



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

TYPES OF OTHER PLANTS IN KALIDASA'S WORKS

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ABSTRACT:

Kālidāsa as a poet gives ample emphasis on the plot, technicalities of the poetry as well as on the description of nature. While depicting the nature in his works, plants have been given such importance that sometimes the reader gets swayed away and is compelled to think the plants, as human being. Name of some plants occur in different works of Kālidāsa that do not come under the category of trees or creepers. They grow in swampy fields or in water. They have beautiful flowers, different shaped leaves with specific attributes. Even the buttons growing in the swampy fields are very tasty to eat. Another type of plant recorded in Kalidasa's work is **heavenly plants**. They grow only in the domain of gods i.e. the Himalayas. Only the celestial and aerial semigods avail the chance of enjoying it.

KEY NOTES: Heavenly plants, Kalama, Durvā, Lavalī, Tamarasam, Kālāguru

INTRODUCTION:

Kālidāsa as a poet gives ample emphasis on the plot, technicalities of the poetry as well as on the description of nature. The emotive level and psychological attributes, are not only, confined to man but also spreads even to rivers, mountains, animals and plants. While depicting the nature in his works, plants have been given such importance that sometimes the reader gets swayed away and is compelled to think the plants, as human being.

He defines the trees, creepers, bushes and other along with the peculiarities, classification and sometimes taxonomy of particular plant. The plants have been distinguished as trees, creepers, small trees with flowers, bushes, hydrophytes, bulbous roots and grass etc. Creepers occupy a distinct place in

the Kāvya especially in Kalidāsa's works. The delicate, tender, dancing creepers arouse the reader aesthetically to a higher domain. Name of some plants occur in different works of Kālidāsa that do not come under the category of trees or creepers.

They grow in swampy fields or in water. They have beautiful flowers, different shaped leaves with specific attributes. Even the buttons growing in the swampy fields are very tasty to eat.

Another type of plant recorded in Kalidasa's work is **heavenly plants**. They grow only in the domain of gods i.e. the Himalayas. Only the celestial and aerial semigods avail the chance of enjoying it.

Like the trees and creepers they also grow in a particular period of time. They too are very useful with medical potentialities. A detailed and comparative study of the plants which do not come under the category of trees or creepers depicted in his different works in Sanskrit are taken into consideration here with all possible minutes.

1. DURVĀ

The learned people welcome the guests with the tip of the grass (durvānkura) plucked from earth.¹ It is considered sacred and mostly used in worship. However, Pārvaṭī decorated her hair lock with the garland inserting the grass in between the flowers.² Durvā is mentioned as a sacred grass used in all types of religious rites.³

2. KALAMA

It grows in the field and are uprooted once the grains are ripe and harvested. As the paddy trees are transplanted elsewhere after the first sprouting with a fixed time so also Raghu returned the kingdom to the rulers of Bengal after conquering it.⁴ The tress of ascetics is compared to the grains of Kalama due to the similarity in colour i.e. light copper colour. This plant becomes ready for harvest in the autumn season if planted in due time, in the month of rainy season.⁵ When the grains ripen the entire field looks very beautiful with the yellow colour.

3. KANDALĪ

The kandalī sprouts effortlessly when the soil gets moistened with the shower of rain. The sprouts of Kandalī look alike the 'Vaidurya' gem because of the dark green colour.⁶ Animals love to eat it. The button of Kandalī opens up with the sound of thunderbolt which is mentioned in the first half of the Meghadūtam.

4. KETAKĪ

The pollens of Ketakī are scattered being blown by the wind coming over the Muralā river. They fall on the body of the soldiers during the expedition of Raghu and gather so densely that the armour made of iron looks as the silk garment.⁷ Playing pranks with the beloved the lover throws pollens before her eyes which are of off white colour that resemble the set of white teeth.⁸ The air coming through the bank of the river covers the face of the ladies with white pollens and their faces look pale.⁹ When the

flowers of Ketakī come out entire area of Daśārṇa looks a white for Ketakī grows in abundance is semi hilly area.¹⁰

In the rainy season the forest looks very beautiful for the flowers of Ketakī. The ladies prefer to decorate their hair with the needle tipped buds which bloom in the rainy season.¹¹

5. KUMUDA

To depict the feeling of the defeated princes, aspirants for becoming the best bridegroom, Kālidāsa writes the Red lily blooms in the dawn with the rise of sun and white lily fades away for moon is no more in the sky. The rejected princes get marooned for they stand nowhere before the husband of Indumatī during the svayaṃvara.(12) like the white lily. This flower blooms in the ponds with clear and transparent water, in the autumn.¹³

The water lily white in colour called as Kumuda blooms in the night looking at the moon whereas the Red lily 'Paṅkaja' during day.¹⁴

6. LAVALĪ

Lavalī grows in the swampy field. The beauty of the face of the lady is said to be like the Lavalī.¹⁵ It is of (Lavalī dala pāṇdurānana) white colour.

7. NĪVĀRA

It is a variety of rice which grows of its own. The ascetics perform the sacrificial rites and offer the grains in the fire of the altar. The rice grains falling out of the pandal grows when comes in contact with the water.¹⁶ Looking at the Nīvāra plant grown under the tree, grains being dropped by the parrots while eating, sitting in the hole on the tree, Duṣyanta could know the existence of a hermitage.

The rice plant grows near the door of the hut of vasistha's ashram without any effort. The deers, taken care by the lady ascetics as their sons, eat these plants.(17) Afterwords, they take rest near the hut made of leaves and chew the food again. The paddy plant grows of it's own with the shower of rain.

¹⁸ This variety of grain is not available in the countryside.¹⁹ Kalidasa writes the ascetics live in the āśhram as independently as the nīvāra grows effortlessly; even if it is not planted and taken care of.²⁰ The grains at the beginning look pale and bulky like the pregnant woman.²¹ As the rain welcomes the grains so also sugrīva and others welcome Ram at the time of releasing the sacrificial horse.²² The king takes only one sixth of the total production of Nīvāra rice from the āśhram as tax.²³

8. PADMA

When the air mingled with the smell of padma seatters everywhere the environment becomes very lively.²⁴ The lotus fades away as the moon ascends the sky for it is unable to tolerate the beams of the moon. To mark this happening the poet says – as the soldiers send back the enemy as soon as the conch blows, so also the beams of moon make the lotus close its petals forcibly.²⁵

Kālidāsa is of opinion that one accepts merits that suit him. The lotus closes it's petals when moon beam falls upon it. Likewise, the lily gets squeezed when the sun rays enter into it. It proves the time of blooming of lotus and lily.²⁶

The same expression occurs in MD. Yakṣa requests the cloud to give passage to sun who will be coming to relieve the lotus from being tortured by the dew in the night. Through metaphor lotus becomes the heroine. Being separated from sun, the hero, lotus is crying which is reflected through the dew drops on it. The dew is inferred as the tears. Contrary to it, the aggressive love-lorn ladies are crying in the morning because they have to depart from their lovers. In this situation cloud will be the only solace who appeases the lotus as well as pacify the ladies. If the cloud will obstruct the path of the sun a great mishap will happen in case of lotus and lady both.²⁷ The small hanging hairs on the forehead of the lady make her face more attractive like, in lotus. The face is compared with the lotus flower and the hairs (alakacūla) as the bees. For it is believed that the bees get stuck to the lotus and remain there for whole night as the flower closes its petals in the evening with the absence of the sun in the sky.²⁸ If one of the couple gets poisoned, meets the other partner in the morning only, which helps in depicting the 'Vipralambha' sentiment. As the beard burns even by a small ball of fire, the lotus dries up with the snowfall.²⁹ That means, it blooms in the autumn but ends up in the winter as it is unable to resist the shivering cold, which proves the delicacy of the petals.

The smell of the flower, as such, is not mentioned significantly in a verse. But the mention of a special category of ladies who are told as 'Padmīnī Jātiyā nāyikā'³⁰ confirms that **Padma** has a specific smell also. The honey of the flower is very sweet and medicative. Smell of the petals sweetness of the honey in the 'Keśara' attract the bees towards it. The lotus blooms in autumn in the transparent pond.³¹ The sun shines on it as the sky is also crystal clear.³²

Except the red color, lotus also has blue colour (nīlotpala) which is very dear to Pārvaṭī. Kālidāsa admits that out of excess love for the eldest son, Kārtikeya Pārvaṭī chooses to decorate her hair with the feather of the peacock, which slips down while dancing to the tune of rain shower, in stead of the blue lotus which she is fond of.³³

As the daughter of a damsel, Śakuntalā looks very beautiful incurring all the feminine qualities. Very delicate as she is compared with the blue lotus in the first act of AS.³⁴ Wearing a bark garment when she moves in the hermitage it appears as if she is even more beautiful than before. 'Iyamadhikamanojñā' valkalenāpi tanvi' with a contrast background the beauty of a thing enhances. The lotus looks more beautiful amidst the Algae (saivāla) so also Śakuntalā with the bark on her body.³⁵

In the third act being pained by cupid Śakuntalā was confined to the resting stone under the creeper groves and was treated for the temperature with the leaves and stalks of lotus on the bank of the river Mālinī.³⁶ The lotus leaf was even used for writing a love letter to Duṣyanta with her nails 'Śukodarasnighdhe nalinīpatre nakhaiḥ nikhīptavarṇo kuru.'³⁷ The hands of Sarvadama look like the lotus, only half bloomed in the dawn.³⁸ As in the dawn the flower starts opening its petals slowly and gradually which is well observed by the poet.

A full grown lotus looks beautiful when the 'Keśara' in the middle of it gets fully developed. The eyes of the onlooker stick to the flower when the pollens emerge out of the anther in the centre of the petals.³⁹ The flower has been named differently in his works, like – 'Padma', Nīlotpala, 'Araviṇḍa', 'Sarasija', etc.

9. SĀLĪ :

The Sālī blossoms in the autumn season. As soon as they bear fruit they start hanging down because of the heaviness of the grains. When they swing to the tune of the air they just look amazing.⁴⁰

10. TAMARASAM

Unlike other heroines of Kālidāsa, Indumatī looked fairer and is compared to the 'Keśara' of Padma.⁴¹ Even the face of Daśaratha was compared with the 'Tāmarasa'. Indra butchered the wings of the mountains. Similarly, Daśaratha, with a face like 'Tāmarasa', killed the enemy with arrows.⁴² Simili of Indra & Daśaratha is given in relation to the colour i.e. fair one. A pond full with Tāmarasa and birds swinging in it looks like a lady.⁴³

HEAVENLY PLANTS:

1. HEMAPADMA

Holding the golden lotus in their hand the Rsis went for taking oblation in the Bhāgirathī looking beautiful like a garland, flowing from the tress of Śiva.⁴⁴ This flower blossoms only in mānsarovara the sacred lake, very dear to Siva and Pārvaṭī.

2. KALPAVRKṢA

It is a heavenly tree. It is imagined that this tree creates ornaments, clothes to adorn the ladies of Alakā.⁴⁵ The seven 'Ṛṣis' wearing the sacred thread made of pearls, bark embled with gold and the garland used for meditation adorned with jewels appeared before Siva like 'Kalpavrṛkṣa'. In the Himalays this tree enhances the beauty of the water house where where water is showered artificially without the help of man.⁴⁶ It can even produce wine. The sylvan gods from 'Gandhamārdana' mountain come to Pārvaṭī with wine, keeping in a vassel of 'Suryakānta' stone.⁴⁷ Daśaratha listens to the good news of marriage of Ram with Sita and becomes so happy that he compares Ram to 'Kalpavrṛkṣa'. The fruits of this tree ripen in no time.⁴⁸

3. KĀLĀGURU

This is also a heavenly tree which shivers looking at the expedition caravan of Raghu down the Himalayan range.⁴⁹ This is a scented tree found mostly in the lower area of the Himalayas.

9. PĀRIJĀTA

As Pārijāta excels among the heavenly trees, king Raghu of solar dynasty excelled all other kings, in status.⁵⁰ Adorning with several ornaments Viṣṇu's hands look like the branches of Pārijāta. As the Pārijāta looks stunning amidst the ocean so also Viṣṇu.⁵¹ Kuśa and Kumudvatī sharing the throne together appeared like Pārijāta.⁵² The goddesses like Pārvaṭī and Indrānī love to decorate their hair with the Pārijāta flower. Kālidāsa writes the aerial ladies stay staring at the tree for a long time enjoying the beauty.⁵³

10. SANTĀNAKA

The shade of this tree is very pleasant. So the aerial beings on the way take rest under it. The road of the Himalayas looks like the heaven because of these trees.⁵⁴ When Rāma was born the gods showered the Santānaka over the palace of Daśaratha. The gods became more happy than the father of Ram.⁵⁵ It was not an ordinary shower of blessings but a shower which fulfils all the desires.⁵⁶

11. SURARĀJA

It is of some category as Pārijāta. The tree Surarāja came out of the churning of the ocean along with Laxmī. In that manner, King Kumuda suddenly came out with his daughter in RV.⁵⁷

Some other plants have also been uttered in Kālidāsa's works like Sallaki, Lāsaka, naktamālaṃ and the like without giving much reference.

CONCLUSION: There are some other plants who have been mentioned only by name. The white Kasa flower resemble the choweries.⁸ The wild boars eat the mustā grass digging from the swampy field⁹ like wise the moss¹⁰ is mentioned (Śaivāla) along with the lotus, the name of Naktamalam' occurs in RV.¹¹ The sprouts of Yavas, a type of grain are used for the 'Nirājanā' an auspicious ceremony.¹² The 'Sallaki' trees emit a specific odour when the elephants break it's branches.¹³

END NOTES

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|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. RV – XVII – 12 | 21. RV – X V 59 | 39. MA – act – II – 10 |
| 2. KS-VII-14 | 22. RV XV – 58 | 40. RS – III – 10 |
| 3. VU – III-12 | 23. AS –act – I | 41. RV – VI – 37 |
| 4. RV- IV-37 | 24. RV – I – 43 | 42. RV – IX – 12 |
| 5. RS-III-13 | 25. RV – VII – 64 | 43. RV – IX – 37 |
| 6. RS-II-5 | 26. RV – XVII – 75 | 44. RV – XIII – 51 |
| 7. RV-IV- 55 | 27. MD – 42 | 45. MD – 79 |
| 8. RV-VI-17 | 28. RV – VIII – 55 | 46. KS – VI – 41 |
| | 29. RV – XV – 52 | 47. Ibid VIII – 75 |
| 9. RV-XIII-16 | 30. SD –ch – III | 48. RV – XI – 50 |
| 10. MD-24 | 31. RS – III - 1 | 49. RV – IV – 81 |
| 11. RS-II-21,24 | 32. RS – III – 25 | 50. RV – VI – 6 |
| 12. RV-VI-36 | 33. MD – 47 | 51. RV – X – 11 |
| 13. RS-III-2 | 34. AS – act – I – 17 | 52. RV – XVII – 7 |
| 14. RS –III-25 | 35. AS –act – I – 18 | 53. KS – VIII – 27 |
| 15. VU – V – 8 | 36. AS –act –III –7,16,20,22 | 54. KS – VI – 46 |
| 16. AS –act – I-16 | 37. AS – Act – III | 55. RV – VII – 8 |
| 17. RV – I – 49, 50 | 38. AS – act – VII –16 | 56. RV – X – 77 |
| 18. RV – I – 52 | | 57. RV – XVI – 79 |
| 19. RV – V – 9 | | |
| 20. RV – V- 15 | | |

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