CHAPTER VIII
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8/1. Introduction:

The poet is the creator of poetry and the critic propounds principles and ideals for its evaluation. It is valid only to certain extent. Indian pundits of poetry hold the view that a poet should have proper knowledge of poetics. Bhāmāh has gone to the extent of saying that a poet alone is the master of poetics - 'ajñasyeva pragalbhatvamakaveh śāstravedanam' (Kāvyālankār, 1/3). Ācārya Vāman has distinguished between viveki and aviveki (arocakī and satrapābhvyahārī) poets. The viveki poet is master of poetics - 'purve sisyāh vivekitwāta, netare tadwiparyayāta'(Kāvyālankār sutra, 1/2/2-3). According to Ezra Pound rules and regulations of the poet should be given preference to those of others.\(^1\) Barfield accepts good poetry and good criticism as interdependent.\(^2\)

Sānkardeva and Tulsīdāsa are devotional poets and not legislator or scholars of poetics. They did not write poetry as such but the poetry of devotion. Devotional philosophy is discussed in their works but not poetics. Their devotional philosophy can therefore be taken as their poetics.

There is no explicit expression of ideas relating to poetics in Sānkardeva. But it appears that he was conscious
that his poetry would be subjected to discussion and interpretation. He, therefore, expressed his devotional assumptions in Bhakti-Pradip and Bhakti-ratnakara. Such ideas are scattered in other places as well. It may, therefore, be assumed that there must be scattered verses in his works which may help us in putting together his ideas of poetry.

Tulsi did not write any book on poetics. However, his assumptions relating to poetry are scattered in his writings. But it cannot be taken as basis of giving him status of scholar of poetics. Poetical legislation was not his goal. Ideas relating to poetry have found place within the limitations of devotional poetry.

On the basis of scattered verses in Sankar and Tulsi certain conclusion can be found about their ideas of poetry.

1. Kāvyā- lakshan
2. Kāvyā-prayojana
3. Kāvyā-hetu
4. The subject of poetry
5. Aspects of poetry
6. Forms of poetry.

8/2. Kāvyā- lakshan :

For poetry and poetical form Sankardeva has used several
terms - Kavita (Rām, 7/756), gīta (Kir. 609, 724, 1313; Bhag. 8/1092) payār (H.U.2.; R.H.K. 363, 626; Bhag. 10/1976), padacava (R.H.K. 533), padabandha (H.U. 356; R.H.K. 4; Bhag. 11/547, 840), kathā-chabi (R.H.K. 110, 453), ihumuri (R.H.K. 430, 754; Bhag. 8/400), ihūna (R.H.K. 777; Bhag. 8/293), Hari-kirtana (Kir. 142), Kṛsna-kathā (Kir. 511) etc. Tulsidāsa has used kabittva (Mānas, 1/7/6), kavita (Ibid, 1/8/2) etc.

There is very little about classical elements in Sankardeva, although there is something like Ānandavādi viewpoint. He has referred to the fusion of the taste of honey and milk in poetry, thereby supporting the idea of the delightfulness and good as the essential element of poetry - 'vyāso denta kathāta ranjana'.

In Rāmcaritmānas Tulsidāsa has described the elements of poetry at the very outset:

'Varnāmarthasanghānām rasānām chandasāmapi. mangalānām ca karttārau vande vāṇīvinayakau'.

- Mānas, 1/1, sloka

It is a combination of words, meanings, rasaṣ, versification, figures and suggestions and sensibility. It should also be replete with the sense of the good. Good ideas are essential for poetry. To Tulsī poetry is in fact an expression of the good ideas of the poet in whom heart, intelligence and mind combine:
Hrdaya-sindhu mati-sipa samānā.
Śvātī sāradā kahahin sujānā.
Jaun barśai bara bāri bicārū.
Hohin kabita mukutānānī cārū.

- Mānas, 1/10/4-5

Here the didactic attitude is obvious in which the welfare of the people is dominant. It is also reflected in following verse:

kīrati bhaniti bhūti bhali soī.

surasari sama saba kanha hita hoī.

- Mānas, 1/13/5

As the subject of their poetry Sankar and Tulsi took up mainly the praise of their deity. Even the best poetry for them is purposeless in its absence. On the otherhand even defective poetry becomes meaningful if it is dedicated to the praise of God. It reflects their sensibility as devotee.

The success of poetry depends on its simplicity and goodness. To Tulsi great poetry depends on its simplicity and goodness. To Tulsi great poetry creates forgetfulness of enmity. Besides effectiveness of presentation of greatness in idea and feeling is necessary in poetry.

A. The poet:

At some places Sankardeva refers to himself as kavi.
(H.U. 178, 429) or *racavitā* (kīr. 1690, 1722; R.H.K. 532, 794), but mostly as *Kṛṣṇa-kinkar* (Bar. 8, 9, 11; Kīr. 1195, 1300; H.U. 371, 616), dāsa (Bar. 14, 31), sevaka (Ibid, 15), vācaka (Kīr. 1345) etc. Tulsidāsa calls himself a kavi (Mānas, 1/35/1) and sukavi (Ibid, 1/11/5). There is no classification of poet in Sankardeva. Tulsī divides poets into groups—sukavi and kukavi. From Tulsī's approach it may be inferred that his idea of poet was mainly guided by his devotional sentiments. The virtue of poet is more determined by his subservience to the greatness of the subject of the theme than by literary devices. Mere use of literacy devices may degenerate into bad poetry if the limitation of the former are not realised. The emphasis of Sankar and Tulsī is mainly on devotion. Sankardeva takes of his writing not so much as poet, but as a devotee. That is why he refers to himself as *Kṛṣṇa-kinkara, alpamati* (Bhāg, 12/531), *sīṣumati* (Ibid. 10/1476) or *mahāmuda* (Ibid, 10/599) etc. and his poem as chāvāler bāni. Tulsī also ascribes his writings to Rāma's glory. As for himself—'kabita bibeka eka nahin morein' (Mānas, 1/8/6). It shows his humility as devotee.

It shows that to them the main function of the poetry is essentially devotional.
B. The audience of poetry:

The audience of poetry includes the reader, the listener and the spectator. There is no classification of audience in Sāṅkar and Tulsī. Since their poetry is an emanation of their devotion their audience can be categorised along the lines of devotees. The claimant of devotion has implicitly approach to poetry. He must have the ability for great love, concentration in reading and listening:

\[
\text{kṛṣṇar kīrtane jātī ajātī nabāche.}
\]
- Bhāg, 1/816

\[
\text{kṛṣṇar kathāye ātī nacāve ācāra jātī,}
\text{mahā pātakiro gati karai.}
\]
- Bhāg, 10/1477

Just as one who listens to the praises of God becomes a kind of devotee, one who sings or reads poetry becomes a participant in the creative act.

Like his devotee Tulsī's audience is praised as 'jnānī'.

His wiseman can assimilates the essence of poetry who thoughtfully listens and is passionately involved. In Tulsī's words -

\[
\text{je gāwahin yaha carita sambhāre,}
\text{tei ehi tāla catura rakhawāre.}
\text{sadā sunahin sādara nara nārī.}
\text{tei surabara mānasa adhikārī.}
\]
- Mānas, 1/37/1
On the otherhand the evil and lustful persons are not entitled to Tulsī's poetry. To Tulsi the rightful audience of poetry are those persons who have love for Rāma. To Śāṅkar devotional poetry is available to all without any let or hindrance.

śūna samajyāra loka kalita sadagati hoka
dāka chāri bolā rāma rāma.

- Kīr., 547

śūna sarbajane mana karā upāsama.
āna kāma eri beṭi bolā rāma rāma.

- Kīr., 592

śūna budhaloka

- Kīr., 541; Bhāg, 8/736

śuniyoka sauhāsada mahābhāgavata pada
kṛṣṇakathā parama amṛta.
bhūkuti mukuti sabe Howe upagata
ihā paraloka mahā hita.

- Bhāg, 1/1214

It is acceptable to Tulsī with emphasis on 'sujāna':

rāvanāri jasu pāwana, gāwahin sunahin je loga.
rāma bhagati dhīna pāwahi, binu birāga japa joga.

- Mānas, 3/46/a
sunahun sakala sajjana sukhu mānī.
- Ibid, 1/29/1

sādara sunahu sujana mana lāī.
- Ibid, 1/34/7

The study of scriptures, logic etc. is not necessary for the audience of devotional poetry. The faith and respect towards the deity is sufficient:

āra vedāgama bistara sāstrata, nāhi kichu prayojana.
- Sānkar, Kīr., 210

pundite pade sāstra mātra, sāra bhakta liye.
- Sānkar, Bar., 10

āgama nigama purāna anekā.
padai sunai kara phala prabhu ekā.
tava pada pankaja prīti nirantara.
saba sādhana kara yaha phala sundara.
- Tulsi, Mānas, 7/48/2

Apparently Sāṅkardeva has the audience in his mind while composing his works. No poem seems to be its exception to it. The style of direct address clearly reflects it:

āna kāma eri samajyāye bedī.
- Kīr., 642
Tulsidāsa does not frequently address the audience but he was too mindful to it. That the two poets are more inclined towards devotional tendencies of the audience than their poetic tastes. It is more or less in conformity with Atkin's analysis of the poetic mind: In all literary activity of the writer, which have to be taken into account. They are the medium of words and that human nature to which appeal is made.  

The attention of the two poets has gone to another aspect of the audience. The audience without devotional sensibility would naturally be uninterested in devotional poetry. Sānkardeva states that a man with sinful mind becomes painful to them. That is why he advises people to keep away from them:

pāṣandese nindai bedara vānī.
tāka sambhāṣaṇa eribā jēnī.

- Sānk, Kīr., 136

Similarly, Tulsidāsa finds that the audience, that is, not Rāma's devotee feels Rāma's story as tasteless:
Thus to both the poets their poetical audience constitute devotees or the audience of devotional poetry. The only condition for such audience is devotional mind and attraction towards reading, listening or singing of devotional poetry.

C, Jhe ātmā of kāvya:

Poetry has something essential in absence of which it ceases to be poetry. More will be said about it later in connection with kāvya varṇya. Hence, it is sufficient to say that Śankar and Tulsī are closer to the ideas of rasavāda. It is indicated in Śankar’s ‘kathāta ranjana’ and ‘madhu same dugdha’ and in Tulsī’s ‘rasānām’. As devotional poets Śankar and Tulsī aim at spreading devotion through devotional poetry.

To Tulsī:

rāma carita je sunata aghāhīn.
rasa biseṣa jānā tīnha nāhīn.

- Mānas, 7/52/1

Rāma carita does not mean Rāma’s carit only, but it includes God in every form. Such is the case with Śankar also. To them bhakti-rasa is the soul of the poetry.
C. II. Tulsīdāsa and his distinction:

Poetry has three aspects - the writer, the writing and the audience. They also can be called the poet, the poetry and its reader or listener. Tulsī has paid greater attention to these aspects than Śāṅkar. It is metaphorically expressed in the following verses of Rāmcaritmānas.

hrdaya-sindhu mati-sipa samānā,
swāti sāradā kahahin sujānā,
jaun baraśai bara bāri bicārū,
hohin kabita mukutamani càrū,
juguti bedhi puni pohiahin,
rāmacarita bara tàga,
pahirahin sajjana bimala ura
sobhā ati anurāga.

- 1/10/4-5

The first two lines refer to poet as creator. The first line of the verse describes the outcome of the creative activity and the last line refers to the audience. An analysis of the metaphor would be quite fruitful here. Mythologically four conditions are essential for pearl - water, oystershell, swāti nakṣatra and its rain drop. Similarly, for poetry heart, mind, the goddess of poetry and her blessing are essential. The first two are the receptacle and the last two
the cause. Here ėṣārādā means inspiration and poetry is woven out of Rāmaçarita like putting together of pearls around the thread. Finally, Tulsi has discussed the audience of poetry through the metaphor of muktāmāla. Tulsi has discussed the relationship of poet and his work and audience and also the creative process. There is no such description in Sankardeva.

8/3. Kāvyā-prayojana:

According to Rāmāyaṇa there are six uses of poetry - fame, wealth, practical knowledge, good, relief and preaching. They are adopted by others with variations in language. Some have added the four puruṣārthas. Broadly speaking Sāṅkar and Tulsi have also accepted them.

Sāṅkar and Tulsi are devotee poets and their main aim is singing the praises of the deity. The essential utility of their poetry lies in self-delight.

*sāṅkara racilā gīta āponāra cinta hita,  
sūnā samajyāra yata jana.*

- Sāṅkar, Kīr., 609

swāntahsukhāya tūṣi raghunāthagāthā  
bhāṣānibandhamatimanjulamātanoti.

- Tūṣi, Mānas, 1/7 sloka

The pursuit of wealth, desire and fame is presented by them
as transitory and the cause of illusory attachment:

athira dhana jana jīvana yauvana, athira ehu samsāra.

- Śankar, Bar, 17

suta bita loka eṣanā tīnī.
kehi kai mati inha kṛta na malīnī.

- Tulsi, Mānas, 7/70/3

The pursuit of wealth, fame etc. are the weakness of men. To Śankar and Tulsi their attainment is not the purpose of the poetry. However, there are some verses in which their desire for fame finds an echo:

hari pada prasādata siddha hauka abhimata,
pada hauka aśeṣa pracāra.

- Śankar, R.H.K., 626

chāwālara vāṇī hena anumāni, mane huibā paritoṣa.

- Śankar, H.U., 616

karo karajore buddhajana abhinandā.
nakaribā padata dūṣana dekhi nindā.

- Śankar, Bhāg, 11/5

āmara kavitā jāni nindā nubulibā vāṇī,
nakaribā āta upahāsa.

- Śankar, Rām. U., 7/756
bhasa bhaniti bori mati mori.
hansibe joga hansae nahin khorī.

- Tulsi, Mānas, 1/8/2

jo prabandha budha nahin ādarahin.
so śrama bādi bāla kabi karahin.

- Tulsi, Ibid, 1/13/4

sapanehun sācehun mohi para, jaun hara gaurī pāsāu.
tau phura hau jo kaheun saba, bhāṣā bhaniti prabhāu.

- Tulsi, Ibid, 1/15

kabi kobida raghubara carita, mānasa manju marāla.
bāla binaya sunī surūci lakhi, mo para hohu kṛpāla.

- Tulsi, Ibid, 1/14/C

It may be inferred that fame was acceptable to them as the purpose of poetry, however, secondary it may be.

The good of people is fundamental both to the devotional religion of Sankardeva and Tulsidāsa and to the poetry which they compose for its spread. The good of people is an important purpose of the poetry:

sohi vaikuṇṭhaka kṛṣṇaka nātaka, utpāṭaka dukha mūla.

- Sānkar, K.D.N.

śunā sāmājika jana diya mana, kṛṣṇara līlā caritra.
ata para hita nahi prthivita, janibä ito kalita.
- Sankar, Bhag, 12/533

kîrati bhaniti bhûti bhali soi.
surasari sama saba kanha hita hoî.
- Tulsi, Mânas, 1/13/5

mangala karani kalimala harani tulsi kathä raghunâtha ki.
- Tulsi, Ibid, 1/10/Ch.

There is reference to the welfare of the people in the plays of Sânkardeva along with other goods. In the speech of the Sûtradhâr the welfare of the people is presented as an object of poetry.

The achievement of bliss and grace, redemption from sin, tendency to devotion etc. also find place as the poetic objectives of Sânkar and Tulsi. Sânkar and Tulsi have taken note of various purposes of poetry including self-delight. But self-delight is not in conflict with the good of the people.

8/4. Kâavya-hetu :

Scholars of poetics have referred to genius, skill and exercise as the means of poetry. And they are also accepted by Sânkar and Tulsi. Genius is explained as the intellectual
faculty which perceives new relationship and creates the power of expression in language. It is a divine gift.

Sánkar and Tulsí rely upon genius as gift of gods and goddesses. A study of the works of Sánkar and Tulsí shows three things as the means of the poetry.

A. Deva-krpa
B. Guru-krpa
C. Study of scriptures.

A. Deva-Kṛpā:

Sánkar has given prominence to the grace of SriKṛṣṇa and Tulsí to that SriRāma. Everything depends on them and nothing is possible without their grace. Even their devotion can not be achieved. Hence, for poetic creation as for devotion divine grace is indispensible. :

hrdi mādhava johi mati dilā, sohi anurupa karalu hari līlā.

- Sánkar, R.H.N.

he kṛṣṇa deva pari karo seva, tumi mora nija swāmi.
thāki hṛdayata sikhāilā jīmata, tāhāko racilo āmi.

- Sánkar, Shāg, 2/1476

hāmu vidyamāna thākite tohāka kona cintā, ...

- Sánkar, K.G.N.

vyāpaka biswarūpa bhagawānā.
tehin dhari deha carita kṛta nānā.
tēhin bala mein rāghupatī gūṇa gāthā.
kahihaun nāi rāma pada māthā.

- Tulsi, Mānas, 1/12/3-5

To them poetry is not due to the poet but to the grace of God. It is divine grace that gives the power of expression to the poet:

kṛṣṇara praśāde saṁsta hui.

- Sāṅkar, Kīr., 1576

asa mānasa mānasa cakha cāhi.
bhai kabi buddhi bimala avagāhi.
bhayau hṛdaya ānanda uchāhū.
umarēu prema pramoda prabhāhū.
calī subhaga kabitā saritā so.
rāma bimala jasa jala bharitā so.

- Tulsi, Mānas, 1/38/5-6

Divine grace has been given formal recognition as poetical means by Panditṛaj Jagannāth - 'tasyāsca hetuh kwacīda devatāmahāpurūṣa praśādādi-janyamadṛṣṭama'. The above verses of Sāṅkar and Tulsi should be read in this perspective.

Besides, the grace of deity, the two poets have also acknowledged the importance of the grace of other gods and goddesses. Even Sāṅkardeva has referred to the desirability
of the grace of Saraswati, Mahadeva etc.

kṛṣṇe dile jena mati jena rarai saraswati.
biracilo sehi abhipraya.

- Sāṅkar, Kīr. 608

namo namo hora maheswara hari, maraṣā doṣa āmāra.

- Sāṅkar, Bhāg, 10(II)/599

sārada dārūnāri sama swāmī.
rāmu sūtradhāra antarjāmī.
jehi para kṛpā karahin janu jānī.
kabi ura ajira nacāvahin bānī.

- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/104/3

sambhu prasāda sumati hiya hulsi.
rāmcaritamānasa kabi tulsī.

- Tulsī, Ibid, 1/35/1

Gods like Ganesā, Siva-Pāravati, Ganga, Surya, Devī, Yamunā, Hanumāṇa, Kāśī, Citrakūṭa, Laksmana, Bharata, etc. are prayed by Tulsī. He has given more place to other gods and goddesses than Sankardeva.

8. Guru-kṛpā :

The grace of the teacher finds almost equal place in Sāṅkar and Tulsī. In the beginning of their compositions they
express their desire for it:

\[
gurūra carane mane kari sirogata.
\]
- Sānkar, A.P., 5

\[
gurūra carana mane namaskāra kari.
biracibo uttarākāndara kathā sāra.
\]
- Sānkar, Rām. U. 7/3

\[
srīgura pada nakha mani gana jotī.
sumirata dibya drṣṭi hiya hotī.
\]
- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/5/3

\[
sīra dhari guru pada pankaja dhūrī.
\]
- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/33/1

Tulsīdāsa heard Rāma kathā for the first time from his teacher at Sūkarkhetā:

\[
mein puni nija gurū sana sunī, kathā so sukarakheta.
samujhi nahin tasi bālapan, taba ati raheun aceta.
x x x x
tadapi kahi gura bārahi bārā,
samujhi pari kachu mati anusārā.
bhāṣābaddha karabi mein soī.
morein mana prabodha jehin hoī.
\]
- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/30/1
To Tulsi the very memory of the teacher opens the world of knowledge and enables one to compose poetry.

C. Study of Scriptures:

The knowledge of arts, sciences, poetics, life of the people and discrimination between proper and improper are included among poetic skill and exercise is distinguished from them. But it appears that Sankar and Tulsi have presented skill and exercise in the form of scriptural studies. In his different works Sankardeva has referred to their sources and related books. He stressed on the study of Purānas and other scriptures. In the beginning of Rāmcaritmānas Tulsi has declared:

nānāpurāṇanigamāgamamamataṁ yada
rāmāyaṇe nigaditam quaсидanyatoapi

- Mānas, 1/9 sloka

It is found at other places too.

Besides, the two poets acknowledged the importance of their predecessors. Sankardeva respectfully remembers Vyās and Vālmiki as also Mādhav Kandali, the composer of the first Rāmāyaṇa in Asamiyā. Along with Lord Siva, the creator of Śābor mantras, Tulsi pays homage to Vālmiki and to Kapīśwara for his great knowledge. References to the preceding poets reflect the knowledge of poetic tradition.
There has been a controversy about the relative importance of genius and skill. The divine grace and the study of the scripture may not appear as part of this controversy in Śāṅkar and Tulsī, but they have certainly relied more on the former. It can be found in their humility as to the title of the poet:

karajore buddhaloka bolo kṣheṇiyoka moka,
āmāra ayogya ito karma,
padata dūṣaṇa pāi nindibeka najuvāi,
mahantajanara kṣhamā dharma.

- Śāṅkar, Rām, U. 7/323

kabi na haun nahin bacana prabinū.

- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/8/4

Tulsī has accepted the importance of skill more clearly than Śāṅkar:

kabita bibeka eka nahin morein.
satya kahaun likhi kāgad korein.

- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/8/6

Exercise is also recognised more specifically by Tulsī and Śāṅkar:

karata karata abhyāsa te, jaḍamati hota sujāna.

- Tulsī
Both Sānkar and Tulsī accepted Divine grace or genius as the means of composition. Sānkardeva took it almost all important. But Tulsīdāsa also took notice of the skill and exercise.

8/5. The subject of poetry:

Anything can be the subject matter of poetry. From historical, scriptural stories to the meanest contemporary object. Sānkar and Tulsī have their own outlook. The subject of their have been more or less determined by their devotional attitude. As their poetry was mostly an expression of their devotional mind, its subject also reflects their aims as poets. The main subject of their poetry is related to the praise of the deity. As such Sānkar's *Kirtan-ghosā* and *Bhāgavata* and Tulsī's *Rāmcaritmānasā* and *Vinoya-patrikā* became their great works. They would rather exclude vulgar subjects from the purview of their poetry:

*gramya kathā kathane malina howe vānī.
tāka sūddha karo kṛṣṇa kathāka bakhāni.*

- Sānkar, Bhāg, 1/816

*kinhe, prākṛta jana guna gānā.
sira dhuni girā lāgi pachitānā.*

- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/10/4
Their ideas may not be acceptable in terms of poetics, but their purposefulness is justified in the context of their devotional poetry. The theme of their poetry is the description of devotion in its broader sense. Even goddess Saraswati is supposed to be helpful here as claimed by Tulsi:

bhagati hetu bidhi bhavana bihāi.
sumirata sārada āватi dhāi.

- Tulsi, Mānas, 1/10/2

As devotion is the subject of the poetry, the two poets unrelentingly preach the necessities of prayer and renunciation:

bine bhakati gati nāi.

- Śankar, Bar., 13

kaliko paraṁa dharama hari nāma.

- Śankar, Ibid

pāī na kehin gati patita pāwana ráma bhaji sunu satha manā.

- Tulsi, Mānas, 7/129/ch.

rāma kathā kali mala harani mangala karani suhāi.

- Tulsi, Ibid, 1/141

The two poets have referred to the attainment of salvation through entertainment, hearing, reading, talking and singing about the characters of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. The subject of their devotional poetry can be Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇava character.
SANKARDEV'S PORTRAIYED THE STORY OF RAMA AND VAISNAVA CHARACTERS LIKE HARISHCHANDRA, AJAMILA, BARI, HARMOHAN, ANARYA, PARIKAHITA, GAJENDRA, PRAHLAD ETC. IN HIS WRITINGS ALONG WITH THE STORY OF VIṣṇU. SIMILARLY, BEIDES THE STORY OF RAMA TULSI MADE THE STORIES OF SIVA-PĀRVATĪ AND KṚṣṇA AS THE SUBJECT OF HIS POETRY.
To Tulsidāsa works of even great poets become vulgar and indecent if not associated with Rāma's story. And on the other hand even bad poets can create good poetry if inspired by Rāma-nāma. Obviously the subject itself is the determining factor of the poetic excellence and not simply in handling:

saba guna rahita kukabi kṛta bānī.
rāma nāma jasa ankita jānī.
sādara kahahin sunahin budha tāhī.
madhukara sarisa santa gunagrāhī.

- Tulsi, Mānas, 1/9/3

The main subject in the poetry of Sānkara and Tulsi is one which leads to the development of devotion. That is why the subject of their poetry is dominated by devotional feelings.

8/6. Aspects of poetry:

Scholars of poetry have taken into consideration both the thought content and the artistic element. Various devices and branches of poetry finds place in the artistic elements. They are mainly śabdārtha, rīti, guna, rasa, alankāra and chanda. Excepting rasa, other elements are related to the external aspect of poetry. These elements are used for communicating the poetic theme. Since the medium of poetry is language, principles regarding the use of words and their
meaning would be included in art.

That Śāṅkar and Tulsi were well versed in poetics is apparent from the perusal of their works. The arrangement of words, the meaning and its expression, the treatment of verse and figures of speech were known to them and they used them with skill. But there is no discussion of their doctrines as such in their writings. We do not get help from internal evidence about Śāṅkar's ideas on poetic devices.

It is certain that he recognises the significance of rasa in poetry because it makes it delightful to read:

kathoraka bhaya kathāra āsāya, dīlo kicho kāvyarasa.
abicārī tāka hathāte āhmāka, nidibāhā apayasā.

- Śāṅkar, H. U. 617

āno mahā kabicaya kāvyā rasa nibandhaya,
tāka nindai kona sādhujana.
jibā kicho badā dekhā ito aparādha erā,
vāsō denta kathāta ranjana.

- Śāṅkar, Bhāg, 10/1477

buji abhiprāya dīlo thāya thāya,
kichu kāvyarasa jibā.
abicārī tāka hathāte āmāka,
nindāvāni nubulibā.

- Śāṅkar, Ibid, 8/311
Tulsi also believes in rasa-oriented poetry. From the introductory verses of Rāmcaritmānas it is clear that he subscribes to the idea of 'Vākyam rasātmakam Kāvyam'. He adheres to this ideal. It can be seen in the prevalence of bhaktirasa in his poetry. They aim at creating sense of delight through citta-mukti. It is reflected in Śankar's termination of erotic episodes into bhaktirasa. It seems he was aware of the possibility of eros being detrimental to his devotional aim. Hence, his clarification -

jito bhakatara āchaya sṛngāra rasata satate rati.
ihāra śravaṇe kirtane huibeka, tāhāro nirmala mati.

- Śankar, Bhāg, 10/1540

sṛngāra rase jāra āchai rati.
āke sūni hauka nirmala mati.

- Śankar, Kīr., 975

Tulsi did not feel any such need. Eros is completely controlled in his poetry. To Śankar and Tulsi bhakti is the best form of rasa. Devotional poetry is more susceptible to intelligent communication (sādhāranīkaraṇa):

rāmcaritamānasā ehi nāmā.
sunata śravana pāïya biśrāmā.
mana kari biśaya amala bana jaraï.
hoi sukhi jaun ehin sara paraï.

- Tulsi, Mānas, 1/34/4
The study of devotional poetry leads to the realisation to brahmānanda and brahmānanda-sahodara.

Other aspects of poetry are referred to in Tulsi but not in Sankar. Following are some examples from Tulsi:

ākharā aratha alamākrti nānā.
chanda prabandha aneka bidhānā.

- Mānas, 1/8/5

aratha anūpa subhāva subhāsā.
soi parāga makaranda subāsā.

- Ibid, 1/36/3

dhuni avarēba kabita guna jātī.
mīna manohara te bahubhāntī.

- Ibid, 1/36/4

ughatahi chanda prabandha gīta pada rāga tāna bandhāna.

- G.V., 2/15

sugama agama mṛdu manju kathore.
arathu amita ati ākharā thore.

- Mānas, 2/293/1

kathā prabandha bicitra banāī.

- Ibid, 1/32/1

kabita doṣa guna bibidha prakārā.

- Ibid, 1/8/5
Tulsi was in favour of balance of word and meaning, use of different verse form, suggestion and expression, irony, style, poetic qualities, faultlessness, narrative etc. In these lines Tulsi has tried to include all those poetic ideas which contribute to the permanence to a poem. A study of Tulsi's poetry shows that he made skillful use of the poetic devices. Poetic devices are skillfully used in Sankar also, but there is no discussion of their principle.

8/7. Forms of poetry:

Sankar and Tulsi expresses their feelings and ideas through various forms of poetry of which prabandha and muktaka are most important. Sankardeva wrote plays too. Neither discussed the forms of poetry. However, there are some indications of poetic forms scattered in their writings:

Sankare racilä kṛṣṇa caritra pavāra.
- Sankar, Bhāg., 1/800

Kathā prabandha bicitra banāi.
- Tulsi, Mānas, 1/32/1

suthi sundara sambād bara, birace buddhi bicāri.
- Tulsi, Ibid, 1/36

ughatahin chanda prabandha gīta pada rāga tāna bandhāna.
- Tulsi, G.V., 1/2
Here we find clear mention of caritra (carit-kāvya), payār, kathā – prabandha, sambād, gīta and pada forms of poetry. These forms of poetry are practiced by them, but they are not defined.

8/8. Conclusion :

Thus it is seen that Śāṅkar and Tūlṣi were devotee poets and not poetic legislators. Their aim was to sing the praise of the deity's name, deeds etc. and not propounding any poetic doctrine. It is however certain that they were acquainted with the ancient tradition of Indian poetics and its assumptions. They were aware of the difference between pure poetry and devotional poetry. Whatever scattered references to poetry are found in their writings can be taken as reflections of their ideas of poetry. In this respect Tūlṣi's ideas are more important and clear than Śāṅkar's.

One can see a parallelism in their reference to poetry, poet and reader or audience on the one hand, and on the other hari-kathā, gāvaka and śrotā. The purpose of poetry becomes freedom from sin, achievement of salvation and tendency to devotion. The grace of God and guru, the study of scripture and poetry are Kāvya-hetu. Devotion should be the theme of poetry. Both of them accept the significance of rasa in poetry and are rasa-vādi poets. They have not introduced any new
element regarding the recipient of poetry. They did not express ideas about forms of poetry, but did use different forms of poetry themselves.

Finally, it may be said that Sankar and Tulsi's ideas, although related to tradition, were not bound by it. Their originality lies not in the discovery of new poetic doctrines but in the experiments with the possibility of using the traditional doctrines in conformity with the special demands of devotional poetry.

References:
1 'If you wanted to know something about an automobile, would you go to a man who had made one and driven it, or to a man merely heard about it.' - Quoted from 'Modern Poets on Modern Poetry'. p. 7
2 The perfect poet is also the perfect critic. p. 170
3 A. P. 6
4 Bhāg, 8/35/4; Mānas, 1/9/2
5 Ibid, 8/1353; Ibid, 1/9/3
6 Mānas, 1/14/a
7 Ibid, 1/10/2
8Ibid, 1/9/3
9jādapi kabita rasa ekau nāhin.
   rāma pratāpa pragata ehi māhin.
   - Mānas, 1/9/4
10erotā baktā gyānanidhi, kathā rāma kai gūḍ.
   - Ibid, 1/30/b
11so bicāri sunihahin sumati jinha kein bimala bibeka.
   - Ibid, 1/9
   sādara kahahin sunahin budha tāhi.
   - Ibid, 1/9/3
12Mānas, 1/37/2
13te nara yaha sara tajahin nā kāu,
   jinha kein rāma carana bhala bhāu.
   - Mānas, 1/38/4
   (Vol. II, p. 352)
15mahēpāpacaya āche jāra hrdayata.
   bhakatira kathā tāra napase karṇata.
   - B.P., 7
   Also see, Kir., 143; Bhāg, 10/4
16See, S.D.Singh - Tulisidasa ki kārayitri pratibhā kā
17jagata pavitrakāri sākahāte amṛta.
   - B. P., 6
   rāma kathā jaga mangala karani.
   - Mānas, 1/9/5
18P.P.N., K.D.N. etc.
19Bhāg, 1/1111
20Rām. U. 7/4; Mānas, 1/119/4
21Kir. 77; A.P. 3
22 Rām, U. 7/155; Mānas, 1/10/3
23 B.P. 9; Ibid, 1/10/a
24 V.P. 1
25 Ibid. 3-14
26 Ibid, 17; Mānas, 1/14/1
27 Ibid, 2
28 Ibid, 15
29 Ibid, 21
30 Mānas, 1/14/2
31 V.P., 22
32 Ibid, 23
33 Ibid, 37
34 Ibid, 39
35 Bhāmah: Kāvyālankār, 5/4; Māmmat: Kāvyaprakāśa, 1/3
36 Rājsēkhar - Kāvyāmimangsa, p. 16
37 H.U., 2; B.P., 3; R.H.K. 4 etc.
38 Mānas, 7/68/3 (nigamāgama purāṇa mata ehā)
39 Bhāg, 1/821
40 Ibid, 6/299
41 Rām, U. 7/323
42 Mānas, 1/14/3
43 Ibid, 1/14/d
44 kaviswarkapīswara, Ibid, 1/sloka 4
45 bhaniti bicitra sukabi krta jau.
   rāma nāma binu soha na sau.
   - Mānas, 1/9/2
46 varṇānamarthaśanghānām rasānām chandasāmapi.
mangalānām ca karttārau vande vāṅvinayakau.

- Ibid, 1/sloka