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Scientific approach of Kalidasa to poetic inhibition in relation to plants

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Abstract:-

The poets in Sanskrit literature are accustomed to the use to peculiar but amazing phenomena which is called as poetic inhibition. The typical behavior whether true or not when transformed into a make belief expression, is the poetic inhibition, in which Kalidasa excels than other poets. The marriage of a tree is also the outcome of the poetic sentiment in **Abhjnanasakuntalam** and other work's **Navamallika** is said to be the wife of the 'Sahakara' the mango tree (**sahakaravadhu**) interdependence of the tree and creeper develops the concept of marriage. The natural change of male cuckoo's voice in the spring season drives the poet to write that bind is the messenger to cupid. And he is singing in a sweet voice obeying the order of cupid. It is just an inhibition that 'Rudraksa' the plants with beads of **Rudraksa** grow where siva resides. Siva is the symbol of ascetism. Rudraksa bead said to be dear to the ascetes, because it controls the pressure and pulse of the human body and maintains the body equilibrium.

The most talked phenomenon is 'Dohada'. It is totally an imaginative situation where the theory of positivity work. Girls are made to throw water and wine from mouth or kick the plant with their leg are depicted as Dohada, in kavyas. The **kandali** comes out of the earth with the sound of thunderbolt. The **ketaki** is not offered to the gods because of the curse of Siva. The **Kavaca** used in the AS is called Aparajita kavaca. It bites the person unauthorized to touch it becoming a snake.

Durva a mere grass gives longevity and companionship. The cloud becomes weak after the shower of rain before reaching Reva. To heal himself he is advised to drink the water of Reva mixed with leaves of Jambu tree, which will work as a medicine in vomiting. The red stone in **Vikramorvasiyam** is the touch stone for Urvashi, which is mistaken as a piece of red meat by the eagle. It is a common belief that apsaras are the personal property of Indra. Still the brevity and dedication of Vikrama compels Indra to separate Urvashi from the heaven.

Key words:- Poetic, Inhibition, Natural, Dohada, Mango Bride, Rudraksa.

Introduction:

Kālidāsa as a poet appeals to the heart of thousands of people from all over the world. He has been named among the best hundred poets of the world, Śakuntalam being one of the best books. Unlike Shakespeare he writes tragico-comic stories in Sanskrit language. His use of imagination and inference is just superb. He is neither too much sentimental like Bhavabhūti or artificial like later Sanskrit poets. While composing different works he excels all other poets especially when it comes to the depiction of nature with typical phenomena.

The poets in Sanskrit literature are accustomed to the use of peculiar but amazing phenomena which is called as poetic inhibition. The typical behaviour whether true or not when transformed into a make belief expression, is the poetic inhibition, in which Kālidāsa excels than other poets. The command over the language and simplicity of expression compels the reader to believe blindly what the poet intends to believe. The natural happenings in the surrounding is sometimes interpreted in a particular way to switch over the sentiment. The poets are free to use them as and when required to support their expressions.

Kalidasa is such a poet who believes in depicting the things as it is. He never tries to exaggerate the description what his successors have done. He loves to narrate the beauty of the nature in reality.

Even expressing the human feelings he maintains the decorum. Nature and human nature are dependent upon each other. Still he succeeds to draw a thin line between the two to balance the norm of the society as well as the traditional belief.

However, as a poet he is not free from some typical beliefs and adheres to those peculiar poetic inhibitions, imbibing them in his works.

Some of the inhibitions are being mentioned in this chapter with the reality behind it. It not only clarifies the idea but speaks the mind of the poet.

First and foremost is the belief that cupid is the god for love and is personified, not only in Kalidasa works but also in works of other poets, as aiming the flowery arrows at the characters, even at Siva, to make them feel the pangs of love.

To depict the love sentiment the poet takes the help of this non-existing god. His wife, Rati, even longs for him and cries for a reunion with her husband

The arrows are said to be made up of five flowers:-

Asokañca aravindañca cūtam ca navamallikā.

nīlotpalañca pañcaite pañcavānastu sāyakāḥ.²

All these flowers blossom in the spring season. The aroma and the beauty of the colourful flowers make people's heart related and tempt them to love everything like man, nature, life and what not. So the inhibition behind the concept of the love god and pañcavāna is just not an imagination but has a ground behind it.

The marriage of a tree is also the outcome of the poetic sentiment. In AS and other works 'navamallikā' is said to be the wife of the 'sahakāra' the mango tree (sahakāravadhū). Interdependence of the tree and creeper develops the concept of marriage. In the summer when the tree is devoid of leaves the creeper ascending on it enhances the beauty of the tree with its greenness along with the fragrant and beautifully coloured flowers. On the other hand, the tree supports the creeper to climb, thereby enabling the creeper to bloom, before it gets the new tender leaves and buds on it. Otherwise the beauty of blooming flower will not come to forefront if the creeper spreads on the earth.

The common belief in India goes that this tree should be taken care of and given in marriage to another plant before it gets its first fruit. This belief still exists in the middle part of Odisha and Eastern part of Chhatisgarh. The mango tree gets married to another plant, the only difference is, now-a-days mango tree is treated as the bride and some other plant the bridegroom.

Whereas Sahakāra in Kālidāsa's works is depicted as the bridegroom and the creeper the bride. The owner of the tree makes full arrangements similar to the marriage of man and woman.

Very popularly known as the fifth note of Indian classical music, is the voice of the cuckoo. In Sanskrit literature cuckoos is believed to be the messenger of cupid and inspires the lovers to express their love. Even the nature gets enchanted listening to the voice of the cuckoo. The poet projects it as the influence of the love god and impact of spring season that makes the bird coo so beautifully.

The voice of the male cuckoo bird changes during the spring season which is the creation of god and is the natural phenomenon. Taking advantage of this the poets fabricate a beautiful story around the cuckoo and its cooing.

Kālidāsa knows that mango is not an ordinary fruit. He knows about different varieties of mango. And even the smell of cūta, the buds, is so intoxicating that the bees prefer to hover around it than sit on other flowers, drinking the honey.

Mango fruit pacifies the thirst and the heat of summer. Still the poet creates a picturesque scene where the fruits on the mountain Amrakuta appears as the breast of the earth being personified as a woman. But as Yakṣa is already cursed because of his lust, visualizing the scene at Amarakuta is not proper on his part. Hence the poet writes that the beauty of the lady earth is enjoyed by the couples of the god, thereby maintaining the propriety of the poem. The scene as expressed can only be visualized from the sky. Further, he manages to change the tender red leaves to the hands of the tree, calling a passer nearby or to depict the cūta which excites in such a way that the person behaves, as if, drunk.

For Yakṣa, the cloud is the only savior, who moves in the sky. Hence, Yakṣa only looks up and not down to enjoy and get excited by the amorous scenes down on the earth. It is very symbolical.

The lotus and kumuda are said as heroine and sun and moon as their heroes. To arouse the love sentiment he makes the bees confined inside the petals of the lotus for whole night. The imagination excels in its own way. But in reality the flower is made like that. Though both the flowers blossom in the clean water in pond the timing is different. Lotus blooms with the sun and kumuda with the moon in the night. The bee

drinking honey sitting on the filaments of the flower is so engrossed that it gets stuck inside; as the flowers close their petals with the sunset.

The bee, being prisoned, help in the fertilization of the flower. The male pollens enter into the anther because of the bee, fertilizing the filaments inside and the seeds develop in the pores of the anther.

This natural happening is narrated by the poets in such a way that a well groomed love story evolves around it.

It is just an inhibition that 'Rudrākṣa' the plants with beads of rūdrakṣa grow where Siva resides. This tree is found in the Himalayas, especially near Nepal. Siva is believed to be residing from Kāśī to Kailāsa, where actually the tree grows. The poet gets a chance to initiate the mythological story to a make belief story.

Siva is the symbol of ascetism. Rudrākṣa bead said to be dear to the ascetics, because it controls the pressure and pulse of the human body and maintains the body equilibrium.

The poet gives a poetic touch to this and transforms this reality to an inhibition.

Speaking about 'Dohada' Sanskrit poets create a situation where the plants are compelled to receive special treatment from a maiden. Not only Kālidāsa, Śrīharṣa is also famous for his description in NC. Where special smoke treatment is given to make the pomegranate fruit big in size. It is called 'dohadadhūpa'. In Ratnavali, Harsa writes about the 'dohada' where the maiden heroine is asked to throw the gurgle water from mouth. Kālidāsa speaks of Aśoka which blossoms after receiving a kick from the maiden. Similarly, Kuravaka is said to blossom only by a glance, cast on it (Alokanāt vikāṣam).

Though Kālidāsa uses the dohada he does not believe in the way it is done. When in MA. the queen is presented with the dialogue that she is anxious to see the blossoming of Aśoka who is appearing as an ascetic without flowers. The tree is even said as devoid of merits without the flowers.³

The attendants inform her that it is waiting for the dohada treatment to get flowers. Suddenly the king comments, it is useless if the tree does not get flowers immediately after receiving the treatment.⁴

It is just a misconception. Only to give importance to the maidens the poets use it like that.

However, treatments, like in NC are supported by the Sanskrit works on plants. Treatments of seed, tree diseases etc. are prescribed in those books.⁵

Another is that the 'Kandali' comes out of the earth with the sound of the thunderbolt. This is very scientific even though expressed by the poet.

The "Ketakī is not offered to the gods because of the curse of Śiva. But the story appears because the flower has thorns in it, which is the outcome of the curse.

It is a very fragrant flower of offwhite colour, blossoming with the shower of the rain. But the thorns are sharp like nails and bitter which may harm if plucked and used in worship. Even the bees are scared of this thorny flower. Poet gets a chance to fabricate a new story in relation to the Ketakī.

Lotus is said to be dear to viṣṇu Casting aside the belief it can be explained that the word "Viṣṇu" implies the sun who is all pervading as mentioned in the sukta of Rgveda.⁶

Another creeper namely Aparājītā is used in the "Kavaca" of Sarvadamana the son of Duṣyanta in AS.⁷ As the lady attendants except the father and mother remark if someone else touches the Kavaca it will bite him or her becoming a snake. It is a very peculiar expression. As the name itself denotes this creeper never dies. Its stem is very strong that it can not be broken with bare hands.

Also the root is used for medicinal value the primitive people use it to have control over a person. They tie a "Kavaca" made out of the root of this creeper or hide it at the threshold of the main door to evade the evil spirit etc. it is a symbol of undying strength. It also hints towards "Vasikaraṇa" a tantric rite.

Durvā is a grass which is used for decorating the body of ladies making garlands with flowers. During marriage the 'Kautukamangala' is tied to the bridegroom as is evident from śhākuntalam. In which Durvā is used with other auspicious ingredients. As the grass grows from stem to stem and never dies, it symbolizes the progeny and never ending relationships.⁸

Describing the sea shore Kālidāsa writes in RV that the beach looks like a line of demarcation between the blue water on one side and dark green looking forest of Tāla and Tamāla on another side. The beach is called, in the verse, as 'tanvi'. The

beach looks slim between the water and the forest. Through inference poets very easily deceive the readers and infatuate them with their ideas.

Personification of nature is so real that readers are compelled to enter the world of imagination. The scene created in the fourth act of AS is the best example of it. Man and nature, especially plant cohabit and compliment each other. To develop and realize the feeling Kālidāsa, along with other poets has successfully recreated a friendly atmosphere of universalisation through the kāvya.

When the south east cloud crosses Revā, a river in the Vindhya forest, Yaksha requests it to drink the medicated water, to get rid of the sickness caused due to vomiting. The poet pushes the reader to imagine and accept the cloud as a man travelling from a far off distant place and tired because of the exertion. The after effect of vomiting will be cured by the Revā water which is bitter to taste because of the sap of the leaves mixed in it. The story awakens the reader to ponder over this epithet and realize the fact that the sap of the jambu tree and leaves has the same medicinal potentialities as the fruits of jambu, by which the acidic enzyme inducing indigestion subsides.

Even in VU the king Vikrama goes in quest of Urvasī when she did not return from the garden. Kālidāsa uses a very romantic and interesting story, when the king goes in search of the red stone. He discovers an eagle hovering around in the sky looking down, and comes to know that a piece of red stone is mistaken as a piece of red meat by the eagle.⁹ Bringing that touch stone he succeeds in changing the body of Urvasī from creeper to her own self. Looking at the intense love of the king for Urvasī king of Gods Indra pleases to give the apsara to Vikrama for ever. To prove the sanctity of love the poet fabricates this amazing story. It is a common belief that apsares are the personal property of Indra. Still the brevity and dedication of Vikrama compels Indra to separate Urvasī from the heaven.

Conclusion: It is evident that the poet is really krāntadarsī. A poet can create or recreate a world of fantasy making it appear as real. But, now time has come when we should examine the facts and prove them to our future generation that the facts recorded in the Sanskrit works are true. The poetic imagination, in no way, should be rejected on the basis that it is fake.

End notes:-

1. 'Rativilāpa'-KS-II
2. SD.ch.III
3. 'Akusumitamasokam dohadāpeksayā'-MA-III-12 "nirguṇōyamaśoka"-MA.
4. 'Aśoka yadi sadya eva mukulairnasampat syatvṛthā vahasi dohadam
alita kāmīśādhāranam'-MA-3-17.
5. Encyclopaedic works in Sanskrit : A study of representative texts-Chapter-III by Dr.S.Pujhari.
6. Rgveda. Viṣṇu Sūkta.
7. AS act.VII
8. Kāndāt Kāndāt Prarohanti.....Y.V.

Abbreviation:

AS - Abhijñanasakuntalam

VU - Vikramorvaśīyam

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