CHAPTER - XI

GENERAL ESTIMATE AND CONCLUSION

Right from the Vedic age the contribution of women has played an important role. Female seers like Lopamudrā, Viśvavārā, Apālā, Ghośā etc. have addressed various deities through their hymns for their well-being and marital happiness. The poetic acumen and multifaceted scholarship found in the hymns of the Vedic poetesses are also reflected in the poetry of the talented ladies belonging to the medieval and modern era. The poetesses like Viśvāsadevī, Gaṅgādevī, Bīnabāyī, Tirumālāmbā, Rāmabhadrāmbā, Devakumārikā, Lakṣmī Rājñī etc. belonging to 14th-18th century AD, have beautifully expressed their thoughts and feelings, have given us a great deal of historical and cultural information and also have thrown enlightening light on the social and family life prevalent in those days. This feature is rarely found in the contemporary poets contributing to Sanskrit literature. Secondly these poetesses of medieval period have also highlighted the political struggles as well as the glorious deeds performed by the powerful kings who will therefore be remembered by the generations to come. In short, the literature of these poetesses serves as a mirror showing different aspects of the spectrum of the contemporary human life.

The title 'Madhurāvijaya' is appropriately given by poetess Gaṅgādevī, since it depicts the victory of king Kampana over the Sultan of Madhura.

Rāmabhadrāmbā has aptly named the Mahākavya Raghunātha-Abhyudaya as describing the gradual rise of king Raghunātha.

In the case of the text Vaidyānta-prāśāda-praṇāti the word 'Prāśāda' primarily means 'a palace', but it is applied to the temple of Vaidyanātha out of honour and devotion for that deity.

Composition Santānagopāla depicts the story of a Brahmin who gets back his Santāna (Progeny) through the divine grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
Among the Campū compositions contributed by the learned ladies, I have discussed in chapter II, three Campū texts, viz., Ganḍāvakyāvalī, Dvārakāpattalam and Varadāṃbikāpariṇāya, which are divided into the chapter variously called as Prakaraṇa, Viveka and Varnāna respectively.

The word वर्णन means section or chapter of a book. The Campū text written by Bīnabāyī is named Dvārakāpattalam. The printed text edited and published by J. B. Chaudhari carries the title ‘परिणामकालम्’. Accordingly Dvārakāpattalam contains the depiction of the city Dvāraka taken from Dvārakāmāhātya found in Prabhāsa khaṇḍa of Skandapurāṇa.

As per the definition of Campū, these texts not only contain the combination of prose and poetry but also the depiction of important personalities, episodes as well as the description of various cities, rivers, sacred places of pilgrimage and the rituals performed by the people in those days.

Similarly, in the modern period, we find the compositions of Pandita Kshama Rao’s Satyāgrahīta, Uttarasyāgrahīgītā and Svarājavijaya which describe the freedom struggle and extra ordinary personality of the father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Other compositions are Mirālaharī, Tukārāmacharitam, Rāmadāsacaritam and Jānesvaracaritam which depict the great deeds of these saintly personalities.

Like wise other texts of some modern poetesses like Bhāvānjaliḥ and Arcanam consist of the poems glorifying certain divinities, great sages as well as the celebrated scholars and poets. ‘Pragna Bharti’, S. B. Varnekar has rightly observed,

“स्फुटकाल्यासंग्रहात्मकम् ‘अर्चनम्’ नाम पुस्तकें मुद्रणसंस्कारान्तर ज्ञानिन्य सा में प्रति प्रेषितवती। कवित्वं दुर्लभं लोकेः इति वचनानुसार संस्कृततांयने कृत्यभूरिपरिश्रमाणायि सुदुर्लभं कवित्वम् उमाया: भास्करमि अलंकरोतिति इति ‘अर्चनम्’ अवलोकनथत मया अनुभूतमि।
‘Agniśikāha’ (the flame of fire) written by Pushpa Trivedi, describes the burning pain and fire of anguish experienced by the lady poet separated from her lover.

‘Anubhūti’ primarily means direct perception or cognition. Pravesh Saxena has however highlighted her experience pertaining to the worldly objects and empirical matters.

The Rākīs, during the Vedic period have invoked deities like Indra, Agni, Aśvins through their hymns. Well known kings like Asmāti, Bhāvayavya, Purūravas, Kṛtvārya and sages like Ambhrṇa, Kakṣivat, Cyavana, Bhṛgu, Aṅgiras, Agastya, Atri, Kaśyapa etc. are rightly mentioned by Rākīs.

Similarly, medieval poetesses have shown their love and reverence for celebrated kings like Bukka, Kampana, Raghunātha, Rāṅa Amarasimha, Rājasimha, Udayasimha, Saṅgrāmasimha etc. who ruled during 14th to 18th century.

The poetesses of the medieval period have shown their calibre and talent by giving a graphic picture of the places like Madhura, Vijaynagar, Kanchi, Penugonda, Tanjore, Chittor, etc.

This delineation sheds light not only on the super deeds of the emperors like Kampana and Raghunātha, but also on the great development of urban design and city planning during 14th – 18th century AD.

People enjoyed happiness during the reign of these kings. There were festivals and ceremonies celebrated in their kingdom. The kings used to attend prominent social functions and religious ceremonies.

Glorification of divinities occupies a prominent place in Sanskrit poetry right from the Vedic age. The poetesses of the medieval period have
offered the prayers to the great deities like Śiva, Pārvatī, Gaṇesa, Viṣṇu, Rāma and have followed the footsteps of the earlier Sanskrit poets.

Different types of literary beauty are found in the works of Poetesses belonging to Vedic, Medieval and modern period. In the compositions of medieval poetesses we find different literary aspects like Rasa, Guṇa, Rāti, Alaṅkāra, Aucitya, Pāka etc. depicted by them in their poetry.

Poetesses of Medieval period should have mentioned the names of the contemporary Muslim rulers like Mohammad Shah Lodi, Ibrahim Lodi, Akbar, Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb etc. and their time. Moreover poetess Ramābhadrāmbā has not given any information regarding the life and works of king Timma, one of the prominent ancestors of the Tuluva dynasty in her Mahākāvyya Raghunātha-Abhyudaya. The royal court of king Raghunātha was embellished by learned scholars, artists and scholarly ladies. Poetess Rāmabhadrāmbā has not referred to the names of these learned scholars and poets even though they lived during the reign of famous and valorous king Raghunātha of 17th Century.

Some of the verses are not found in the manuscript of Mahākāvyya Madhurāvijayam as stated by the commentator P. S. Shastry. On the basis of the in-depth study of the Mahākāvyya Madhurāvijayam and Raghunātha-Abhyudaya, we find different literary aspects in their composition (vide chapter-X). Among the Khaṇḍakāvyas, Vaidyanātha-prāśāda-praśasti is more interesting and more enlightening than the other similar text studied by me. Santanagopāla Kāvyā merely follows and imitates the story delineated in the tenth Skandha of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. There is neither novelty of the theme nor skill of presentation.

Among the modern texts composed by the learned ladies the poetry of Kshama Rao at once impresses us with the variety of the theme and mastery over linguistic skill and literary diction. Since other poetesses like Vanmala Bhavalkar, Nalini Shukla, Mithilesh Kumari Mishra, Pushpa Trivedi, Uma Deshpande and Pravesh Saxena have composed small poems
depicting different topics there is hardly any poetic skill or special literary beauty found in these texts. In this way we find the composition contributed by the Sanskrit poetesses belonging to different eras.

Right from the Vedic age up to the modern period, the ladies have attempted to compose the poetry replete with mythological, historical and social information. We also find literary charm and Philosophical majesty in their poetry. Moreover the ladies of the medieval and modern period were living in different regions of our motherland; accordingly we get references to the cities, rivers, mountains and prominent historical events, which took place in those parts of the sub continent.

In this thesis, I have humbly attempted to study the poetry of these talented ladies who have contributed to Sanskrit Literature through the ages. This is a modest attempt to present the brief profile of some Sanskrit poetesses who have adorned our nation and who have made valuable contribution to Indology in general and Sanskrit Poetry in particular.

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