Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

From the very ancient age, Indian linguistic studies were discussed with the divergent paths of language analysis such as phonetics, morphology, semantics, grammar, structure and etymology. All these branches of linguistics expose the in-depth and scientific approaches of Indian scholars. Further, the semantic features of language have been analyzed with the emphasis on different topics like, etymology, lexicography, syntax and so on. The areas of semantical studies in India, to a great extent are indebted to Sanskrit language also.

The Vedic literature and its subsidiary treatises discussed the prominence and possibilities of language studies. Among them
the Nirukta of Yāska paved the way for a lexicographical study in India. The Nighantu of Kaśyapa may be considered as an earliest treatise on the field of lexical works. The commentary of the Nighantu namely the Nirukta of Yāska, exhibited and discussed various dimensions of language analysis such as etymological, semantical, lexicographical, and hermeneutical features. The discussions on etymological analysis of Vedic words explained in the Nirukta are provided with the emphasis on semantical features. Through the observations based on semantic elucidations, the Nirukta of Yāska, highlighted remarkable observations on the Vedic texts, which stresses on the possibilities of meaning. Further, the linguistic analysis in the Nirukta substantiate its various dimensions of exegesis. Among them the above mentioned branches of linguistics, noted in the Nirukta, reveal some linguistic and sociological trends of the early times.

In the present study the observations of Yāska based on etymological and semantical principles are examined with the help of modern linguistic tools to some extend. According to
modern aspects of linguistics, the methods and observations of Yāśka present in the Nirukta are more or less valuable for the socio linguistic and socio semantic structure of analysis. The divergent dimensions of word analysis are explaining the nature of society and the popular usages of word meanings. The possibilities of sociological illustrations about the Vedic society can be discussed with the etymologies of Yāśka. The above mentioned materials are discussed in the present study with the linguistic approaches.

Linguistic and Semantic Approaches

In the beginning of the Nirukta Yāśka provides with some linguistic principles and views of many scholars of that time. Yāśka discusses the theory of speech and the concept of bhāva, which are some of the noteworthy discussions connected with the linguistic speculations in the Nirukta. More over, Yāśka introduces the fourfold division of words - nāma, ākhyāta, upasarga and nipāta. Similarly he illustrates the general stand-
points of *Nairuktas* such as all nouns are derived from roots and so on.

In the second chapter of the *Nirukta* the principles, rules and regulations applied in the *Nirukta* are discussed. The methods in etymological science accepted by Yāśka in the interpretation of Vedic words is discussed in this chapter. Here Yāśka's view on etymology is of great emphasis. According to Yāśka there are a number of actions which may be derived from a single syllable. Etymologists deal with the popular usages and their meanings in a language. Grammarians discuss the correct form of a word; an etymologist is engaged in searching all the possible forms and meanings of a word. This insight about language was known to Yāśka and he tried to define etymology through the method of breaking all limitations of rule based grammar.

In connection with the discussion on the word 'etymology', the *Nirukta* emphatically approaches the semantic features through word derivation and etymology, which is a branch of modern semantics. The discussion on the prominence of meaning
has introduced by Yāska with great emphasis. Among the four purposes of Nirukta introduced by Yāska, greatness of knowledge is much appreciable than anything in this world. Moreover, for the actual knowledge of Vedic texts, the study of Nirukta is an inevitable factor. The references to at least sixteen predecessors and contemporaries in the Nirukta reveal the fact that there were a rich tradition of linguistic studies in ancient India.

The Vedic words which are enlisted in the Nighaṇṭu have been derived by Yāska with the deliberations and elucidations on the possibilities of meaning. For instance, the discussion on the word gauh expresses the different usages and meanings of it in the Samhitā portions such as carma, śleṣmā, payāḥ and so on. Yāska's application of the principles of etymology such as varṇāgama, varṇaviparyaya and varṇavikāra are found out in the explanations of the words like gauḥ, uṣīram and so on. Yāska emphatically discusses the process of metathesis which may be illustrated as varṇaviparyaya according to Sanskrit
terminology. The words tālu, simha and so on are explained with the terms of metathesis.

Lexicographical Approaches

In connection with the discussion on word etymology, Yāska provided with various speculations on lexicography. The Niruktā of Yāska may be considered as an earliest lexicon work which opened the different areas of discussion on this field. The Niruktā discusses synonyms and homonyms of the Nighanta with different methodological analysis. This approach of Yāska has been examined in the fourth chapter of the present study. Explanations and discussions on homonyms are providing with various structural, accentual and semantical analysis of words. The Nighanta has enlisted more than thousand words in the Naighanta kāṇḍa. Among them Yāska explains above two hundred words of the various groups of synonyms. In the Naigama kāṇḍa at least two hundred and forty eight words are enlisted and Yāska explains each and every word through the
three chapters of the Nirukta. In the Daivata kāṇḍa also Yāśka illustrates the Vedic deities with the observations of various disciplines like Yājñikas, Nairuktas, Pūrve Yājñikas and so on. The methodical analysis of Yāśka on various instances explains the features of all semantic possibilities.

The style of Yāśka in the explanations of various words reveals the nature and scope of etymology which provides an interconnection with lexicographical features. In India, the tradition of lexicography had been developed to its zenith, which may be substantiated with the understanding of the lexicon works such as Amarakośa, Rabhasa, Medini and so on. Modern lexicon works are provided with the colloquial words and phrases in the word analysis and the variety of usages of words and phrases in the languages. Moreover, the idea of Thesaurus which provides with semantical community of words has been traced out back from the treatment of the Nirukta.
Hermeneutical approaches of Yāska

The observations on the word analysis exposed by Yāska paved the way for a hermeneutical strategy in later Indian exegesis. The explanation of the word *gauḥ* is a best example for the possibilities of hermeneutical approaches in the *Nirukta*. The work is intended to reveal the precise meaning of Vedic passages. Yāska's approaches on the explanations of Vedic words are provided with the discussions and observations of various disciplines and scholars. These observations are substantiating the different interpretations of Vedic literature at the age of Yāska. Some observations of the *Nirukta* connecting with etymology mention the features of anthropology, anatomy and so on. The word *śitāma* is a best example for the anatomical references on the inner parts of the body.

Some instances are explained by Yāska with the illustrations of various stories and legends. In the *Nirukta* Yāska mentions at least thirty-two stories or narrations such as the story of Akrūra, the story of Viśvāmitra and rivers, the story of Devāpi
and Śantanu and the like. The narrative style of Yāśka as an exegetical tool for treatise, will be helpful in the reading possibilities of the work. More over, this approach of Yāśka reveals the idea of influence of narratology, in the ancient treatises to a great extent. The legends or stories are used as a tool by various treatments like Brāhmaṇas, Purāṇas and even by scientific works for appropriate understanding and attraction.

Commentators and scholars of different disciplines accepted the etymological and derivational analysis of words as a tool for exegesis. Even in the poetic imaginations, the writers like Kālidāsa and others exposed this style of illustration. For instance, the verses like \( kṣatāt \ kīla \ trāyata \ ityudagrah, \)
\( vadantyaparṇeti \ ca \ tām \ purā \ vidaḥ \) which are explaining the etymological influences in the poetic depictions of Kālidāsa. The great commentator Abhinavagupta accepted the word etymology in the elucidations of the Nātyaśāstra and Dhvanyāloka.

The methodology of Yāśka in the explanations of Vedic words are far extending to the possibilities of meaning discourses
with the popular usages. This paved the way for two
different types of social features in the observations of Nirukta.
Some Vedic passages mentioned in the Nirukta illustrate the
cultural and social structure of Vedic age. Some explanations
and discourses made by Yāska provide much light about the
formation of the society at the age of Yāska.

While illustrating the importance of nipātas, their usage
as an expletive in sentence is mentioned by Yāska. Here Yāska
quotes a Vedic passage which is not found in the present Samhitā
portion. But the passage expresses the living conditions of Vedic
people who were suffering from poverty and the like.

While explaining the Vedic word apatyam Yāska discusses
the inheritance of patriarchy in the society. Here, Yāska provides
with the observations of different disciplines and law-givers.
More over, the inheritance of son and daughter are discussed by
Yāska in a detailed manner. The word etymologies like kanyā
kveyam netavyā, duhitā dorhitā and vidhavā vidhavanād
vidhāvanādvā are explained with a socio semantic approach.
Yāska’s etymologies are providing with a functional and behavioural analysis on different natural phenomena. The observations and etymologies sometimes explain the minute actions of the objects and creatures. The word ‘narāḥ’ has been explained as nṛtyanti karmasu, śākhā - khe śerate, hastah - prāśu hananāt and the like, are explaining the minute and particular actions of the living universe. The etymologies of simha, vyāgrha and so on are explaining the behavioural analysis of creatures. The style of Yāska, in the explanations of various objects and creatures exhibit the keen observation of ecological approaches in hermeneutics.

Later on the Amarakośa and other lexicon works of Sanskrit are also used the functional or behavioural analysis of words. The arrangement of different categories of words are done in the Amarakośa with an observatory approach on the functions and behaviour.

The remarkable thing about the Vedic quotations in the
Nirukta is that, there are a number of Vedic passages which are not found in the present Samhitā portion. It may be interpreted that, these passages are questioning the status of preservation of Vedic texts which are said to be maintained without any interpolation. More over, these passages are illustrating various social features of Vedic people.

The tradition of the Nirukta, which stresses on the discussion of meaning of Vedic hymns and words is not fully followed by the later generation. That tradition of etymological exegesis on Vedic literature was expired. This may be happened because of the influence of other disciplines like Mīmāmsā, Vedānta and so on. Yāska himself mentions different exegesis on Vedic passages which are noteworthy remarks on the educational status of the age of Yāska. But the methodology of Yāska, which elucidates the different possibilities of the science of Linguistics in the areas of semantics, lexicography and hermeneutics are more appreciated by later scholars of other disciplines. Further,
the *Nirukta* of Yāska paved the way for an etymological tradition in Indian hermeneutics.

Ancient Indian linguistic observations affirm a considerable position for semantic discussions. In connection with this, etymology has a firm standpoint for the deliberations of semantic problems. Yāska may be the first writer in the history of etymology in east and west. He treated it as a serious part of the science of linguistics. Yāska’s remarks on various linguistic and semantic problems are substantial to formulate the linguistic richness and profoundness of maxims during that age. Some observations in the *Nirukta* are the reflections of the society, during the time of Yāska. Modern linguistics is an interdisciplinary science which is connected with the various branches of cultural studies. Considering the synchronic method of modern linguistics, Yāska’s approaches are always giving remarkable advances and details on various linguistic features. More over, the study in Vedic etymology based on the *Nirukta* of Yāska reveals
the fact that Sanskrit language was used by the Vedic people in its fullest empirical possibilities. Meaning discourses which are enriched in the *Nirukta*, are still relevant in modern linguistic perspectives.