellow flags, he sleeps. Smiling
As a sick child might smile, he's dozing.
Nature, rock him warmly: he is cold.

The scents no longer make his nostrils twitch:
He sleeps in the sunlight, one hand on his chest,
Tranquil. In his right side, there are two red holes."

The opening lines of the first stanza describe a beautiful and calm valley. Then giving the description of a soldier, who is sleeping on the ground and under the sky, a soldier is smiling like a sick child and the poet asks nature to give him a warm as he is cold. Everything is quite normal till the third stanza, but if we read the fourth stanza then it changes everything. There is a sudden twist in the last stanza which tells that the sleeping solider is dead. The first three stanzas of the poem are quite pleasuring, giving the vivid imagery of nature, its beauty, and how the soldier is lying on the ground and smiling which seems to us that he is enjoying the beauty of nature and becoming happy while watching the scenes that why he is smiling. But the last line of the last stanza shocks the reader as it creates a sudden twist in the tone of the mind of the reader, which reveals that the soldier is dead and there is no one in that place.

"On his right side, there are two red holes."

The ending of the poem deviates and creates a striking impact on the reader. Here karuna rasa is dominant.

13.3.6 *Prabandha-vakratā* (प्रबन्धवक्रता) (Compositional obliquity)

The last kind of *vakrokti* is *Prabandha-vakratā* which is known as compositional obliquity. It is the harmonious combination of the other five obliquity — phonetic obliquity, lexical obliquity, grammatical obliquity, sentential obliquity, and episodic obliquity. It also includes the creation of new stories from the existing story and other sources. It does so by involving certain twists and modifications of the story such as changes in the emotions and rasa, adding some new events of episodes and if necessary, deletion of some episodes.

Prabandha-vakratā (Compositional obliquity) has a sub-variety also, namely;

- ***Rasāntara – vakratā* (Obliquity of Changing the Rasa)**
- ***Samāpana vakratā* (Obliquity of Winding up the Story)**
- ***Kathā – viccheda vakratā* (Obliquity of Intending End)**
- ***Anusāngika-phal vakratā* (Obliquity of Contingent Objective)**
- ***Nāmkarana-vakratā* (Obliquity of Title)**
- ***Tulya kathā vakratā* (Obliquity of Identical Subject)**

Let takes the **example**,

"*Out, out*" written by *Robert Frost* to understand *Prabandha-vakratā* (Compositional obliquity)

"The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard
And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.
And from there those that lifted eyes could count
Five mountain ranges one behind the other
Under the sunset far into Vermont."

This stanza shows beautiful happy imagery. It seems quite a calm and pleasant day. There is a *sringār rasa* which denotes the happy and beautiful surroundings. There is also a repetition of the consonant sound of /s/ in the line "Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it."

"To tell them 'Supper.' At the word, the saw,
As if to prove Saws knew what supper meant,
Leaped out at the boy's hand, or seemed to leap—
He must have given the hand. However it was,
Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!
The boy's first outcry was a rueful laugh,
As he swung toward them holding up the hand
Half in appeal, but half as if to keep
The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all—
Since he was old enough to know, big boy
Doing a man's work, though a child at heart—
He saw all spoiled. 'Don't let him cut my hand off—
The doctor, when he comes. Don't let him, sister!'
So. But the hand was gone already.
The doctor put him in the dark of ether.
He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.
And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright.
No one believed. They listened to his heart.
Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.
No more to build on there. And they, since they
We're not the ones dead, turned to their affairs."

The above lines of the same poem seem like the end of the story. In these lines Frost skilfully uses *vakrokti*, here is the change of *rasa* from *sringār* rasa to the *bhaya* and *karunā rasa*. Here in this line poet is talking about the boy and his hands being cut down due to a buzz saw. And finally, the boy has lost his life due to high bleeding. There is element of obliquity in title of the poem. The title has been taken from *William Shakespeare's Macbeth*. It is a soliloquy when

Macbeth knows about the death of Lady Macbeth, he shouts," Out, out, brief candle!" This line shows the vanity of life and death is inevitable, no one can escape from death.

This poem is based on the real incident of *Robert Frost*'s life. This incident happened with Frost's friend's son. *Frost* used his writing skills and his knowledge of figurative devices, to compose this poem, converting the real events into the creative skill of writing. Here in this poem, we find every aspect or kind of *vakrokti* which makes it a good example of compositional *vakrokti.*

13.4 Let Us Sum Up

Vakrokti theory or s*iddhānta* is a theory which is given by *Acārya Kunataka* in his work "*Vakroktijivitam*," which means *vakroti* is a life of poetry. *Vakrokti* is made of two words- '*vakra*' and *'ukti*.' Here '*vakra'* means indirect, twisted, or unique and the second word '*ukti*' means speech of poetic expression. So, vakrotki theory deals with the art of the use of language or speech in crooked, indirect, and oblique ways that create *rasa*, which means aesthetic pleasure to the reader.

Vakrokti theory has six kinds or levels, which help to create a certain strikingness and charm in the poetry. These six levels help create crookedness and obliquity.

i. *Varna-vinyāsa vakratā* (वर्णविन्यासवक्रता) (Phonetic obliquity)

ii. *Pada-pūrvārdha vakratā* (पदपूर्वार्धवकता) (Lexical obliquity)

iii. *Pada-parārdha vakratā* (पदपरार्धवकता) (Grammatical obliquity)

iv. *Vākya-vakratā* (वाक्यवक्रता) (Sentential obliquity)

v. *Prakarana-vakratā* (प्रकरणवक्रता (Episodic obliquity)

vi. *Prabandha-vakratā* (प्रबन्धवक्रता) (Compositional obliquity).

13.5 Questions

Q1. What is *vakrokti* theory?

Q2. Explain the various kinds of *vakrokti*?

Q3. What is *Prakarana-vakratā*? Give a suitable example.

Q4. What is *Prabandha-vakratā*? Mention its types.

Q5. Write a short note on the *Acāraya Kuntaka.*

Q6. Give the interpretation of any literary text through the lens of *vakrokti* theory.

13.6 Suggested Readings

Krishanmurthy, K. *Vakroktijivitam.* Dharwar: Karnatak University, 1977

https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/engp11/chapter/kuntaka-vakrokti-jivita/

Sharma, Sharwan K. Kuntaka's *Vakrokti Siddhânta: Towards an Appreciation of English Poetry*. Meerut: Shalabh Publishing House, 2004.

Sharma, Shrawan K. Kuntaka's *Theory of Vakrokti: A Practical Approach to Kāvya (A Literary Composition)*. New Delhi: Shraddhanand Publication Centre Gurukula Kangri Vishwavidyalaya & Creative Books, 2019.

UNIT 14 THE *AUCHITYA SIDDHĀNTA*

Structure

14.0 Objectives

By the end of this Unit, learners will be able to:

1. Understand the Concept of *Aucitya***.**
2. Explore Kshemendra's Work *Aucityavicāracarcā*.
3. Analyze the Role of *Aucitya in Kavya***.**
4. Develop the ability to critically evaluate literary texts—classical or modern—using the lens of *aucitya* and identify instances of propriety or impropriety in language, character, setting, and emotional tone.
5. Apply the concept of *aucitya* in their own literary criticism or creative writing to enhance stylistic precision and artistic harmony.

14.1 Introduction to '*Auchitya*'

The term *'aucitya*' is derived from the word '*ucit*', which is made up of two components *'uc+akt'*. The word *'ucit* means appropriate or proper. It has much deeper meanings when applied to poetry. Dr. Suryakanta Shastri, giving an account of this word holds that the word '*aucitya*' is derived from the root 'uc', which stands for 'to be gay and make merry'. He further says that from this root 'uc', the word *'aukas*' is derived, which means 'sweet home', for home is loved by all equally. The sense of this '*ucit'* is '*aucitya*' on account of its derivation from the plausible root 'uc'. The fundamental meaning of this word is ecstatic (full of ecstasy), fair and blissful. None but the ecstatic and blissful thing is appropriate, proper, *Śiva* or celestial (Tripathi 157). According to Pt. Mahadev Shastri too, the word '*aucitya'* is derived from the root 'uc', which means '*samavāya*' (group or collection). The group will consist of itself, the reputed virtues of the world and knowledge. Of course, these virtues are noble. In this way, where there is a group of these noble virtues, there the word *'ucita*' (proper) is applied. In this sense, it can be said that the word '*ucita*' means a group of noble virtues (Tripathi 160). Likewise, *Aucitya-Vimarśa*, defines it:

'उतउत्कृष्टंचित्तम्उचितम्

The knowledge and sense of the best and noblest is *ucita*) (Tripathi 160).

According to Raghavan "*aucitya*' is the proper placing of things in such a manner as to suit '*rasa*' and the avoiding of things not suitable from the essence of artistic expression. This is propriety" (Raghavan 208). He further writes: "*Aucitya* is harmony and in one aspect it is proportion between the whole and the parts, between the chief and subsidiary, between the *angin* and *angās*"(Raghavan 208). He concludes by saying that

"Proportion and harmony form an aspect of '*aucitya*', which is propriety, adaptation, and other points of appropriateness. From this point of view the perfect agreement between the parts and

the chief elements of 'rasa', from the point of view of this proportion and harmony, I think, *aucitya* can be rendered in English into another word also viz. 'sympathy' which as a word in art criticism means mutual conformity of parts. (Raghvan 208)

14.2 *Aucitya* by Acārya Kṣemendra

The celebrated proponent of *aucitya* is Acārya Kşemendra of the eleventh century A.D. who, apparently inspired by Anandvardhana and his literary teacher, Abhinavgupta, composed a full-length treatise, named *Aucitya-vicāra-carcā,* to elucidate and expand the concept of propriety, evidently endeavouring to elevate it to the status of a distinct theory of poetry.

Now, Kşemendra has undertaken the pleasant task of pondering over "propriety in poetry", which is the very life of *rasa*, and an agency for producing charm.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,*śloka-3

Kşemendra defines '*ucita*' (proper) as "which is like to which". What befits a particular thing is what the great masters call proper. The state of being proper is propriety. That which is suited to a certain thing is called proper; its abstract notion is called propriety.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,*śloka, 7.

Thus, '*aucitya*', according to Kşemendra, consists in the placing together of things which are mutually agreeable or in harmony. He has quoted an analogy to illustrate his concept:

> Who will not become an object of ridicule if she wears a zone around her neck; a glimmering necklace around her buttock, an anklet on her hands; and an armlet on her feet? Who is not ridiculed by showing mercy to his enemy who has genuflected before him, overpowered by his prowess? Neither ornaments nor excellences will create beauty without propriety.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,* ślokas, 6.

This analogy floats the concept of *aucitya* in an elegant manner. Kşemendra holds, indeed, that the entire line of classical thinkers on poetry hold that poetry should conform to the requirements of propriety in order that charm might be created in literary compositions. Kşemendra glorifies the concept of *aucitya* as the *"jīvita* of *kāvya",* (life of a literary composition). He holds that *guṇas* and *alaṅkāras* apart, even rasa-integrated *kāvya* has *aucitya* for its constant life. He certainly has in mind the prestigious theory of *rasa*, which accounts for his separate mention of "*rasa-siddha kāvya*", but he ultimately brings the '*rasa*' within the orbit of *aucitya* even as he has brought the *guṇas and alaṅkāras* within the confines of *rasa*. If he does not speak of the soul of a literary composition, it may be ascribed to his desire to avoid joining issue with his renowned teacher, Abhinavagupta. That is why he has pronounced *aucitya* as the life of a literary composition, not the soul. That is why, he has incorporated *rasa* in his catalogue of "*kävyaṅgas*" (limbs or constituents of poetry) may be construed to signify his basic stance, namely, that *rasa*, too, is subordinate to *aucitya* in the final analysis.

A look into these constituents displays Kşemendra's comprehensive view of *aucitya* which he has discovered in relation to the dictional aspect, the management of plot, the incorporation of excellence and figures, grammatical aspect of language, local awareness, cultural or philosophical acceptances, traditional ideas, social customs, psychological requirements, thought-contents, poet's grasp of truth and his creative genius. It can be promptly appreciated that Kşemendra has kept the sahṛdaya's angle in his view while identifying propriety in the manifold constituents of a literary composition.

14.3 Varieties of *Aucitya*

Kşemendra has enumerated twenty-seven constituents of poetry and has examined *aucitya* or *anaucitya* in regard to each of these. He says:

The constituents of propriety, which are the very life of poetry, should necessarily exist in *pada* (phrase), *vākya* (sentence), *prabandhārtha* (meaning in narrative), *guṇa* (excellence), *alaṅkāra* (poetic figure), *rasa* (sentiment), *kriya* (verb), *kāraka* (case ending), *liṅga* (gender), *vācana* (number), *viśeśaṇa* (adjective), *upsarga* (prefix), *nipāta* (particle), *kāla* (time), *deśa* (country), *kula* (family), *vrata* (custom), *tattva* (truth), *sattva* (disposition), *abhiprāya* (motive), *svabhāva* (nature), *sāra-saṅgraha* (essence), *pratibhā* (genius), *avasthā* (state), *vicāra* (thought), *nāma* (title), *aśirvāda* (benediction) and other limbs of poetry.

Kşemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā*, *ślokas*-8-10

14.3.1 *Pada-aucitya* (Propriety of Phrase)

The language of a nation necessarily divides itself into phrases - scholastic and popular, grave, and familiar, elegant, and gross and from a nice distinction of these parts, arises a great part of the propriety of style. About *pada-aucitya*, Kşemendra writes:

> A beautiful saying looks bright when possessing a single suitable word, as does a moon-faced damsel, bearing the *kastūrī*-mark on the forehead of a '*syama*' or a dark-complexioned woman bearing a sandal mark.
>
> Kşemendra, *Aucityavicāracarcā,* śloka,11.

Here Kşemendra wants to say that a beautiful saying, containing just one proper word: the counterpart of the mark on the forehead, becomes more thrilling on account of imparting excessive charm to the rest of the constituents. Shelley's Adonais, which has been considered a

"highly wrought work of art" because Shelley, in this celebrated elegy Adonais attempted to achieve *pada-aucitya.*

All the phrases in the elegy offer a vivid, tragic, and heart-warming picture of grief-stricken Urania lamenting for her son, Keats. "Like a pale flower" is a beautiful phrase which suggests the tenderness of Keats, his youth, loveliness, and paleness caused by disease towards the close of his life.

14.3.2 *Vākyaucitya* (Propriety of Sentence)

Ksemendra holds that like *pada-aucitya, vākya- aucitya* is also an integral part of the language. About *vākya-aucitya*, Kşemendra writes:

"A sentence, composed with propriety, always wins the approbation of the good, as does wealth exalted by liberality, or learning brightened by good character."

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā*, ślokas-12

Kşemendra is of the opinion that an experienced poet employs the sentence more effectively and this effective use of the sentence contributes to the meaning of the composition. Here is an example from Shakespeare's Othello where Othello has rudely shocked Desdemona by calling her a whore. Sje and Emilia complain of it to Iago. Emilia repeats the very word used by Othello, but Desdemona's modesty quails before a word so vulgar. So, she uses a periphrasis, keeping in mind her status:

Desdemona: Am I that name, Iago?

Iago: What name, fair lady?

Desdemona: Such as she says my lord did say I was 12

This demonstrates Ksemendra's *svabhāvaucitya* (propriety of nature) and *avasthaucitya* (propriety of status).

14.3.3 *Prabandhārtha-aucitya* (Propriety of Meaning in Narrative)

About *prabandhärtha-aucitya*, Ksemendra writes:

The meaning of a composition becomes charming with a particular suitable meaning, just as a good person obtains lustre through wealth, made blissful by the strength of virtues.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā*, ślokas-13

Kşemendra opines that using appropriate sense, conceived through the flight of unfading fancy, which acts as sprinkling of nectar which pervades the entire composition, as if glistening, acquires exquisite charm. He says that when poet, conceiving through unfading fancy, employs secondary events and incidents contributing to the meaning of a composition, we have propriety of meaning in narrative. In the "Ode to the West Wind." Shelley has observed this type of *aucitya* in beseeching the west wind to drive his "dead thoughts over the universe like withered leaves to quick a new birth" by investing it with the attributes of a living force:

"O wild West Wind! Thou breath of autumn's being,

Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves are dead

Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter, fleeting" etc

Shelley also calls the "West wind" as preserver, destroyer, uncontrollable etc. Here a non-sentient object has been addressed as though it were sentient, gifted with human sensibilities. This attribution of human attributes to the West Wind is an earth or meaning invented by the poet and that constitutes *prabandharthaucitya* (propriety of meaning in narrative).

14.3.4 *Guṇa-aucitya* (Propriety of Excellence)

About *guṇa-aucitya*, Ksemendra writes:

The sublime excellence, possessed of charm and relevant to the context, rains down joy, as does the moon that rises in time for amorous sport.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā*, śloka-14

Here Acārya Kşemendra means to say is that in a literary composition, an excellence, marked with vigour, perspicuity, clarity, sweetness, delicacy etc., arising from the propriety of the relevant sense and thus obtaining charm, being itself graceful, pours down a shower of joy to the men of taste.

Vāmana divides *guṇas* into two-i)*śabdagṇna* (excellence in word) and ii)*arthagṇna* (excellence in meaning). Vishwanath calls *guṇas* as *i).prasād* (perspicuity) *ii) mādhurya*(sweetness) *iii) ojas*(elegance)

i) *Prasād* (perspicuity)

The excellence or attribute that pervades the entire mind of the reader immediately as the fire catches the dry fuel is called *prasād* or perspicuity. Phrases that are easily understandable produce this excellence. It well accords with the different *rasas*, which are helped in their arousal due to it.

ii). *Mādhurya* (Sweetness)

The excellence or attribute that generates special delight by liquefying the reader's psyche is called mādhurya (sweetness). It includes the use of phonemes and syllables to produce a rhythmic effect, especially the repetition of the same vocal class-nasal, semi-vowels, and the use of short syllables with a total absence of hard consonants. Use of compounds should be avoided. *Vaidarbirīiti* is characterized by this excellence.

iii) *Ojas* (elegance)

The excellence or attribute that excites and inflames the psyche, expanding it, is called *ojas* (elegance)**.** This excellence attains more relevance and so more prominence in the depiction of the *vīra*, the *bībhatsa* and the *raudra*.

14.3.5 *Alaṅkāra-aucitya* (Propriety of Literary Figure)

The expression attains a heightened beauty due to the application of acquired skill. Here, the

acquired skill means the technical art of the poet acquired by teaching or practice. This far excels the beauty of individual elements such as words, meaning, attributes, and poetic figures. It should be understood here that the subject matter is not with any attraction. About *alaṅkāra-aucitya*, Kşemendra writes:

A poem becomes bright with a figure of speech which has a propriety of meaning, just as a fawn-eyed lady looks beautiful with a necklace hanging on her well-developed bosom.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā*, śloka-15

"To a Skylark" which has a rich treasure of a glowing sequence of images, is an example of *alaṅakaraucitya* or propriety of figures. The poet is overwhelmed with the incessant, mellifluous flow of music "rained down" by the ethereal singer. He calls it an "unbodied joy" which reflects his own recognition of the magic of the bird's notes. He has strung together multiple similes, one after another, which bespeak his sense of unawareness of the precise position of the bird in the heavens. The skylark is beyond the poet's range of sight. He can only listen to the "rain of melody" being poured down from the heavens, remaining all the while lost in a mystery as to the exact spot or altitude where the bird has taken its station. The images "like a poet hidden in the light of thought" like a glow-worm golden in a del of dew", "Like a rose embowered in its own green leaves" contribute to the vivifying of the poet's sense of bewilderment as to the exact location of the "spirit or bird" which is panting forth a flood of rapture so divine."

14.3.6 *Rasa-aucitya* (Property of Sentiment)

Rasa-aucitya is the hallmark of flawless composition. In this regard, Kşemendra writes:

> The sentiment, fascinating on account of its propriety, and pervading the entire sense, makes the mind grow, as does the spring the Asoka tree.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā*, ślokas-16

Needless to say that *rasa* is the soul of composition and in its unhampered overflow, the poet's skill lies. In the poem, the poet arranges principal and auxiliary *rasas*. Such an arrangement or change has not only a natural power of persuasion and of giving pleasure but also the marvellous power of exalting the soul and swaying the hearts of men. Every poem has variety of *rasas* and this variety underlines how the change of *rasa* contributes to the consummation of *angirasa* (principal sentiment). Kşemendra has assigned, obviously, greater importance to *rasa-aucitya*. He follows Anandvardhana's principle of *angin rasa* being developed and manifested in such a way that the other intervening *rasas* are overshadowed and the *sahrdaya* is overtaken by the powerful feeling of the *angirasa.*

14.3.7 *Kriyāaucitya* (Propriety of Verb)

When there is a cohesion of the subject with the verb; when another subject attains excellence in relation to the same verb; when the adverbials go to qualify it; when metaphorical superimposition heightens the beauty of the verb-form and; when the direct object, though concealed, gets charmingly communicated, we have *kriyāaucitya* (propriety of verb. In this regard, Kṣemendra holds:

> The excellence, the lovely metre, and the goodness of a poem become prominent if the verb is proper, just as the virtues, the behaviour, and the nobility of a person shine if his deeds are good.
>
> Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,19*

The following are examples of this sub-*aucitya*:

(i) The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and
wise to know And keenly

felt the friendly glow And

softer flame.

(ii) Dear God! the very houses

seem asleep And all that

might heart is lying still!

(iii) Calm is all nature as a resting wheel

The kine are couched upon the

dewy grass; The house alone,

seen dimly as I pass,

Is cropping audibly his later meal;

(iv) This city now doth, like a garment,

wear the beauty of the morning;

silent, bare, Ships, towers, domes,

theatres and temples lie Open unto

the fields, and to the sky;

(v) That by the regular action of

the world,

My soul was unsubdued.

The above five examples chosen from Wordsworth bear all the five sub-varieties of obliquity of verb, respectively. In the first example, the subject 'poor inhabitant' cohered with the verbs 'learn', 'know', and 'felt', is obliquely used. The second example has two subjects, 'the houses' and 'mighty heart' where due to the obliquity of the verb, the second subject attains excellence. In the third example, the verbs 'seen' and 'cropping' are being qualified by the

adverbials like ‘dimly’ and ‘audibly.’ In the fourth, the verb ‘wear’ and ‘lie’ underline the metaphorical superimposition to the subject ‘city’, ‘ship’, ‘tower’, ‘dome’, etc. which vibrate with human faculty. In the final example, due to the verb’s miraculous function the direct object, i.e. ‘my soul’ gets charmingly communicated.

14.3.8 *Kārakaucitya* (Propriety of Case)

Kārakaucitya (propriety of case) is based on the oblique transposition of the cases. When an ordinary case is employed in *kāvya* by a writer as a main case or vice-versa or the cases are transposed, we have *kārakucitya* (propriety of case). The beauty or strikingness, produced by this obliquity, depends solely on the transposition of the cases which aims at heightening the poetic expression. According to him, this transposition of case symbolically animates and makes it more functional poetically. Kṣemendra says in the context:

The sentence with all its constituents looks bright with proper syntactical cases, just as riches, which are an ornament to a high family, look lustrous with deeds of magnanimity.

Kṣemendra’s *Aucityavicāracarcā,20*

When Macduff, in Shakespeare’s Macbeth, for instance, come at the appointment hour to call on Duncan and finds him lying dead in a pool of blood in his bed-chamber, only broken words can fall from his lips that, however, explain his bewildement more effectively than if they had followed their normal order: “O horror! horror! horror! Tongue nor heart/ Cannot conceive nor name thee”! ‘Tongue’ here is the subject of ‘name’ and ‘heart’ the subject of ‘conceive’ but not only ‘Tongue’ seems to go with ‘conceive’ and ‘heart’ with ‘name’ but each of these subjects seems to go with both the verbs. In spite, however, of this apparent disorder, or rather because of it, the meaning of the speaker is expressed as no other could express it.

1.3.9 *Liṅga-aucitya* (Propriety of Gender)

When words belonging to two heterogeneous *liṅga* (genders) are brought together and used without the distinction in a generalised way; when *strīliṅga* (the feminine gender) is used, ignoring another possible gender, merely for the sake of excellence in the expression and when the existence of the gender described, is avoided and a particular word is employed to enhance the beauty, we have *liṅga-aucitya* (propriety of gender). Kṣemendra says that A composition becomes beautiful using proper gender just as the body looks beautiful with auspicious marks indicative of sovereignty.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,21*

The following is the example of this sub-variety:

It was the cooling hour just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded
Circling all Nature, hushed and calm and still,
With the far mountain crescent half surrounded
On one side and the deep-sea calm and chill
Upon the other and the rosy sky.
With one star sparking through it like an eye.

Here Byron makes use of the heterogeneous genders — 'the sun' with 'the azure hill', 'the earth' with 'the mountain' and 'the star' with 'an eye.' The togetherness of feminine and masculine genders shows as if they were united together to accelerate the beauty of the object described.

14.3.10. *Saṁkhyā-aucitya* (Propriety of Number)

Saṁkhyā-aucitya (propriety of number) functions based on the oblique transposition of numbers. Ksemendra holds that a propriety which, the poet employs, out of his fascination for the strikingness in his *kāvya*, to transpose the numbers -- singular number is changed into plural number and vice-versa -- is called *saṁkhyā-aucitya (*propriety of number). This interchange of two opposite numbers imparts beauty and charm to the poetic expression and consequently, the meaning gets its heightened form. Kṣemendra holds:

> A poem becomes lovely using proper number, just as the faces of the learned people, whose minds are blessed with fortitude.
>
> Look bright with proper speech.
>
> Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,22*

14.3.11. *Viśeśaṇaaucitya* (Propriety of Adjective)

When the use of *viśeṣaṇa* (adjective) heightens the beauty of a verb or case and gives liveliness and picturesqueness to the literary language, we have *viśeṣaṇaaucitya* (propriety of adjective). In this regard, Kṣemendra's view is that

> The meaning defined by proper adjectives shines like a virtuous and large-hearted gentleman, who is made to shine by friends excelling in virtues.
>
> Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,23*

The following taken from Keats's "Ode to Nightingale," is an example of this *aucitya*

> Thou was not born for death, immortal Bird!
>
> No hungry generations tread thee down;
>
> The voice I hear this passing night was heard
>
> In ancient days by emperor and clown.

Keats with his extraordinarily powerful senses in perceiving the colourful world employs adjectives, which qualify 'bird', 'generations', 'night' and 'days' makes the reader rejoice in the idea that the nightingale is not born for death. The major concern in the use of adjectives is Keats's perception of the conflicted nature of human life, i.e. the interconnection or mixture of pain and joy, intensity of numbness or lack of feeling, life and death, mortal, and immortal, the actual and the ideal, and separation and connection. On the surface, it seems to be about the sense of pleasure provided by the bird to the poet, about the contrast between the bliss of the bird- song and the reality of human life, about the poet's desire to escape into the world of beauty forever and the subsequent realization of the impossibility of the attainment of such a desire. But it is not only what it seems to be on the surface level. In fact, it is a magnificent expression of the poet's philosophy of life – 'to stretch out after the Beauty that is eternal and abiding.'

14.3.12. *Upasargaucitya* (Propriety of Prefix)

When a particle, after being added to the beginning of a root, forms a new word with a particular meaning, it is called a prefix. It remains inactive in isolation, but in conjunction with a word, it vibrates with a force and intensifies the meaning. This combination of particle and word, which enhances the beauty of expression, is called *upasarga-aucitya* (propriety of prefix) by Kṣemendra. He states:

> The charm of a stanza having an unimpeded excellence increases by means of suitable prepositions (prefixes) just as wealth increases by following the virtuous paths.
>
> Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,24*

The following is an example of *upasarga-aucity*

> Like a rose embowered

In its own green leaves

By warm wind deflowered

Till the scent it gives.

In the above stanza selected from "To A Skylark," Shelley enhances the beauty of the skylark by the addition of the prefixes 'em' and 'de' to the words 'bower' and 'flower' respectively. The skylark sings and flies high in the sky simultaneously and during this performance, it remains unseen. In order to characterize skylark, Shelley transforms two nouns, 'bower' and 'flower', into verbs by adding prefixes to them. And thus, so formed word 'embowered' characterizes the skylark's characteristic of being unseen and 'deflowered' denotes its presence felt by the skylark's music. Both the words, transformed by the prefixes, have been aptly employed. 'Bower' signifies a place on the top of a building where an object cannot be seen and 'flower' denotes the fragrance.

14.3. 13. *Nipāta-aucitya* (Propriety of Particle)

Nipāta-aucitya (propriety of particle) is concerned with the proper use of the particle. Though a particle is an independent component or merely an exclamatory sound and has no grammatical bond with words, it plays an important role in *kāvya*. A talented poet uses this particle to denote some strong feelings or emotions of joy, melancholy, pathos, wonder and mystery etc in *kāvya.*

Kṣemendra defines it in the following way:

The sense becomes fixed by means of useful particles, well-placed, as the accumulation of wealth is assured by means of good counsellors well-placed.

Kṣemendra's*Aucityavicāracarcā,25*

The following is an example of this sub-variety:

Oh! lift me from the grass!

I die! I faint! I fail!

In all the above example taken from “Ode to the West Wind” Shelley uses particle (oh!” and a mark of injection !)” obliquely to intensify his own pathetic condition.

14.3.14. *Kāla-aucitya* (propriety of time)

When there is remarkable beauty due to the utmost propriety of time described, we have *kāla-aucitya* (propriety of tense). Kṣemendra defines it in the following way:

> With the meaning having propriety of tense, the sense attains charm as the body of the virtuous (looks beautiful) with a dress which agreeable to the people.
>
> Kṣemendra’s*Aucityavicāracarcā,26*

The following is an example of this sub-variety

For nature then

The Coarser pleasures of my boyish days,

And their glad animal movements all gone by)

To me was all in all: — I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,

The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,

Their colours and their forms, were then to me

An appetite; a feeling and a love,

That had no need of a remoter charm,

By thought supplied, nor any interest

Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is past.

In this stanza of *Tintern Abbey* Wordsworth gives a contrast that he experiences in his two visits to the Wye River. Here he recalls his past experience of this place and compares to that of the

present. This account of the past, which is given, stretches to the present by changing the tense suddenly in the end. At this juncture, the total scene comes before the reader as it was happening in the present. The change of tense in the end also transports the reader to the past that once had acted as a stimulus for the poet.

14.3.15. *Deśa-aucitya* (Propriety of Country)

Propriety in using the language with reference to the place is called *deśa-aucitya*. The meaning of the poem becomes bright by means of propriety in the agreeable description of the place. About *deśa-aucitya* Kşemendra writes :

The meaning of a poem becomes bright by means of propriety in the agreeable description of the country, like the conduct of the virtuous people, showing intimacy.

Kṣemendra's*Aucityavicāracarcā,27*

The description of the bottomless lake of fire in *The Paradise Lost* is an example of *deśa-aucitya*.

14.3.16 *Kula-aucitya* (Propriety of Family)

Like *deśa-aucitya, kula-aucitya* is also an essential part of a composition. In this regard Kṣemendra writes:

> The propriety surrounding a family lends special excellence to the charm of the poetry, just as the propriety of the lineage of a person is generally dear to those who have a heart to feel.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,28*

Here is an example from Shakespeare's Othello where Othello has rudely shocked Desdemona by calling her a whore. Sje and Emilia complain of it to Iago. Emilia repeating the very word used by Othello, but Desdemona's modesty quails before a word so vulgar. So, she uses a periphrasis:

Desdemona : Am I that name, Iago ?

Iago : What name, fair lady ?

Desdemona : Such as she says my lord did say I was.12

In this way, then, figures and the effect of sublimity but, once again, they are best used when they seem to arise naturally from the context, creating Ksemendra's propriety of nature and status of a character with the aid of *alaṅkāraucitya* (propriety of figures of speech).

Shelley's "Ode To The West Wind" is another example of this *aucitya*, in which the west wind has been described as Preserver and Destroyer **.**

14.3.17 *Vrata-aucitya* (Propriety of Custom)

Propriety in using the language on different occasions with reference to the prevailing customs and practices is called *vrata-aucitya* (Propriety of custom). Kşemendra defines it in the following way:

> The sense of a composition deserving praise on account of its worthiness due to the propriety of a sensible *vrata* or custom fills the mind of the people with satisfaction by its charm.
>
> Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,29*

In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the speech of Satan exemplifies this *aucitya:*

What though the field be lost?

All is not lost; the unconquerable will,

And a study of revenge, immortal hate,

And the courage never to submit or yield.

14.3.18. *Tattva-aucitya* (Propriety of Truth)

A composition is deeply impregnated with the truth of life, which refers to the fundamental realities and guiding principles that shape our existence. These can include the impermanence of

things, the importance of human connection, and the presence of both joy and sorrow.

Kṣemendra says,

A poet's heart bewitching composition appeals (all the more) by its containing (by the mention of) the proper sense, the truth of which has been ascertained.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,30*

Shelley philosophizes his ideals and gives voice to his faith in eternity, which is perfect and unchanging. The following stanza of Adonais is an example of this *aucitya.*

The One remains, the many changes and pass;

Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;

The one Spirit's plastic stress

Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,

All new successions to the forms they wear;

Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight

14.3.19. *Sattva-aucitya* (Propriety of Goodness)

The propriety of goodness refers to certain inherent qualities or characteristics essential to nature composition. This concept shows how a literary composition expresses or manifests. Acārya Kşemendra puts *sattva-aucitya* in the following way:

A poet's composition, containing proper disposition shows charm, like the magnanimous acts of the wise, made agreeable with thoughtfulness.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,31*

Shelley's following stanza which expresses the reality of life, is an example of this *aucitya:*

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not:

Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught;

Our sweetest songs are those that tell

Of saddest thought.

1.3.20 *Abhiprāya-aucitya* (Propriety of Motive of the Composition)

This can be understood as the purpose of the literary composition. In this context Acārya Kṣemendra holds that a composition conveying (to the reader) its motive without any difficulty captivates the mind of the reader. He formulates this in the following way:
A saying whose purpose is exhibited without (much) difficulty pleases the mind, like the self-abiding innocence of the virtuous.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,32*

This *aucitya* is discernible in the play, *Julius Caesar*, in which Shakespeare's use language as a poetic structure, enriches the motive of the play. The most immediately striking feature of the play is the clash between the personalities of the great central figures as they wrestle with huge national issues and their own inner lives. Themes are incorporated into the whole, and by which the politico-personal tension is set in a far wider context. It is true that Shakespeare created for this play a largely un-metaphorical and unlyrical style, which derives its power from strong sentence structure and simple rhythms rather than from any associative richness. Clarity and dignity are its qualities. It has no complexity and allusiveness, which are most used in Shakespeare.

14.3.21 *Svabhāva-aucitya* (Propriety of Nature)

When the *vastu* (subject-matter), replete with an innate beauty is described without heavy embellishment in a simple style, it possesses *svabhāva-aucitya*. Now the poet by his natural

power of contemplating the natural objects lively, allures the heart of the sensitive reader. The objects described, should be conducive to beauty by virtue of their own natural bewitching charm. In other words, they should have an appeal to the heart by their own spontaneous beauty. A good poet is competent enough in making these objects and their characteristics more captivating. This means that the inherent magic of the object still requires the venture of the poet's function. In regard to *svabhāva-aucitya*, Kṣemendra writes:

Propriety of nature appears like a beautiful ornament for composition, just as natural (in artificial) and unequalled beauty is a lovely ornament of women.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,33*

The following is an example of *svabhāva-aucitya* :

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So be it now, I am a man;

Or let me die!

The Child is the father of the Man;

The general quality of style in the above example is simplicity. Here we find Wordsworth's use of common words and a complete absence of reference to mythology, history, geography, or any other background to illustrate the meaning. The great majority of his words are monosyllabic and common, and seldom do they require any other agency to explain them. Now he speaks like a mystic, but simplicity and directness remain there in his expression. The language, except the last line, is childlike, with a simplicity which distils in monosyllables. Yet the thought, communicated, has a span like that of the rainbow.

14.3.22 *Sārasaṇgra-aucitya* (Propriety of Essence)

Kṣemendra, defining this *aucitya,* holds that

> To whom is not the meaning of a composition dear, when its sense has been determined by a peroration, and resembling thereby a transaction which is promptly carried out.
>
> Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,34*

Here the word "peroration" refers to the concluding part of a speech or piece of a composition, often characterized by a passionate appeal to the reader. It can also refer to a long, often pompous, speech in its entirety.

Shelley's poem, *Hellas* is an example of this *aucitya*. The poem deals with the Greek war of independence against the Turks. Shelley skillfully winds up the story at the time, when the Turkish Sultan, Mahmud is spiritually awakened. In the poem the Turkish Sultan, Mahmud wakes up from a disturbing dream hearing from Hassan and four messengers the increasingly depressing account of his war with the Greeks. An 'ancient' Jew, Ashureus makes him behold the future 'shadowed in the past.' Under the hypnotic spell of the Jew, the phantom of Mohomet the second predicts the ultimate decay of the Turkish empire and the fall of Islam. Contrarily, very soon, he comes to know about his victory over the enemy. But the shouts of victory coming from offstage fail to enthuse Mahmud, for he knows that these temporary successes are meaningless: "Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile/ Of dying Islam!" After this, two chanting of semi-choruses take place and the poem ends. This winding-up of the story, at this moment, demonstrates *Sārasaṇgra-aucitya* (Propriety of essence).

14.3.23 *Pratibhā-aucitya* (Propriety of Talent)

Pratibhā-aucitya can be understood as an artistic arrangement of incidents. This is a poet's state when the words or expression come out with a wild gust of enthusiasm. In other words, now the poet is filled with divine frenzy, which causes an arena of sublimity and strikingness in his poetic

creation. It leads to loftiness of utterance and so it is an indispensable device in the composition. He holds that the incident is merely a desert. It is the role of the emotions that infuses music with life. Kṣemendra holds that

A poet's composition properly ornamented with poetic brilliance (genius) shines like the spotless family of a virtuous person gifted with fortune.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,35*

This *aucitya* is discernible in the play, *Julius Caesar*, in which Shakespeare's use of language as a poetic structure enriches the motive of the play. The most immediately striking feature of the play is the clash between the personalities of the great central figures as they wrestle with huge national issues and their own inner lives. Themes are incorporated into the whole, and by which the politico-personal tension is set in a far wider context. Shakespeare indeed created for this play a largely unmetaphorical and unlyrical style, which derives its power from strong sentence structure and simple rhythms rather than from any associative richness. Clarity and dignity are its qualities. It has no complexity and allusiveness, which are most used in Shakespeare.

14.3.24 *Avasthā-aucitya* (Propriety of the State)

Here, Acārya Kşemendra intends to say that the propriety of circumstances or state described makes the composition vibrating with thoughts and emotions, which appeal to the reader. Here a character is delineated in an extraordinary way, to make him/her immortal. This intends to refers to *uttamkāvya* to *dhvanikāvya* (the highest kind of composition) in which the primary meaning is completely lost, giving way to the suggested meaning. He defines it:

> A composition (containing) the propriety of state (described) becomes an object of worship of the world, like the captivating deeds of the wise done after due deliberation.

Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,36*

The poem “The Blessed Damozel” by D. G. Rossetti is an example of this *aucitya*

There will I ask of Christ, the Lord

Thus, much for him and me:

Only to live as once on earth

With Love –only to be,

And then a while for ever now.”

“I saw her smile ….

And then she cast her arms along

The golden barriers

And laid her head between her hands,

And wept. *I heard her tears”*

The poem evokes an image of two lovers—one in Heaven and another on the earth—who desire to meet each other. It so happens that the blessed damsel, who is in heaven, imagines reuniting with her lover on the earth and smiles in this oblivious state. But next moment she realizes the fact that reunion with her lover is impossible and so she weeps. The lover who sees her smiling initially later hears her tears. Hearing the sound of the tear-drops as they fell on the ground suggests a poignancy to the whole situation. Here *mādhuryaguàa* causes great delectation in *sahṛdaya*.

14.3.25 *Vicāra-aucitya* (Propriety of Thought)

This *aucitya* is what we call grandeur of thought which refers to the quality of having lofty, noble, and expansive ideas. It is considered a key source of the sublime in a composition, where the greatness of a writer's or speaker's soul is reflected in the elevation and majesty of the

thoughts. Essentially, it means that profound and inspiring works require a foundation of profound and inspiring thought. Kşemendra writes:

> The composition becomes beautiful by proper thought just as the education of the wise becomes charming on account of learning what really ought to be learnt.
>
> Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,37*

Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a prime example of grandeur of thought, with its depiction of the creation of the world, the fall of Satan, and the struggle between good and evil. Milton's use of elevated language, vivid imagery, and profound themes contributes to the poem's sublime effect. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* explores themes of guilt, redemption, and the power of nature, using vivid descriptions and symbolic imagery to evoke a sense of awe and wonder.

14.3.26 *Nāma-aucitya* (Propriety of Title)

The title of a composition is replete with a kind of propriety, which attracts the reader due to its striking meaning. Hence, the great poet entitles his/her work in such a way that it may possess splendour, indicating the tilt being given to it. The title does not have merely a ceremonial purpose. The purpose of a good title is to unlock and underline the soul of the work. The title enables the reader to know the main idea through either of the ways symbolic or literal. Kşemendra unfolds the significance of the *nāma-aucitya*

> By the significant term, conforming to the motive, the merits and demerits of a composition are shown, just as the name worthy of the acts of a person shows his excellences and blemishes.
>
> Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,38*

The title of Coleridge's poem *Christabel is* very suggestive. It has a hidden moral significance. It is an allegory as he apparently narrates a story, but his real aim is to convey a moral that 'the virtuous of the world save the wicked.' The title very aptly conveys this idea as the name

Christable includes two figures, Christ and Abel, the innocent son of Adam - who sacrificed themselves to save the wicked world. Both the figures symbolize virtue and innocence and both helped the wicked. Similarly, the title *Prometheus Unbound* has also been obliquely employed by Shelley. Before Shelley, Aeschylus wrote on Prometheus and the title, he gave was, *Prometheus Bound*. Just a little tilt makes the title expressive of the theme of the poem. It is expressive of both the symbolic and literal meaning. The literal meaning unfolds the freedom of Prometheus bound by Zeus and the symbolic meaning underlines the freedom of men.

14.3.27 *Āśīṣa-aucitya* (Propriety of Benediction)

Kṣemendra holds that

> A proper benediction raises the value of a composition that gives a complete sense and satisfies the learned, just as a proper benediction increases the propriety of a king who gives all his wealth and appeases the learned.
>
> Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā,38*

Shakespeare's Tragedies like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* grapple with profound questions about human nature, mortality, and the consequences of ambition, employing powerful language and dramatic situations to create a sense of the sublime.

14.4 Let Us Sum Up

Kshemendra's ***Aucitya Theory*** emphasizes *propriety* or *appropriateness* (*aucitya*) as the central guiding principle of literary composition. He defines *aucitya* as the harmonious alignment of all elements in a literary work—theme, character, emotion, diction, and style—so that nothing appears out of place. In his treatise *Aucityavicāracarcā*, Kshemendra systematically analyzes

how deviation from *aucitya* results in aesthetic discord, while its observance ensures poetic beauty and emotional resonance (*rasa*).

Unlike other theorists who prioritized elements like *rasa*, *dhvani*, or *alaṅkāra*, Kshemendra foregrounds *aucitya* as the underlying force that binds all literary components into a coherent and aesthetically pleasing whole. He highlights that propriety is not rigid but context-sensitive, shaped by factors like character, situation, and cultural norms.

In essence, Kshemendra's theory is a sophisticated early articulation of literary decorum and contextual sensitivity, underscoring the importance of balance, consistency, and ethical-aesthetic harmony in literature.

14.5 Questions

1. Discuss Kshemendra's concept of *Aucitya* and its significance in Sanskrit poetics.
2. How does *Aucityavicāracarcā* explain the role of propriety in the evocation of *rasa*?
3. Compare Kshemendra's theory of *Aucitya* with any one major poetic theory (e.g., *Rasa*, *Dhvani*, *Vakrokti*).
4. Analyze the relationship between *aucitya* and character portrayal in classical Sanskrit literature.
5. What is the meaning of *Aucitya* in Kshemendra's poetics?
6. Name the key work of Kshemendra that elaborates the *aucitya* theory.
7. How is *aucitya* related to *rasa* in a literary composition?
8. Give an example of *aucitya* from classical Sanskrit poetry.
9. Why does Kshemendra consider *aucitya* as the foundation of literary beauty?

14.6 Suggested Readings

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