



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES REFLECTED IN THE RAGHUVAMSA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CANTO-I

Dr. Jewti Boruah

Assistant professor

Deptt. of Sanskrit

Jhanji H.N.S. College, Sivasagar

Assam, India

ABSTRACT

The socio-cultural values include the beliefs, customs, traditions and practices that affect our life style and social behaviors. In others words, these values are associated with the social and cultural aspects of a society .These values are very essential for peace and progress of a society

The great Sanskrit poet Kalidasa showed his deep concern for human life, society, culture, religion and advocated many valuable ideas for these aspects in his works. The *Raghuvamsa mahākāvya* is no exception. In this paper, a modest attempt has been made to highlight the ideas pertaining to socio-cultural value revealed in the *Raghuvamsa mahākāvya* of Kalidasa with special reference to canto-I.

Key words: socio-cultural, values, *Raghuvamsa*, *kāvya*, king, society etc.

Introduction:

It is rightly said that Literature is the mirror of the society. Besides, it is a positive media to pass down the heritage of a society or country from one generation to the next. Like any other forms of the literature, a *kāvya* (poetry) also reflects the society whatever happened at that time. The purpose of the poets is not merely to record the events or to entertain people, but also to stimulate them to work for reforming the society. Without exception of it a great poet like Kalidasa has not composed his works only for giving the mundane pleasure to the people, but also preached the valuable ideas relating to society and culture. His *Raghuvamsa* is one of the great *mahākāvyas* of the Sanskrit literature, which is based on the *Rāmāyana* of Valmiki. It describes the lives of twenty nine (29) kings of Raghu Dyanasty in 19 cantos. The major part of this *kāvya* is devoted (cantos I-XV) in describing the main five kings (e.g. Dilipa, Raghu, Aja, Dasaratha and Rama) of the *Raghu* race . In this *Kāvya* the poet depicts the pictures of the situation of geographical, social, political, cultural, economical etc. of that time. In a word, *Raghuvamsa* depicts India's ancient cultural tradition.

Objectives:

The leading objective of the study is to highlight the ideas in relating to social and cultural values. An attempt has also been made to focus on the aspects which are relevant for the present day society.

Methodology:

Content analysis is the methodology applied in the study. The original work and some modern works are used to prepare this paper.

Discussion:

Systematic life-style:

At the very beginning of the first canto of this *kāvya*, the poet summarizes the collective virtues of the great kings and paints the picture of the ideal kingship. The kings of the *Raghu* race performed sacrifice and honoured the mendicants. They provided punishment in proportion to the crime and collected wealth for charity. They married only for the sake of offspring. Again the poet describes that the kings passed their lives through the four *āśramas* (*Brahmacārya*, *Gārhasthya*, *Vāṇaprastha* and *Sannyāsa*). So, they were busy in study in their childhood, enjoyed pleasures in their youth, led an anchorite life in their old age and finally resigned their bodies by means of *yoga*.¹ This systematic lifestyle was the model of the Indian social-system. The great poet Kalidasa himself announces that virtues of the great kings of *Raghu* race impelled him to create the *Raghuvamśa mahākāvya*.

Royal qualities:

In this canto, there is the description of king Dilipa. Actually, the *kāvya* properly begins with the history of Dilipa. He was endowed in all royal qualities. The virtues of Dilipa narrated here are applicable in a great or less degree to all good and noble kings or ruler.²

Common welfare:

The great poet gives attention in common welfare. He describes that the king Dilipa collected taxes from his subjects only for their welfare (not to swell his treasury)

prajānameva bhūtyartham sa tābhyo balimagrahīt /
sahasraṅgaṇamutsraṣṭumādatte hi rasamrabiḥ //

-[*Raghuvamśam*, I. 18]

Preserving Social order:

Besides it, the poet gives more importance in the religious side. The king Dilipa, as described in the *kāvya*, punished the criminals for the purpose of preserving social order. It is also stated in the *Manusmṛhitā* that-

yadi na praṇayedrājā daṇḍam daṇḍaśeṣavatandritaḥ /

śūle matsyānibā pakṣyandurvalām balavattarāḥ //

-[*Manusmṛhitā*, VII.20]

Special importance to Dharma:

Again, the king Dilipa married only for offspring and attained the *artha* (wealth) and *kāma* (sensual pleasure) as a part of *dharma* (the performance of duty)³. Thus the poet attaches special importance to *dharma* and sub-ordinates to it the consideration of *artha* and *kāma*.

Faith in efficiency of religious rites:

Although the king Dilipa and his queen Sudaksina led a couple lives yet they had the pang for lack of offspring. Therefore, Dilipa decided to discuss with their family priest Vasistha on that matter. It shows his faith in the efficiency of religious rites in attaining the desired end. Then Vasistha explained the cause which was the bar in the way of attaining their issue. The cause was that a curse formerly pronounced upon the king by the divine cow Surabhi. So, the sage Vasistha advised the king to please Surabhi's daughter Nandini and explained how to serve her. Then the readiness with which the king accepted the task shows his duty loving nature.

Noble aim demands noble sacrifice:

Thus, in the story related to Dilipa, the poet wants to explain us that without hard toil nobody can achieve his goal and "noble aim demands noble sacrifice". It is reflected in his other works like *Kumārasambhavam* and *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* also.

Regard for *karmavāda*:

The great poet Kalidasa has the regard for *Karmavāda*.⁴ If someone neglects his duty and does not express honour to the honourable then he will get sure obstruction in his welfare.

pratibadhnāti hi śreyaḥ pūjyapūjāvyatikramah//

-[*Raghuvāmsam*, I.79]

Three noble duties:

The king has three noble duties-National education, national defence and economic progress of the nation. These duties are very essential for the peace and prosperity of a nation. King Dilipa performed these three duties very well. The poet gives obvious examples in this context-

*prajanām vinayādhanādrakṣaṇādbharaṇādapi /
sa pitā pitarastāsām kevalam janmahetavaḥ //*

[*Raghuvāmsam*, I.24]

Economic development and public relation:

In the delineation of the rich and loyal villages of the kingdom of Dilipa the economic development and public relation have clearly depicted. In the way of Dilipa to Vasistha's *āśrama* the brahmanas of the villages showed their respect to him. The cowherd also brought pure butter for their king.⁵

Simplicity and austerity:

Though, there is the description of the king Dilipa of the *Raghu* race found in the 1st canto of this *kāvya*, yet the poet does not show the luxurious royal life. The king Dilipa behaved like a common man. He was pious, dutiful, generous and obedient.⁶ When he went to the sage Vasistha he acted as a obedient student and slept on the bed of *kuśa* grass as a *vratācārī*. Generally, the person of royal family is seen luxurious by nature. But Kalidasa depicts Dilipa that he was not involved in the worldly affairs totally and led a life like a sage. Kalidasa mentions him as *rājyāśramamuni*.⁷ This is the Indian belief in austerity and simplicity.

The importance of *mantra-vidhi*:

The importance of *mantra-vidhi* (secret counselling) in the ruling system is also considered here.⁸ King Dilipa knew how to apply the *mantra-vidhi*. Kautilya also supports it –

mantrapūrvā sarvārambhāḥ

tasmādrakṣetmantram //

(*Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*, 11th prakaraṇa, mantrādhikārah)

Essentiality of Sacrifice, charity and *tapasyā*:

In *Śrīmadbhāgavadgītā*, it is described that the sacrifice, charity and *tapasyā* are essential for the purity of mind⁹. These excel in physical and mental vigour and uplift the soul. Kalidasa also defines the greatness of the sacrifice.

hvirāvarjitam hotastvayā vidhivadagniṣu/

bṛṣṭirbhavati sasyānāmavagrahaviśoṣiṇām //

[*Raghuvāmsam*, I.62]

Moral education:

Moreover, some sentences found here which are full of morals. For instance- *pratibadhnāti hi śreyah pūjyapūjāvyatikramah //*

[*Raghuvāmsam*, I.79]

Conclusion:

Thus, the great poet Kalidasa tries to shine in the reflected glory of our ancient culture and civilization. There was a time when *dharma* was followed or considered as the performance of duty, and our great gurus and sages commanded not only regard and respect but reverence of high degrees. Kings would decent down from their thrones to pay regard and obeisance to the saints. Knowledge was respected and the learned people occupied a place of honour.

From the above discussion we can say that the socio-cultural values found in the 1st canto of the *Raghuvāmsa* are relevant today and helpful for the society. The leaders of the nation can take the idea of good ruler, common welfare, public relation, national education, defence and economic progress etc. from the 1st canto of this *Kāvya*. These are the helpful factors of the social peace, progress and prosperity. If the people follow the ideal of king Dilipa and cultivate his virtues, then definitely there will be no evil in our society. Everyone should think his nation like a *āśrama* as said by Kalidasa¹⁰. They also realize their obligation to their society or nation and stand unitedly in all occasions.

Footnotes

1. *Raghuvāmsam*, I. 5-9
2. Ibid, I.13-28
3. Ibid, I.25
4. Ibid, I.20
5. Ibid, I.44, 45
6. Ibid, I.26, 44, 45
7. Ibid, I.58
8. Ibid, I.20
9. *yañjodānamtapścaiva pāvanāni manṣiṇām - (Śrīmadbhāgavadgītā, XVIII.5)*
10. Ibid, I.58

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Original works

1. *The RAGHUVAMSAM* of Kalidasa, ed. by M.R. Kale, published by Motilal Banarasisdass Private Limited, Delhi, 2005
2. *SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA*, translated by Gauricaran Borkotoki, published by National Tecno Printers, Guwahati, 2000
3. *MANUSAMHITA* translated by Kiran Sarma published by Chandra Prakash, Guwahati, 2008
4. *ARTHASASTRA* of Kautilya ed. by Rajanikanta Dev Sarma, published by Assam Prakasan Parisad Guwahati, 2002

Secondary works

1. Goswami Dr. M .- *Raghurapi Kavyam* published by Chandra Prakash, Guwahati, 1994
2. Sarma, Thaneswar -*Sanskrit Sahityar Itivritta* published by Chandra Prakash, Guwahati, 2002
3. Tiwar Dr. R. S. -*Mahakavi Kalidasa*, published by Chowkhamba Vidhyabhavan, Baranasi, 1999

