PREFACE

In Classical Sanskrit literature, the epics Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata occupy a supreme position because of their literary, as well as philosophical merits. They are an eternal source of inspiration for mankind. Further, the Mahākāvyas of great poets like Kālidāsa, Bhāravi, Māgha, and Śrīharṣa also are regarded as great works which embody the great values and heritage of Indian culture. The Mahākāvyas of Kālidāsa’s Raghuvamśa and Kumārasambhava and Bhāravi’s Kīrātārjunīya, Māgha’s Śiśupālavadha and Śrīharṣa’s Naiṣadham are considered unique creations possessing great literary merits. That is why they are treated as Pañcamahākāvyas in Sanskrit literature. The definition of Mahākāvyas as given by Daṇḍī and Viśvanātha is truly followed in these poems. Probably, they might have formulated their definitions basing on these Pañcamahākāvyas. Scholars are of the opinion that the Mahākāvyas tradition started with Kālidāsa and continued even after him. This fact clearly indicates the popularity of the Mahākāvyas in the Sanskrit literature.

These five Mahākāvyas received the attention of scholars and they were studied in respect of plot construction, characterization, social conditions and the religious aspects and also with regard to the great messages they expound apart from their literary merits.
As all the four poets were brought up in vedic tradition, they were very much familiar with the Vedas, Dharmaśāstra, Smṛtīs Purāṇas and Kauṭīlyās Ardhaśāstra they naturally teach the same principles of Indian culture like truth, tolerance, universal brotherhood, service to mankind etc.

They further enunciate the relative merits of the four fold values of life namely Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa. Each of these poets formed critical studies dealing with literary merits of their works, their concepts of life, education, their views on politics, religion, philosophical thoughts and also polity. Though some views are expressed here and there regarding the ethical principles reflected in these five poems, a systematic study of the entire ethics reflected in these works has not been made nor is a critical and comprehensive study attempted. The present thesis: “THE ETHICS REFELTED IN PAÑCAMAHĀKĀVYAS: A COMPARITIVE STUDY” is intended to fill this gap.

Significance of the present study:

The Indians are more spiritual than materialistic. They strongly believe that they can attain happiness by performing good deeds whereas bad deeds lead to unhappiness. They fixed their mind on a life beyond death. So, it is necessary to follow some rules of conduct to achieve the supreme goals of life. Sanskrit literature being the main vehicle of Hindu religion,
our philosophy and ethics preach highest ethical principles. All Sanskrit works from Vedas to all branches of knowledge sing the glory of ethical religion. There is a happy blend of religion and ethics in Sanskrit literature: All the institutions of Hindu society are invariably built on the foundations of the fundamental principles of ethics. Even the religious works like Bhagavadgītā and various religions like Advaita, Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita stress the need to imbibe basic values of morality as they are the basis for leading a life of spirituality. Even the works of great poets like Kālidāsa, Bhāravi, Māgha and Śrīharṣa and the Sanskrit dramatic literature apart from pleasing they also preach the highest values of life. The moral sayings of Vālmīki, Vyāsa, Bhārtṛhari, Cāṇakya are significant as they discuss the essential values to be cherished by mankind. So, it is obvious that the Sanskrit literature strongly believed in the efficacy of ethical laws denoted by the comprehensive term called Dharma which means right word, right thought and right deed. The Sanskrit literature contributed immensely for the preservation of value system of our nation. That is why the universal sayings like “Satyam Vada, Dharmam Cara, Dharma Eva Hato Hanti, Dharmo Rakṣati Rakṣitaḥ.” are popular among the people of our nation. The concept of the four aims of life namely Dharma, Artha, Kāma, Mokṣa further strengthen the moral foundation of the Hindus. In this way, the
study of ethical principles and their relavance is of paramount importance to any nation or society if it wants to progress in the right direction.

Keeping this noble purpose in mind and the supreme importance of it for mankind the present steady "THE ETHICS REFELTED IN PAÑCAMAHĀKĀVYAS: A COMPARITIVE STUDY" is undertaken.

Methodology :-

The present study is based on a thorough study of the original works of Kālidāsa namely Raghuvamśa, Kumārasambhava, Bhāravi’s Kirātarjunīya, Māgha’s Śiśupālavadha and Śrīharṣa’s Naiṣadhīya Caritam. The commentaries of Mallīnātha on Raghuvamśa, Kumārasambhava, Kirātarjunīya, and Śiśupālavadha and Narāyana’s commentary on Naiṣadhīya Caritam are also studied to glean the original ideas of the poets. Further the studies of various scholars on Kālidāsa: A critical study of Amal Dhari Singh, India in Kālidāsa of B.S. Upadhyaya, Kālidāsa: Date, Life and works of V.V. Mirashi, Kālidāsa of R.D.Karmankar, Kālidāsa of Hillebrandt, Kālidāsa of K.S.Ramaswami Sastri, Kālidāsa of G.C. Jhala, Kālidāsa of W.Ruben, Kālidāsa: His Art and Thought of T.G.Mainkar, The Date of Kālidāsa of K.C.Chattopadhyaya, History of Sanskrit Literature of V.Varadāchāri, A History of Sanskrit Literature of A.B.Keith,
Kirātārjūṇīyam of Bhāravi with the commentary of Mallinātha Sūri, Dhvanyālōka of Ānandavardhana with the commentary of Mallinātha Sūri, Śiśupālavadha of Mañgha of Sivadutta Dādhīca, Naiṣadhiyā Caritam of Śrīharṣa of Ācharya Shehsaraja Sharma regmi, The Ethics of Sankara of Neelakantan Elayath, Hindu Ethics of G.A. Chandavarkan, A critical study of Śrīharṣa Naiṣadhiyā Caritam by Arunodaya Natvarlal Jani, Kāvyālaṅkāra of Bhāmaha by P.V. Naganatha Sastry, Principles of Ethics by P. Chatterji, Viduranīti A commentary on ethical politics by B.S. Bist, Foundation of Indian Ethics of Ilaravi, comparative Ethics in Hindu and Buddhist tradition of Roderick Hindery, Hindu Ethics of G.A. Chandavarkan, political thought in Sanskrit kavya of Geeta Upadhyaya, Manusmṛtih of J.L. Shastri etc., have also been consulted in evaluating the original works and arriving at right interpretations of the poets.

The present study: -

The present thesis is classified into ten chapters.

The first chapter is an introductory chapter entitled “Classification of Sanskrit poetry and the place of Pañcamaḥākāvyas”. It is intended to make a general classification of Sanskrit Kāvyas as padya, gadya, mahākāvyas, Khaṇḍakāvyas’s Campus, dramas etc., depending on various external factors. Further, it also presents other kinds of poetry namely
Uttamottama, Uttama, Madhyama, Adharma etc., basing on internal factors. The chapter ends with a brief presentation of the contents and importance of Pañcamahākāvyas in Sanksrit literature.

The second chapter namely “ETHICS A HISTORICAL AND LITERARY APPRAISAL” is devoted to present the definition, scope and a historical study of the ethical system in Sanskrit literature. In this comprehensive chapter the definitions of ethics offered by both Indian and Western scholars is subjected to a critical study. Further, the principles of ethics as reflected in Vedas, Upaniṣadas, Dharmaśāstras, Purāṇas and in epics Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and the Indian bible Bhagavadgītā are highlighted here. The universal messages preached by the works cited above and their relevance for all times and in all climes are focused in this chapter.

The third chapter namely “THE SOCIO POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS REFLECTED IN PAÑCAMAHĀKĀVYAS” is devoted to present a detail in the socio political and religious views of the poet Kālidāsa. As the ethical foundation depends on these three fields it is necessary to analyse them properly as to what extent ethics formed the cementing force in the three walks of life. So, the socio political and religious stricture, the nature of administration, the use of three Śaktis and fourfold policy of Sāma, Dāna, Bheda, Dānda, hierarchy of the administration and
the policies of the state towards people especially the women, are the important topics discussed in this chapter. The next Mahākāvya Kumārasambhava and the socio political and religious conditions reflected in this work form the subject of discussion. The third important Mahākāvya Kirātārjunīya its contents, the changes introduced in the original story and the socio political conditions are presented here. The Śīṣupālavadha in twenty cantos describes the killing of Śīṣupāla by Kṛṣṇa. The socio political and religious conditions reflected in this poem are the same as we find in Smṛtis and Dharmaśastras. However his views on politics, and political diplomacy are very comprehensive and original indicating his indepth knowledge in Rājānīti In the same way the last Mahākāvya Naiṣadhīyacarita, its detailed contents, the socio political and religious conditions and also the position of women are the topics presented here.

Kālidāsa’s humility, his absolute faith in ancient heritage, the ethics relating to Varṇāśramadharma, education, love and marriage, family life, administration, the king, ministers, sages, Purohitas and spirituality are the important subjects elaborately discussed in the fourth chapter namely”.

"THE ETHICS REFLECTED IN RAGHUVAMŚA OF KĀLIDĀSA."

This chapter is very comprehensive and forms the original and significant contribution in the thesis.
The next chapter is "THE ETHICS REFLECTED IN KUMĀRASAMBHAVA OF KĀLIDĀSA". The main theme of the work is the marriage of Śiva with Pārvatī as such there is not much scope for political ethics but socio-religious ethics. So, in this chapter the ethics relating to four Āśramas, love and marriage, family life and religion are presented basing on the original text. The significant character of this chapter is the discussion of wider principles of ethics relating to marriage and also religion.

 Kıraṭārjuniyam is another important Mahākāvyya which is the source of ethics especially relating to politics. So in the sixth chapter the political ethics reflected in the speeches of Bhīma, Draupadī, Arjuna, and Yudhiṣṭhira and also the ethics followed by Duryodhana in his administration are systematically analyzed in the sixth chapter namely "KIRĀTĀRJUNĪYAM AND ETHICS". Further, the ethics relating to king's diplomacy, the fourfold political expedients, state and ethics, and the concepts of trivarga and four Puruṣārthas, and the general ethical system gleaned in the entire work are the topics subjected to critical study. It is also a thorough study representing the originality of the thesis.

The seventh chapter "THE ETHICS REFLECTED IN MĀGHA’S ŚĪŚUPĀLAVADHA" is directed to present a comprehensive analysis of
ethical principles especially relating to politics. The intricacies of political diplomacy as understood from the speeches of Balarāma and Uddhava and also the course adopted by Kṛṣṇa in dealing with Śiśupāla give ample scope to discern the minute things of diplomacy and also the ethical principles underlining this diplomacy. As Śiśupālavadha is a manual of political wisdom the subtle principles of ethics are deep and penetrating.

Naiṣadhīyacaritam gives much scope for a critical study of ethical principles relating to society, polity and religion. So, the eighth chapter. “THE ETHICS REFELTED IN NAIṢADHĪYACARITA” is devoted to present Śrīharṣa’s ethical ideas in the fields of Varṇāśramadharma, education, marriage and family life, chastity of women, the king, state and ethics and also a general survey of the moral principles as enunciated by Śrīharṣa in Naiṣadhīyacaritam.

The ninth chapter “THE ETHICS REFELTED IN PAṆCAMAHĀKĀVYAS: A COMPARITIVE STUDY” is intended to highlight the significant character of ethics of each poem and to point out the common features as well as the differences in the outlook of ethics historically. As Kālidāsa belonged to 1st century or 5th century AD, the impact of Vedas, Smṛtis Dharmaśāstras, and Kauṭilyās Arthaśāstra is profound on him. During the time of Kālidāsa the society was not so
complex and political when compared to the times of Bhāravi (575 – 600 AD). Māgha (700 AD) and Śrīharṣa (1150 – 1200 AD). The works of Bhāravi’s Kirāṭarjunīyam and Māgha’s Śiśupālavadha are based on Mahābhārata which describes a family feud over the kingdom which ultimately ends with a war. So the political diplomacy and many intrigues, characterised the theme of the work. As both the works Kirāṭarjunīyam, and Śiśupālavadha borrowed the themes from this great epic, it is but natural that they give more importance to different shades of ethics relating to society, religion and especially politics. The last Mahākāvyya Naiṣadhiyacaritam of Śrīharṣa belongs to a later period and that is after many centuries of the first four Mahākāvyas. It is a Śāstrakāvyya throwing much light on the nature of society, religion and politics. The society changed rapidly but ethics guided all walks of life during this period also but the outlook of ethics also changed. Keeping this background in view, this chapter traces the historical and comparative perspectives of ethics noticed in Pañcamahākāvyas.

The last chapter “CONCLUSION” contains the summary of the above nine chapters and also a critical analysis of ethics and its relevance to the society.
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