

CHAPTER -1

INTRODUCTION

The contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature is Vast and varied. The poets in Kerala have enriched the Sanskrit Literature by their works like Mahakavyas Lyrics, Grammatical works etc. The magnitude and variety of the contributions of Kerala to Sanskrit literature are really amazing. Kerala has contributed a number of Mahakavyas to Sanskrit literature. The Epic, Puranas, and contemporary history profoundly influenced the writers of the Mahakavyas in general and this applies well to the Mahakavyas produced in Kerala as well. The poems like *Srikrshnavilasa* of Sukumara, *Vasudevacarita* of Bhaskaramuttat, *Vasudeva Vijaya* of Vasudeva etc. are based on the *Bhagavata purana*, the poems like *Ramacarita* of Vidwan Godavarma Yuvaraja, *Raghaviya* of Ramapanivata, *Uttararamacarita* of Ramavarma Koccunnitamburan etc are based on the *Ramayana* and the poems like *Bharata Samgraha* of Ramavarman, *Yudhisthira Vijaya* of Vasudeva etc are based on the *Mahabharata*.

Srikrshnavilasa: - The Srikrshnavilasa is the most popular Mahakavya in Kerala. It consists of twenty cantos. The Author of this work is Sukumara, he is also called Prabhakara, said to have been a member of the kuttuly family of Namputiri Brahmins. The poem describes the story of the life of Krsna as is given in the *Bhagavata purana*. The poem shows the influence of Kalidasa in style as well as in general handling of the story .

Srikrnavijaya: - The author of *Srikrnsna vijaya* is Sankara. In twelve cantos he describes the story of krsna. The poet Sankara was a member of warrior community.

Pandava carita: -The *Pandavacarita* is another popular Mahakavya of Kerala. The poem is significantly entitled as it deals with the history of the pandavas. The poem does not contain the name of the author. In the beginning of the poem, the author praises the yamaka poet Vasudeva who wrote *Yudhistiravijaya*.

Bharata sangraha: - It is an incomplete work of Ramavarman, a royal prince of the Kola country. It describes the story of *Mahabharata*.

Yadunathacarita: - Yadunathacarita or *Bharata sangraha* is a Mahakavya of unknown authorship and date. In ten cantos it narrates the story of Krsna as told in the tenth skandha of the *Bhagavata*. It is written in a simple style. It is very clear that it was composed at the instance of a scholarly and generous Queen of Quilon ,who was the sister of the King AdityaVarman.

Bharatacarita: - The author of the work is krsnakavi and it contains twelve cantos. In it the poet describes the story of Dusyanta and sakuntala, and their son Bharata.

Kusabhyudaya: - *Kusabhyudaya* is a Mahakavya of unknown authorship. It was composed under the patronage of king Ramavarman of Quilon. In the introductory part of the poem the poet gives a long description of his patron. The poem describes in a simple style the story of Kusa, son of Rama.

Raghaviya: - *Raghaviya* is a Mahakavya in twenty cantos written under the patronage of the king of Ambalapuzha. It narrates the popular story of the *Ramayana*. The author of this kavya is Rama Panivada. As his name indicates, he belonged to the panivada or the Nampiar community.

Visnuvilasa: - *Visnuvilasa* is the other Mahakavya of Ramapanivada. In eight cantos it describes the story of the *Bhagavata*, dealing with the first nine incarnations of Lord Visnu. According to the tradition Ramapanivada must have been an elder contemporary of Kuncannambiyar.

Ramacarita: - *Ramacarita* is a Mahakavya composed partly by Vidvan Godavarma Yuvaraja of Kotannallur and completed by his nephew Ramavarma Koccunni Tampuran. The kavya contains the story of Rama in forty cantos.

Balyudbhava: - It is also called Mahedra vijaya is a Mahakavya written by Godavarma Yuvaraja. It contains sixteen cantos. It seems to be the earliest work of the poet.

Uttararamacarita: - It is a Mahakavya also written by Ramavarma Koccunni Tampuran, the author of *Ramacarita*. It consists of eight cantos. In this kavya the poet deals with the later incidents in the life of Rama.

Vasudevacarita: - *Vasudevacarita* of Bhaskara muttat is a Mahakavya written on the model of Sukumara's *Krsnavilasa*. The story of krsna based on the tenth skandha of the *Bhagavata* is the subject matter of the poem. Bhaskara muttat was a member of the vattapalli family in Sucindram. He must have flourished between 1805 A.D and 1875A .D.

Uttaranaisadhiyacarita: - It is a Mahakavya written by Madhavan Atitiri. In sixteen cantos it describes the story of Nala after his marriage with Damayanti.

Tapatisamvarana: - *Tapatisamvarana* of Kunnikrsna Nambiar of Narannoli is a Mahakavya about the story of Tapati and Samvarana based on the *Mahabharata*.

Sripariksidvijaya: - It is a Mahakavya written by Ramasvami Sastri. It contains ten cantos. The work was not published.

Raghavayadaviya: - It is a scholarly Mahakavya produced in Kerala. In ten cantos it narrates the story of Rama and Krsna.

Grammatical Mahakavyas

Srichitnakavya: - It was composed by Keraliet Krsnalilasuka with his desciple Durga Prasadayati. It is a sastrakavya in twelve cantos, it narrates the story of krsna from his days of infancy upto his svargarohana. Side by

side with this it illustrates the prakrta sutras of Vararuci and prakrt grammar of Trivikrma.

Vasudevavijaya: - It is a sastrakavya of Vasudeva which illustrates the Sutras of Panini. In seven cantos it describes the story of Srikrna based on the tenth skandha of the *Bhagavata*. As a vyakaranakavya, the *vasudevijaya* impresses the scholarly mind. Most of the verses are poetic even while they elucidate the science of grammar.

Subhadraharana: - *Subhadraharana* of Brahmadata Narayana is a sastra kavya illustrating the forms according Paninian grammar at the same time not loosing sight of aesthetic principles of a Mahakavya. The Mahakavya in 22 cantos deals with the story of abduction of Subhadra by Arjuna. The authour Narayana was a Namputiri Brahmin belong to a Visvamitra gotra ..

Sri Ramavarma Maharajacarita: - This belongs to the group of sastrakavyas of Kerala written by Vaikkom paccu Muttat. He was the court physician of of A.yilyam Tirunal RamavarmaMaharaja, who ruled the Travancore state between 1860-1880. In eight cantos it narrates the life and achievements of Ayilyaam Tirunal Maharaja and incidently of some other kings of Travancore.

Suruparaghava: - *Suruparaghava* of Ilattur Ramasvami Sastri is a Sastrakavya written on the model of Bhattikavya. In it the poet narrates the story of *Ramayana*. This work is not published and seems to contain 18 cantos out of which only eight cantos have been obtained. They reveal the poetic talents as well as the profound erudition of the author.

Yamaka Mahakavyas

Yudhisthiravijaya: - *Yudhisthiravijaya* of Vasudeva is one of the best Yamaka kavya in Sanskrit literature. In eight cantos it narrates the main Story of *Mahabharata*. Vasudeva was a Bhattathiri of the pattattu family of Namputhiri Brahmin in the village of Perumanam.

Sitaharana: - *Sitaharana* of Narayana is a Yamaka Kavya written on the model of *Yudhisthiravijaya*. The poem deals with the story of the abduction of Sita by Ravana and the Subsequent recovery by Srirama. Narayana the author is one of the notable writers of Kerala in the field of Yamaka poems. Nothing is known definitely about the author except that he lived at the time when Manukuladitya was ruling over the country. The *Sitaharana* to be an

imitation of the *Yudhisthiravijaya* and must be much later than the 10th century.

Historical Mahakavyas :-There are a large number of Historical kavyas in various forms in Sanskrit literature.

Musikavamsa: - *Musikavamsa* of Atula is the most important Historical Mahakavya in Sankrit produced in ancient kerala. Atula was a court poet of the Musika king Srikanda. In fifteen cantos it deals the history of the musika dynasty of Kerela from the ninth to twelfth century A.D.

Sivavilasa: - *Siva vilasa* of Damodara is a Semi-Historical Mahakavya. It has eight cantos and contains 505 Verses. Although the poem called Sivavilasa, the glory of Siva, it deals with the story of Unniyati the daughter of Virakerelavarman of Odanadu or Kayamkulam.

Visakhavijaya: - Visakhavijaya Kerelavarma Valiya koyil Tampuran is a notable Historical Mahakavya. Kerelavarma Valiya koyil Tampuran (1845-1914) is perhaps the last great luminary in the brilliant galaxy scholar poets of Kerala. *Visakhavijaya* is the most important among keralavarma's works

he was born on the 19th of February 1845 in the royal family of Lakshmiapuram at Changanassery. In twenty cantos it gives a biography of poet's protage Visakhani Tirunal Maharaja against the background of the history of Travancore and the poet's own life.

Angalasaraja: - *Angalasaraja* of A.R. Rajarajavarma (1863-1918) is a Historical Mahakavya in 23 cantos 1910 verses. The subject is the rise and progress of the British empire in India with special reference to their contact with Travancore. The poem was written in 1897.

Sriramavarmavijaya: - *Sriramavarmavijaya* of Kunjan variar of Mankulamnara Variar in Ponnani taluk (1872-1942), also called Rudradasa is a Historical Mahakavya in 10 cantos. It describes the life and achievements of Rajarsi Ramavarman of Cochin up to his "Sastipurti".

ManavikramaSamutiri Maharaja carita: - It is an Incomplete Mahakavya written by Vellanasseri Vasunni Muttat (1863-1918). It narrates the achievements of Manavikrama Etti Tampuran.

Mataphupalacarita: - Mataphupalacarita of Pantalam Raghavavarma Tampuran (1874-1940) is a biographical Mahakavya in ten cantos. It describes the biography of king Ramavarma of Cochin.

RamavarmaKavya: - It is a Mahakavya written by Koccunni Tampuran. It consists of nine cantos. The poem is written in praise of Ramavarma of Cochin who abdicated his responsibility as a king.

Keralodaya: - *Keralodaya* is a Historical Mahakavya of Dr K.N. Ezhuttaccan in twenty-one cantos with nearly 2500 verses describes the entire history of Kerala – political, social and cultural against the background of South Indian history. According to the author, the first verses was penned in 15th December 1959 and the last on 19th May 1962.

Kristubhagavata: - *Kristubhagavata* of prof. P.C. Devassia Said to be the first Mahakavya based on the life of Jesus Christ. It consists of thirty-three cantos. The theme is historical and well known. The author deals with the story in a simple but impressive style.

Viswabhanu: - *Viswabhanu* of prof .P.K Narayana Pillai is a Mahakavya describes the important incidents in the life of Swami Vivekananda. Dr. Pillai is also an author of eminence in Sanskrit, Malayalam and English. It consists of twenty two cantos.

Navabharata: - *Navabharata* of Mutukulam Sridhar is a Historical Mahakavya composed in Eighteen cantos. It describes the story of Jawaharlal Nehru against the background of the Indian freedom struggle.

SrividhyadhiRaja vijaya: - It is another Mahakavya of Mutukulam Sridhar. The poem contains Nineteen cantos and deals with the life and activities of Srividhadhirajaguru, popularly known as “Cattampiswami”.

Nayakabharana: - It is the third of the Mahakavya written by Mutukulam Sridhar. The poem is historical and it contains Nineteen cantos.

There are many Mahakavyas having their origin in Kerala. All though we have got many Mahakavyas like Sri Krsnavilasa of sukumara, Bharatha sangraha of Ramavarma etc. worthy of mention , there are certain other Mahakavyas, which have not came to light till the beginning of twenty first century. Even now, those kavyas, are remaining in the manuscript stage itself.