CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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Food assumes utmost importance among the three basic needs of human life, the other two being clothing and shelter. The role of food is evident in constituting growth and development of all living beings. The science upon the food substances is also equally important. Indians had realized this significant role of food in human life even in the early phases of their development. The concept of deification can be seen even in the annasūkta of Ṛgveda\textsuperscript{1}. The Sanskrit sources of ancient India indicate eminent contributions in the field of dietetics (Pathyāpathyanirṇaya) and in the science and art of cooking (Pākaśāstra and Pākakalā).

Dietetics

Dietetics is defined as the application of the science of nutrition to the human being in health and disease\textsuperscript{2}.

The field of dietetics is earning much appreciation even in all the systems of modern medicine than ever before. The system of Allopathy when introduced in India, particularly in Kerala where Ayurveda and other indegenious systems had been widely in vogue, highlighted the fact through promotional advertisements that the new system did away with the nastiness of dieting (pathya) and stringent

\textsuperscript{1} moghamanmana vinda apracetāḥ satyaṁ bravīmi vadha ītsa tasya/
śrīyamaṇḍa puṣyati no sakhīyaṁ kevalāgho bhavati kevalādī// RV.X. 117.6

\textsuperscript{2} Encyclopedia of Human Nutrition, ed. Denjamin Caballero, Lindsay Allen, Andrew Prentice, p. 32, Elsevier Ltd. Oxford 2005
lifestyle (*dinacarya*). These advertisements insisted only in taking allopathic medicines following one’s own style as before. This means that they took the advantage of the reluctance of the post colonial society for following the dietetic methods of treatment. But the modern trend of Allopathy has even changed that almost all super specialty hospitals have their own dietician who would visit the patient and prescribe the most adequate diet for the patient. Thus the system of Allopathy has realised the role of dietetics in treatment of diseases and in keeping good health. But it is evident that Ayurvedic treatises gave utmost importance to dietetics in their system of treatment.

**Culinary art**

Culinary art can be simply defined as the art of cooking. According to Burke, Man is a cooking animal. This art, supplemented with the strong foundation of the science of dietetics makes the Indian tradition of cooking more systematic. Thus dietetics and culinary art bear certain areas in common.

The history of food in the Vedic India can be drawn from the Vedic, Brähmaṇic and Upaniṣadic sources. Certainly *Valmīkīrāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* show a more systematic approach in dealing with the different aspects of food. Apart from the Vedic and epic sources we have references to food and food science in Ayurvedic, Purāṇic and classical Sanskrit sources. It is a noticeable

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3 Dr. K.Murali, (Principal Govt. Ayurveda College, Tripunithura) in one of his lectures given in the Department of Sanskrit, University of Calicut on *Āyurveda*

fact that Ayurveda and its tradition, stood as the champions for the development of critical notions of dietetics and culinary art in ancient and medieval India. Moreover we are fortunate that there are some published Sanskrit texts which deal exclusively with the topics of dietetics and culinary art. They are the following.

Kṣemaśarman’s Kṣemakutūhala - 16th Century CE
Raghunātha’s Bhojanakutūhala (1st pariccheda) - 17th century CE
Naḷa’s Pākadarpaṇa - unknown date

Apart from these, Bhojanakutūhala records many earlier important treatises like Prayogapārijāta, Kriyāsāra, Vaidyakaśabdasindhu and Ṣṛdayadīpa and quotes many other scholars like Haimana, Bhoja, Virāyana, Suśeṇa, Dhiṣṭana, Jairjaṭa, Vṛddhasuṣruta, Maitreya and Kāśīrāja. Ravindra Kumar Panda\(^5\) states that Suśeṇa has written a work on food science known as Vyañjanavarga. According to him, other works on food science are Pākādhikāra of Vaidyakasāra, Takravidhi of Rudrayāmala, Bhīmabhojanakautūhala of Vaidyadeśika, Rucivadhūgalaratnamālā of Parapraṇava, Tāmbūlakalpasamgraha of Nṛsimhabhaṭṭa, Pākādhikaraṇa, Kṣīrādiprakaraṇa, Vastuguṇāguṇa, Śākaguna, Annapānavidhi, Takrapānavidhi, Pākamārtāṇḍa, Vividhapākabhasmatailādinirmāṇa, Yogacintāmaṇī, Takrakalpa and Tāmbūlamanjari. Of them Tāmbūlamanjari has been published from Pracya Vidya Mandir, Badauda\(^6\). Manuscripts Library of Kerala University preserves a manuscript entitled Pākāvali which is

\(^5\) The author of research article pakakala aur pakasastra – ek vivecan
\(^6\) See the research article pakakala aur pakasastra – ek vivecan, Journal of Ganganath Jha K.S.V. Vol.LXIII(1-4) 2007, p.51-52
authored by Madhav Upadhyaya. Thus it is certain that there was a
great tradition in Sanskrit on food science. It is to be noted that most
of them being hitherto unpublished.

Though some of the texts are published, even the critical
studies of these published texts have not been made in a
comprehensive style. This project aims to explore generally the
contributions of ancient and medieval India in Sanskrit in the field of
dietetics and culinary art with special reference to the
Bhojanakutūhala of Raghunāthasūrin.