CHAPTER TWO

FLORA IN PAdYA KAVYA
INTRODUCTION

This Chapter is an attempt to present an in-depth and comprehensive discussion of flora in Sanskrit poetry as expressed by some prominent Sanskrit poets in the classical era in ancient India as stated in the introduction. What needs to be recognised here is that while these kavyas do not necessarily focus on the environmental, ecological or botanical aspect as their central theme, they offer rich information on their understanding of flora of that time in manifold, and most often very elegant, fashion. Needles to restate the well known fact that Sanskrit poetry is adored with exquisite narration of nature as well as the ecological processes in their many fold magnitude and dimensions. Celebrated works such as Rthusaṃhāra and Meghadūtha have nature's fundamental constituents in their cognomen themselves. As pronounced by the traditional wit, kavyas were constructed only by sages’ (नाजुषि कुरुते काव्यम्), and these sages loved and adored forests as an integral part of their lives, decreeing them as holy, sacred and idolising. No wonder forests and forest produces were considered as vital and crucial for serene peaceful living, expansion of 'supreme wisdom' and continuation of cultural tradition. Putting it precisely, forests, along with other provinces of nature, acted as the geographical and cultural space which inspired most of the prominent classical Sanskrit poetry.

It can be expensed with the acknowledged reality that Sanskrit poetry is adored with brilliant description of natural scenic beauty and the splendour of the seasons. The unmitigated ambience is perceived as a reproduction of the mortal domain. Natural elements are conceived by the Sanskrit poets as possessing human feelings, emotions, intellect and other
behavioural patters, making the mortal existence an integral part of the cosmic whole. Nature, in other words, not only assumes divinity, but also draws very close to mortal presence in the creation of the nature. In Sanskrit poetry, one encounters the same feelings and emotions, the same passions and sorrows, the same feelings of tenderness, love, affection and friendship - at times even the same fatigue, dislike and disgust, same commissions and omissions - that are reflected and referred to govern the human mind. That is why these classic compositions stand as works of art for ever. The thesis strives a succinct presentation of the nature in the form of floral wealth in the treasure of this literature. While the material in this regard is voluminous, an attempt is made to present the gist of this literary marvel with suitable illustrations and explanations from three major exemplars.

**FLORA IN KĀLIDĀSA'S POETRY**

The discussion on the contributions of Sanskrit poetry to the understanding of flora finds perhaps its best possible explanation in the works of Kālidāsa whose immortal love and reverence for the nature knows no parallels. Kālidāsa is exuberant and passionate in his adoration for trees, plants and other forms of vegetation. In him one finds a majestic illustration of forest with its bountiful trees, plants, creepers, blossoms and flowers. Kālidāsa is characteristically gifted with realistic details of plant life. In addition, his writings bristle with beautiful allusions to various plants, their relations to human life and sentiments. He is a poet of nature with grand eminence. In his writings, the human as well as the vegetable worlds are said to act and react on each other in ways too numerous to enlist. Without laying any claim to a special or elaborate investigation on this subject, it is
attempted here to enumerate and describe some plants and trees as are mentioned in Kālidāsa’s writings, with a view to illustrate his inimitable style of dealing with the flora. The poet’s knowledge of the trees, flowers, crops, and the plant life in general, in different parts of India is quite profound too. More often than seldom, Kālidāsa refers to immense numbers of flowers and describes their colour, fragrance, etc. as displayed in different seasons. There can be rare example of such an exceptionally skilful and humane observation of human nature and emotions as related to, and represented by flowers and plants as endowed in Kālidāsa’s works.

Kālidāsa’s date cannot be stated with absolute certainty as in the case of several other classical Sanskrit writers, but he is believed to have existed and written his works during the fourth century AD. There is near unanimity in accepting Kālidāsa as the one of the greatest Sanskrit poets and dramatists, if not the greatest of all times. In the words of Jayadeva, Kālidāsa is कवि कुल गुरु (teacher of the class of poets ever). Lofty recognition is placed upon him by the classical and modern art and literary critics from all over the world alike. Kālidāsa’s rich literature has been translated into major world languages and is made known to people from many countries and cultures. Kālidāsa’s popularity has not many equals in the global literatures. Rūtusāṁhara, Meghaduta, Kumarasabhava and Raghuvamśa are his famous lyrical compositions (Padhyā Kavyas) and Mālavīkāgnimitra, Vikramorvaśiya and Abhijnāna Śakunthalā are the ‘visual’ literary works (dramas or Drushya Kavyas) as classified by scholars in the field.
This small masterpiece is a glowing tribute to the glories of the six climatic seasons, each of which is vividly described in a separate canto (Sarga). Even though modest in size and considered as relatively less important among his works, Kālidāsa’s Rūtaśāhara offers the reader a treat in terms of dealing with the charm of the flora. Verses after verses describe the beauty of plant life in this collection of exquisite poems. 'Divine nature' and the ‘refined human’ are intertwined and interpolated here. The two axis of life - internal-external axis and instrumental-consummatory axis - are invigorate and enlivened in this poetic classic with unforgettable depiction. The focus shifts back with ease from the beauty of nature to the charm and wonder of youthful love. The emotional harmony between a particular mood and a particular aspect of the season in question emanates from each piece of description.

While admitting that this is one of the noblest forms of tribute to Nature, attention may be drawn to some aspects of construction of the poem sometime under debate. It must be remembered that the poet here is describing the Indian cycle of six seasons which is usually supposed to begin with Vasanta (Spring), followed by Grīśma (Summer), Varṣa (Rains), Śarad (Autumn), Hemantha (Part-Autumn and part-Winter) and Śīśīra (Winter). For the purpose of the poem, it seems that the opening description of arduous season Grīśma -the Summer - helps the poet to delineate in some kind of progression the welcome and unwelcome features of each subsequent season until he can build in a fitting finale to his composition in his memorial to the most graceful season of spring. The

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description of flora in this canto is presented in summative fashion and important elegies are taken for discussion. CANTO ONE, like the entire work, furnishes proof of Kālidāsa’s rich understanding of vegetation of his time.

Grīṣma, the Summer, the first season (rutu) has many things to offer to the human beings in the form of nature’s gift. But at the same time, Kalidas is pained because of the wrath of nature on the vegetation. During Summer (vasantha rutu) women apply sandal paste to their breasts to ease out the discomfort of the agonising heat. In addition, they also use the red lākṣa-juice to their feet. The summer makes life difficult, both for the humans and other beings. The mud dries out in the empty lake which is full of Bhadramusta grass (Rtu.I.17), the mass of lotus-roots is torn up completely (Rtu.I.19), the young shoots of corns are consumed by fierce conflagrations and the dry leaves are swept by violent storm, forests look loathsome with the shrinking water level due to intense sun (Rtu.I.22), birds are panting sitting on leaf-less (Aparnadhruma) trees (Rtu.I.23). In every direction the grounds have been consumed by fire, whose red glow resembles the freshly bloomed kusumbha flower which is revitalised by the force of strong breeze on both sides of trees and which is busy in singing the ends of creepers and twigs (Rtu.I.24). Forest-fire rises up in the valleys and crackles on the ground through dry reeds (Rtu.I.25). The fire grows ever bigger in the Šalmali groves and flushes with a golden sheen in the hollows of trees (Rtu.I.26). When waters are studded with lotus-beds, when the scent of Paṭala is pleasing, when sprinkled water gratifies the senses and when moon-beams and flowers are enjoyable - may such a summer pass for
you in happiness when you, surrounded by lovely women are sitting happily on the terrace where sweet music is going on (Rtu.I.28). 

SECOND CANTO deals with the Varṣa - the rainy season. After the burning summer comes the majestic rainy season with its water-laden and multi-coloured and multifarious thundering clouds. Some clouds look like the petals of dark-blue lotuses whereas others look like heaps of powdered 'collyrium' (Rtu.II.2). The season boasts of plenty brimming and bright shoots of grass, covered all over with plantain leaves (Rtu.II.5). In this form the beauty of nature reflects the beauty of human emotions.

It is not that all is well with the vegetation during the monsoons, says Kālidāsa. Like unruly paramour, the swift streams uproot the stock of trees on the river banks as their muddy water gushes and surges in great speed towards its destination - the ocean (Rtu.I.7). Adorned with trees bearing new foliage and full of numerous kinds of dark green grass, the Vindhya woodlands bewitch the mind as there the trees abound in green felicity (Rtu.II.8). Kalidasa's human touch to the floral beauty is raised new imaginative heights as he exclaims: 'The sandy forest-ground heightens the yearning in human mind as it abounds in deer on whose faces the louts-like eyes dart in sudden fright and which covers the thin greenery interspersed with sand' (Rtu.II.9). Bees quit the creeper of which leaves and flowers have dropped off. They swoop on dancing peacocks whose plumage resembling a fresh lotus deludes them (Rtu.II.14). The groves of Kadamba, Sarja, Arjuna and Ketaki transmit aroma of their blossom to the wind which becomes cool as it meets the moisture-laden clouds. (Rtu.II.17). Dames kindle passion in the heart of their lovers with the fragrant flowers in
their ear-rings, and with their breasts garlanded and mouths breathing wine (Rtu.II.18). Women don strings of fresh Bakula, Ketaki and Kadamba flowers as ornaments on heads and wear Arjuna flowers as ear-adornment which they arrange according to their will (Rtu.II.20). Women are adorned with sandal paste, scented with flowers and black aloes (Rtu.II.21). With heat allayed by fresh showers, the skirt of the forest seems gladdened by Kadamba blooms and smiles through the Ketaki thorns (Rtu.II.23). With a tender touch the wet season arranges like a lover on the heads of ladies buds of Bakula blossom paired with jasmine and thick-buds of Yuthika, and bestows Nipa flower as ear-ornaments to the newly married brides (Rtu.II.24). Moist from refreshing mist of showers and aromatised with perfumed Ketaki pollen, the breeze makes the trees, brimming with blooms, dance to the delight of roaming folks (Rtu.II.26). Kālidāsa conceives rainy season as the enduring associate of creepers and trees twigs (Rtu.II.28). This part of the work is a true representation of Kalidasa’s abundance of information and wealth of imaginative dexterity while dealing with flora. For example, we are surprised by imageries such as ‘during the rains, the flowers of kadamba, saroja, arjuna and ketaki render the breeze fragrant’ (IRtu.I.17).

THIRD CANTO of the work deals with the season of Šarad’ Rtu - the Autumn. The beautiful Autumn season arrives like a new bride, dressed in Kasa flowers. The season is all arranged in white. Earth has become white by Kasa efflorescence. The lakes are white because of white lilies and the gardens are white by jasmine flowers and the margins of forest by Saptacchada trees bowed by the load of its flowers (Rtu.III.2). The
ground is crimson being strewn with Bandhuka flowers and the city’s minarets laurel with comely creepers (Rtu.III.5). The Kovidhaara has a way to appeal to hearts. Its very branches are waving in the gentle breeze; its delicate tips of leaves reveal the mass of flowers and the excited bees greedily drink its dripping honey (Rtu.III.6). The rivers are reddened by the pollen of red lotuses (Rtu.III.8). Elegant, tall woody plants twist under flowers wave with joy; the pool covered with blooming lotuses is distraught; the blow distorts the brain of youngsters with acute pique (Rtu.III.10). The lakes stir the heart suddenly embellished by white and blue lotuses in bloom (Rtu.III.11).

Poetic heart in Kālidāsa contends for the beauty of all varieties of flowers and plants, not just a few that are easy to observe. Thus it is further imagined that after the kutaja, arjuna, sarja and nipa trees, the glory of new blossoms has now settled down on saptacchada flowers (Rtu.III.13). People yearn for love and liking in the forests charming with the fragrance of ŝephalika flowers (Rtu.III. 14). Accompanying them, the shaking flowers of kalhara, padma and kumuda are increasingly becoming solemn and cool by their contact; the dawning wind inhales specks of snow from the foliage and generates an intimate craving in the heart of the adolescent (Rtu.III.15). people are ecstatic by the sight of fields stretch out to horizon covered by bountiful and ready rice (Rtu.III.16). The bloomed lotuses have excelled even the moonlike faces of dames and have conquered their inebriating glimpses (Rtu.III.17). The syāma creepers whose leaves are bent with their flowers vanquish the beauty of women’s arms adorned with ornaments, the fresh Jasmine flower looking bright along with kankeli buds
(Rtu.III.18) lend glory to the heavenly radiant sight. The women interlace fresh *malati* flowers in their thick, dark curly locks of hair; they place a variety of blue lotuses in their ears adorned with the lustre of pounded gold (Rtu.III.19). The ladies wear garlands dripped in sandal-juice (Rtu.III.20) while the lakes are full of flushed lotuses (Rtu.III.21). The sun-lotus in the daybreak unfolds like the lovely face of a woman (Rtu.III.23). The visitors moan as they are amazed by the similarity between the lotuses and the beauty of the dark eyes of their loved ones, and the glow of their coral lips in the *bandhujiva* flowers (Rtu.III.24). Kāidāsa, the poet, supplicates to the reader: “May this autumn exhilarate your hearts, the beloved’s face is like a blooming lily (the autumn has the blooming lily for her face); the beloved’s mouth opened wide has eyes like expanded blue lotuses (the autumn has expanded blue lotuses for the eyes); the beloved wears a garment white like the open new *kaza* flower (the autumn has open new *kaza* flowers for the white garments).”

In the FOURTH CANTO of the literary piece enters *Hemantha Rutu* - part Autumn and part Winter, the season (Rutu) of great charm of a different kind. *Hemantha* appears with the ripened rice-crop, blossomed *lodhra* flowers, cheered by the appearance of new sprouts, wherein the lotuses are wilted and the frost is falling. Ladies of this season possess lotus-like feet (Rtu.IV.4). Decorated with full-blown *Indivara* flowers the lively lakes magnetise the minds of men (Rtu.IV.9). The ripe *priyangu* creepers, being shaken constantly by the snow-cold winds, become pale like a young lady separated from her lover (Rtu.IV.10). Kālidāsa hopes for all: “May this over charming cold season of *Hemantha* grant you happiness.
- the season which is attractive by its manifold attributes, with the
countryside pervaded by the thick *sali* harvest (Rtu.IV.18)  

FIFTH CANTO makes passionate references to the floral beauty and
wealth of nature. Here is the season of sheer delight called Šiśirārūt - the
Winter: the beloved of ladies wherein the earth is covered with clusters of
grown-up rice and sugar-cane (Rtu.V.1). The delighted women drink wine
(*madhyam*) wherein lotus-petals are shaken by their sweet-smelling breath
(Rtu.V.10). Kālidāsa wishes that may the *Sisirā* be ever for welfare
wherein sugar-sweets are plenty, which it is delightful with sweet rice and
sugarcane (Rtu.V.16).

SIXTH CANTO describes *Vasantha Rutu* - the Spring Season. With
the tender mango-shoots as his sharp arrows, the spring season (*Vasantha
Rutu*) arrives like a brave soldier (Rtu.VI.1). Spring has the characteristic of
decorating all things the season encounters - the trees put forth flowers,
lotuses grow in lakes (Rtu.VI.2). The Spring season bestows splendour to
the mango trees teeming with flowers (Rtu.VI.3). The round hips of
beautiful ladies are adorned with silk cloth dyed with the colour of
*kusumbha*  

13, and their round bosoms along with the attire reddened with the
colour of saffron (Rtu.VI.4). The fresh *karnikara* flower looks pretty in the
ears of women; *ashoka* and the open buds of jasmine (*nava mallika*) in their
blue bobbing hair (Rtu.VI.5)  

14. Women are exhausted with passion and
they rub over their white bosoms the powder of sandal paste and musk
mixed with *priyangu, kaliyaka* and *kumkuma* (Rtu.VI.12). Men, whose
bodies are ponderous with the desire for alliance, swiftly put off their
woollen clothes away, and put on thin garments dyed with lakṣa juice and
perfumed with the incense of fragrant black aloes (Rtu.VI.13). Intoxicated with the mango juice, the male cuckoo kisses his mate with the passionate delight while the buzzing bee on the lotus seat commends his companion (Rtu.VI.14).

The mango trees with bent down the branches full of roseate leaves, brimming with beautiful flowers and being delicately drawn by the wind generate strong urge in the hearts of women (Rtu.VI.15). The young dames watch the ashoka trees bearing sprouts and countless flowers red like the coral from the very root which brings in deep desire in them making their hearts enter into melancholic youth (Rtu.VI.16). The pretty blooms of the mango trees, sucked by the intoxicated bees, and whose tender sprouts are swayed by the gentle breeze, produce unexpected stimulation in the minds of young lovers (Rtu.VI.17). The intense gracefulness of the fresh blossoms of kurabaka trees competes with the bright feminine complexions (Rtu.VI.18). Scattered on every side with the kimshuka groves, curved under the weight of flowers moved by the breeze and paralleling the fiery flames of fire, this earth appears like a newly married bride, clad in crimson clothes, during the Spring (Rtu.VI.19). The palasha leaves entice the hearts of youthful minds like the beaks of parrots (Rtu.VI.20). Shaking the bloomed branches of the mango-tree, the Spring-breeze deludes the youthful minds (Rtu.VI.22). The lovely boulevards brightened with blossoms arrest the minds of youth overcast with craving (Rtu.VI.23). The distressed traveller due to separation from his companion, on observing the flower-full mango-trees, closes his eyes and bemoans bitterly (Rtu.VI.26). Kālidāsa hopes: May the beautiful Spring whose sharp shafts are the beautiful mango
blossoms, whose mighty bow is the lovely *kimsuka* leaf, ever grant the tranquillity (Rtu.VI.28).

Let me say a few words on Kalidasa’s conception of flora through this wonderful expedition of six seasons of the year. The imagination of Kālidāsa in this meteoric *kavya* blooms in groves and gardens, through trees and flowers, by leaves and buds all through the narration. For instance, the special *kunda* flower here subjoins to the eminence of woods and gardens. The white and sparkling flowers are likened to the blooming and smiling faces of impassioned brides. Kālidāsa is so immersed into this blissful beauty of the forest and its vitality that he minces no words to express his ecstasy. Through this brief but majestic poetry, the poet manifests his tremendous knowledge about the floral wealth of his time, in a manner that has few surpasses. The floral beauty in this literary piece seduces not just the youthful hearts, but even the saints are enticed by their charm. The deference and devotion to the forest expressed in this *kavya* towards the floral life, about the groves, plants, flowers and the environment they create is truly inspiring and stimulating. Kālidāsa proves himself not only a poet unsurpassed, but also a genius to look into the intricate lives of the plant kingdom.

**MEGHA DŪTA**

Being possibly one of the most popular works in the Indian classical literature, Meghaduta is perhaps the most well-known and widely read work of Kālidāsa. A certain Yakṣa (a semi-angelic spirit) cursed by his chief Kubera is constrained to linger on the Ramagiri, for a year in exile,
away from his wife. On the first day of Asada masa (month), this Yaksha, the hero-narrator of the tale, observes Megha - the cloud - on the hill, and instantaneously plans to make use of the Megha as a Duthia (messenger) to send a message to his wife at Alaka (on the Kailasa hill at the Himalaya). Yaksha therewith describes in detail the path the cloud should follow from Ramagiri to Alaka along with a vivid and picturesque narration of the passage along with a description of cities, ponds, rivers, hills, nature, plant, creeper, description of Alaka, Yaksha’s mansion, his wife and the like. Finally, he advances the message proper. The Yaksha in the Meghaduta employs the cloud as the messenger to his most loveable lady partner living in the city of Alaka, and the cloud itself is personified to behave as the friend, benefactor and lover of the flowers and rivers, mountains and forests, over which it may pass dropping showers of rain.

Meghaduta is divided into Purvamegha, describing the way to Alakapuri and to Yaksha’s mansion and Uttaramegha, the description of Alakapuri and his house - specially packed with emotions due to his absence. The second part also consists of his message to his beloved. In the Purvamegha the poet describes Yaksa as facing a cloud, clasping a towering peak of Himalayas, whom he thinks of making the bearer of a message to his baffled wife. Yaksha intends to elucidate on the curse for dereliction of duty. The destination of the beautiful city of Alaka becomes the starting point of the narrative in part two of this poem.

In Meghadoota, like in several other works of Kālidāsa, one finds a tremendous harmony between human emotions and nature. In other words, Kālidāsa advances deep insight into the heart of Nature fused wonderfully
with deep erudition of human feelings. In Meghaduta, praised as 'a priceless lyrical gem', the divide is so perfect an example of this fact. First segment of the \textit{kavya} is a radiant recital of the gracefulness of environment interwoven with human sentiments. Distinct from this, while interacting with this aspect, the latter half of the \textit{kavya} depicts the human passion within this fabric of panoramic natural beauty. The poet's immense stretch of imagination here proclaims a true reverence to the beauty of nature measuring it through the experience of an emotionally over-taken individual. Drawing on his vast knowledge of the nation's geography, utilising the minute and humane observation ability of both the community and the nature, the poet excels in creative imagination of life-in-the jungle and in town, on the earth and in the sky. All forms of nature - from the majestic mountain to the tiniest flower that blossoms - have for the poet a life form as real as the human. They are all as judicious as an individual's existence, as genuine as a personal life, as humans or gods.

\textit{PURVAMEGHA} \\
\textit{R\textit{l}'} \\
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A certain Yaksha, divested of powers by his King and condemned for his dereliction to yearlong exile away from his wife, lived in a cottage on Ramagiri hills, where the trees had a gentle shade (स्निग्धचायाया तक्षरु वसति रामगिर्यांश्मेषु II) Med.S..1). He wanted to send a message to his wife through the cloud. So he offered the cloud a tribute of fresh \textit{kutaja} flowers. (Meg.Sl.4). Yaksha introduces his wife as delicate as a flower (कुमुम सदृशम) (Meg.Sl.10). The thunder of that cloud would be pleasant to hear and it is able to make the earth sprouting with plantain (Meg.Sl.11). Nature's drizzles would extinguish forest-fire (Meg.Sl.17). The peak of Amrakuta
mountain is surrounded by wild mango trees laden with ripe fruits. (Meg.Sl.18). The deer will show you path as you give forth small drops of water, while watching roseate *kadamba* flowers, with half-formed filaments, eating tender plantain leaves on the marshy banks and inhaling in the forest the strong odour of the earth (Meg.Sl.21). Yaksha hopes that the cloud would be delayed on every mountain aromatic with *kutaja* flowers (Meg.Sl.22). The garden hedges turn fair with *ketaka* flowers, opening their pinnacles; in the villages, the holy trees show birds busy building their nests; the *jambu* (purple) forest becomes dark with ripe fruits in the Dasharana country (Meg.Sl.23). After resting journey on and damp with mist the jasmine bowers and lovely gardens besides forests streams, cloud should cress women with his shadow, who are gathering flowers with the lotuses on their ears (Meg.Sl.26). The colour of the Nirvindhya river will be faint owing to dry leaves fallen from the trees on her banks (Meg.Sl.29). The upraised arms and tinted with twilight, they look like the gleams of red *japa* flowers (Meg.Sl.36). A branch of the *vanira* tree is like river Gambhira’s hand in which she clutches her garment of blue water (Meg.Sl.41). The glances of Dashapur country ladies outshine dark bees swooping on *kunda* bunches. (Meg.Sl.47). The tall peaks of Mount Kailasa looks like a shining lotus (Meg.Sl.58). Hence, everything in this natural environment, for poet Kālidāsa, is concerned with both nature and the human life.

**UTTARAMEGHA**

The target of reaching the exquisite city of Alaka becomes the beginning point of the narrative of part two (Uttaramegha) of Meghaduta.
There the ladies spin lotuses of autumn, garlanded with kunda buds. They dust their faces with the white pollen of winter’s lodhra. They interlace Spring’s fresh kurabhaka in the hair. Summer’s delicate Shirisha is placed on their ears and cloud’s arrival is applauded by fixing red kadamba on the severance of their hair locks. The shade of the mandara trees grown on the banks of Ganges shelters the young virgins in Alaka (Meg.U.Sl.4). The way women went at night for their date is impressed at the day-break, with mandara flowers and leaves being dropped from their hair, gold filigree slipping from the ears and pearls off the lace round the breasts, all strewn in a hurry (Meg.U.Sl.9). Yaksha’s house is near the northern side of Kubera’s palace. In the yard grows a mandara plant, bowed with clusters of flowers that hands can easily reach and that impresses the guests as if they are welcomed by flowers. Yaksha’s wife cares for it as if the plant is their adopted protegé. The pool adjacent to his house shelters golden lotuses, whose stems are channelled with glistening lapis lazuli (Megh.U.Sl.13). Nearby the pond is a pleasure-mound fashioned by glittering colours, which is surrounded by golden-tinted plantains (U.Megh.Sl.14). A bower of madhavi creepers, girt by rows of kurabaka is grown here. Hard by stand A red ahsoka tree and a white bakula tree together long like an expecting woman here; the former, for a gentle prod from the left foot and the latter for a gargle of wine, both being gifted by ‘our’ (Yaksha and his wife) common friend (Megh.U.Sl.15). Betwixt the two trees, there is an emerald platform, which has the sheen of young bamboo (Megh.U.Sl.16). The spouse of Yaksha may be counting the remaining months of the fixed duration of exile by arranging flowers as tokens on the exterior doorway (Megh.U.Sl.24). Her eyes are charming as fluttering lotus-leaves; her limbs
vibrate like golden stem of an evergreen delicious plantain (Megh.U.Sl. 32-33). Yaksha requests the cloud to cool the breeze with the scent of malathī blooms to refresh his tired wife (Megh.U.Sl.35) Even the woodland deities (Sthalee dhevatha) often see Yaksha distressed. Their tears, as big as pearls, drop bountiful in delicate branches of trees (Megh.U.Sl.43). Tender shoots of devadaaru trees uncurl because of the breeze, blowing from the South, the fragrance of their milky juices spreading all over (Megh.U.Sl.44). Yaksha requests cloud to bring some symbol, some utterance, from his wife to sustain him failing which his life would slump like kunda blooms in the morning (Megh.U.Sl.50).

What is vital to note here is Kalidasa’s intense feeling towards the flora as signs, signals and symbols to express human feelings. As true with his other writings, in Meghaduta also, the poet’s attempt is to make sense of human sentiments like love, grief, frustration, emptiness and the like within the context of flora around. His hero and the imagined heroine are an integral part of the nature and so are other characters. The simile is thus a direct incorporation of the ‘human’ into the ‘nature’ - especially the plant life around. The shrubs, trees, weeds, creepers, flowers, seeds, and other limbs of forest are the tools made use of by the great poet to reach to the bottom of human emotions. In this story of a romanticist day-dreamer, Kālidāśa presents Alaka city as an ideal city of palaces and parks, with beautiful women who love flowers of different seasons Unlike the ordinary women, the women of Kālidāśa need no ornaments of gold and the silver to make them attractive. Unlike ordinary wealthy women, they like to wear different seasonal flowers in lieu of ornaments, such as the lotus, Kunda,
Lodhra, Kurabaka, Sirisa, and Nipa. The Kalpa Vrksha (wish-fulfilling tree) gives them the celebrated Ratiphala wine. The trees in the kavya always possess flowers. The divine damsels of this city play with lotuses, adorn their hair with kunda and smear their beautiful faces with the pollen of lodhra. They decorate their hair bands with the kurabakas. They use shirisha flowers as ear-rings. The kadamba flowers adorn their braids and transmit charm to their simanta. Trees and creepers in their full-fledged bloom are resounded by humming bees. Ponds abound in lotuses. The city has a wishful filling tree (Kalpavrukshya). It provides materials utilised in decoration; multi-coloured dresses, intoxicant drinks, flowers blooming with foliage and red lac. Putting it succinctly, Meghaduta, as a small but important poetic work Kālidāsa is a piece of great interest in understanding the flora and related aspects of community life of Kalidasa’s time.

KUMARA SAMBHAVA

Kumarasambhava the third kavya by Kālidāsa, considered for the present research work, is popularly conceived as one of the five celebrated Mahakavyas in Sanskrit literature. The Kumarasambhava of Kalidasa is a master piece of literary effort of a very high order. It is, in fact, one of the most distinguished creations of Indian poetic genius and is sometimes treated as one of the finest among Kalidasa’s poetic works. The work signifies divine love and of the battle between the good and the bad. Demon Taraka’s monster hosts and the divine throng led by Kumara, in which ultimately Asura Taraka is done to death is the nucleus of the story originally based on a legend of the Śivapurāṇa.
PRATHAMA SARGA (First Canto) starts with a magnificent
description of plant life in the Himalayas, a clear evidence to Kalidasa’s
depth knowledge of floral variety and affluence in that area. He says; To the
North of the mountains is the greatest of all headlands, the angelic
Himalaya, with his spurs diving into the Eastern and Western ocean; He is
poised as the measuring standard of the earth. Kālidāsa describes the beauty
of Himalaya Parvatha (mountain) in the first canto of Kumarasambhava
which is gorgeous. Filling the hollows of the bamboo in the Himalayas,
winds seem as if to add music to the songs of Kinnara (Ku.I.8). The odour
of milky juice of sarala trees, whose barks are rubbed away by elephants,
makes the peaks aromatic (Ku.I.9).

Kalidasa’s knowledge of the plant life in the mountain ranges of the
Himalayas seems to be deep and rich. The mountain, says the poet, has
luminous herbs which dispel the darkness of night serving as the lamps
without oil for those who occupy caves in their amorous sports (Ku.I.10). The breezes, charged with spray from the current of river Bhagirathi, and
which make the devadaaru trees to quake, are enjoyed by the Kiratas
(hunters), as they breathe in welcome freshness, over the wearied faces of
the hunting (Ku.I.15). Saptarṣis collect the lotuses which bloom far aloft
in the pools (Ku.I.16). Concept of Pushpa Vrīthi (shower of flowers),
famous in Kalidasa’s works surfaces here as both Sthavara and Jangama
(immobile and mobile beings) (Ku.I.23) There was a shower of flower when
Uma, daughter of Himalaya and Mina, and the heroine of this work, was
born. The eyes of the mountain were not satisfied with looking at that child;
for spring, albeit full of a variety of flowers yet the bee has a special
attachment for the Mango-blossom. Her body was like a lotus, blooming into life at the touch of the rays of the sun, looked beautiful, perfect in all limbs. (Ku. I.32). Her feet robbed the beauty of the moving land-growing lotus-plant (Ku.I.33); her thighs were compared to the plantain-stalks because of their extreme coolness (Ku.I.36). Her twin bosom grew in such a manner that they pressed against each other, so that between them even a slender thread of a lotus-stalk (मृणालसूजतरमयि) could not find a way (Ku. I.40) Her arms were more delicate than shirisha flowers (Ku.I.41). Uma’s face possessed the beauty of both the moon and of the lotus (Ku. I.43) and if a flower were to snuggle intimately in tender leaves that was the beauty of her smile flashed on her red lips (Ku.I.44). The glances of the long-eyed Uma was shy as a blue lotus in a blast of wind (Ku.I.46). The poet was not sure whether lotus and Uma both appropriated this beauty from each other. (Uma in her previous birth), since that time one, As the story moves, Lord Shiva became indifferent to worldly pleasure after Dakshayani (wife of Shiva in her previous birth) entered sacrificial fire after her father Dasksha’s wrath to Lord Shiva during heavenly offerings. God Shiva resorted to a peak of the Himalayas, full of devadaru trees (Ku.I.54). The followers of Shiva, wearing as ear-ornaments the blossom of the nameru and wearing bhurja (Bhurjatvachaha) barks pleasant to touch sat on moss-covered blocks of stone (Ku.I.55). On the advice of her Father Himalaya, Uma along with her friends started serving Lord Shiva. By gathering flowers and fetching kuśa grass for the performance of penance she waited upon Shiva every day (Ku.I.60)
Uma, the heroine of the *kavya* is constantly compared with floral beauty including those of flowers, blossoms and creepers. She is liken to a mango sprout. Kālidāsa conceives Himalaya as a honey-bee and his progeny the flowers of the spring. As the bee centres upon the mango sprout, the affection of Himalaya is focused upon his daughter. As the solar rays unfold the lotus (Ku.I.32), youth imparts beauty to Uma’s figure. Her feet with red nails are like red lotuses on the earth (Ku.I.33). The arms of Uma are more delicate than *sirisha* (Ku.I.41). Cupid has created her two arms as the restraint round the neck of Shiva. In that atmosphere, the trees and the creepers in the penance-grove look like the lovers to Kālidāsa.

In DWITIYA SARGAHA (Second Canto) Kalidasa’s love for floral riches goes even deeper. As the story unflags, troubled by the demon Taraka, the gods, under the leadership of Indra, went to the abode of the Self-Creator - Brahma. The Creator appeared in front of them ‘like the sun appearing in front of a lake wherein lotuses are closed (Ku.II.2). Tatakasura’s harassment has made the arms of Kubera (God of wealth) denuded of its club and it looked like ‘a tree whose branch is lopped off’.

Indra, on behalf of Gods, explains the crisis and troubles caused by Tarakasura. And when he turned his face towards their teacher Brahaspati, ‘his thousand eyes flashed like a lotus-lake’(Ku.II.29). Brahaspati explains to Brahma that due to the difficulties caused by Tarakasura, even the sun is afraid of this demon and offers only as much light as is sufficient to make the lotuses in his pleasure-ponds bloom (Ku.II.33). The wind does not blow fast in his garden for the fear of punishment of stealing the garden flowers.
All the six seasons serve him simultaneously with a wealth of flowers in common with the keepers of gardens (Ku.II.36). The concept of *Kalpa Vruksha* or *Kalpa Druma* (the wish-fulfilling tree) is often mentioned in Kalidasa's writings displaying his tremendous admiration towards forests and trees. This was illustrated in the earlier section of this research task. Further to this for example, in *Kumarasambhava* also, Indra offers ornaments to Tarakasura yielded by Kalpadruma (Ku.II.39). The trees of *Nandana Vana* (angle forest) also were troubled by Tarakasura. Because of the demon, the trees in the *Nandana Vana* whose tender sprouts were picked by the wives of the gods with their own hands for making ear-ornaments, could see the incision of the branches and falling of leaves (Ku.II.41). The crop of golden lotuses finds a home in the demon’s pleasure-pond instead of the waters of river *Mandakini* (Ku.II.44).

Tarakasura was very powerful due to the boon and grace of Brahma and indestructible by Brahma himself. Describing this situation Kalidasa says: ‘having grown a tree of poison, it is improper to cut it oneself’, meaning thereby enough care should be taken before planting but once planted cutting the plants is immoral. The son born to Śiva and Uma (Parvathi) alone is able to end the cruel demon. Brahma therefore solicits *Manmatha* or *Kama* (cupid) to draw Shiva (indentured by self-control) towards Uma and marry her. Kama (who is known as ‘flower bowed’ or ‘pushpa dhanva’) presented himself before Brahma as mango-blossoms missile (‘chutankura asthra’) (Ku.II.64) expressive enough to demonstrate Kalidasa’s love for mango plant.
As the THRATHIYA SARGA (Third Canto) elaborates, Kama promises Brahma that he makes any lady to betake herself to a 'bed of tender leaves' (प्रवाल शब्य) (Ku.III.8). Brahma say instantly Kama should proceed to accomplish gods' business, 'as a sprout from a seed requires water before it appears' 22. (The intention of Kālidāsa here seems to tell the reader that like the seeds need water before sprouting, Gods want Kama's help for the birth of Kumara from Shiva and Parvathi to kill the demon). With the onset of Spring, trees and creepers wear resplendence in the penance-grove of Shiva,. The ashoka blossoms without waiting for kick from a fair maiden. The mango sprouts and the humming bees come to suck juice 23.

When Spring had fashioned a new shaft with tender leaves for feathers, Kama forthwith scored on it the letters of his name in the form of bees (Ku.III.27) (जवघूत बाण or 'arrow of new tender mango' is the name of the arrow of Kama). Spite of richness of colour, from absence of fragrance, the karnikara flower pains the mind. The poet is hurt by the fact that the Creator at times creates a flower like karnikara - rich in colours but without fragrance (Ku.III.28). Here again, Kalidasa chooses the varieties of plants, creepers, flowers and fruits for comparing the characteristics (Svabhava) of human beings. The budding palasha looks like the curved digit of the moon. Its dark-red buds (Ku.III.29) resemble the nail-scratching on the wood-land. Tender mango-sprouts adorned the lips of Vanadevatha during the Spring season (Ku.III.30). Perceptions of the deer are obstructed by priyaala’s pollen yellow (Ku.III.31). The male kokila (nightingale) with its throat hoarse due to tasting of fresh mango blossom, sweetly cooed, so that
it bespeak Cupid's mind (Ku.III.32). The bee, following his mate, drank wine (madhu) from the same flower-cup (kusumaikapaathre) (Ku.III.36). The female elephant gave to its mate a mouthful of water, flavoured with the scent of the pollen of lotuses; and the male chakravaka bird honoured his mate with a half-chewed lotus-stalk (Ku.III.37) A Kinnara kissed the mouth of his beloved as it whirled in consequence of her having guzzled floral wine (Pushpasava) (Ku.III.38). The trees, too, embraced by the curved branches, as if they were the arms of bride-like creepers, who possessed fully round breasts in the form of their big bunches of flowers, and whose lips in the form of their shining leaves looked lovely.

Here, Nandi (Shiva's bull vehicle) has been portrayed with a shrubbery (latha gruha) enhancing an image of life form in its comprehensive sense (Ku.III.41). On the command of Nandi, the trees in the forest did not tremble. In the description of this picturesque scenario by the poet, the entire wild life within the forest with its activity is painted succinctly (Kum.III.42).

Kama reached that place where Śiva was practising meditation on whose borders with branches of nameru trees interlacing one another (Ku.III.43), and saw Śiva squatting on an altar of Devadaru (संदेवदास्तुमवेदिकायां... (Ku.III.44); both his upturned hands rested in his lap were like blooming lotuses (प्रपुल्लसराजीवविश्वामध्ये... -Ku.III.45). Parvathi decking herself with the flowers of spring in which the ashoka flower spurned the Padmaraga gem, the karṇikāra cried down the sheen of gold, and in which the Sinduvara stood for clusters of pearls (संक्षारिणी पल्लविनी लंतेव ।) (Ku.III.54) wearing the girdle of bakula-wreaths (Ku.III.55). She scattered
at the feet of Tryambaka the flowers of spring, mixed with bits of leaves, gathered by her friends (Ku.III.61). Uma, too, disengaged the fresh *karnikara* flower from her dark hair wherein it shone, and bowed down her head to Śiva, while the leaf that adorned her ear slipped from it (Ku.III.52). Then Gauri brought to Girisha, the anchorite which had lotus seeds grown in the Ganges and dried by the rays of the sun (Ku.III.65). In response to Shiva’s glance, Uma manifested her feeling with her limbs which were like flashing young *kadamba* (bala kadhambalaihi) (Ku.III.68). Shiva blasted *Kama* who was obstacle in his penance like the thunderbolt to a tree (वनस्पति वज्र इव) (Ku.III.74). Then Himadri led his daughter by her hand like the elephant of the gods (airavata) carrying a lotus plant clinging to his tusks (Ku.III.76).

Kalidasa’s love and appreciation for the flora continues unabated also in the CHATURTHA SARGAHA (Fourth Canto). As he conceives the story further, (after the blast of Shiva) *Kama* deserted entirely dependent *Rati* (wife of *Kama*) who relied on him so totally. Kālidāsa feels that ‘like a lake bursting its retaining wall with the lotus plants’ (Ku.RTU.IV.6). *Rati* cries addressing her husband *Kama*. “Say, whose shaft, the new mango blossom, will be, with a green and red stalk, suggested by the cry of the male nightingale? (Ku.IV.14)” *Kama*’s bow is supposed to be made by flowers. It has lotus fibre as its string and its shafts are of delicate flowers (Ku.IV.29). Destiny left *Rati* and took away *Kama*, like the elephant smashed the tree which supported the creeper (Ku.VI.31). *Rati* wanted to die with her husband and was ready to enter the funeral fire as if on a bed of leaves (नवपलसंस्तरे यथा) (Ku.IV.34). *Rati* reminds *Kama* that he has
helped her in arranging their bed of flowers (कुसुमास्तरणे सहायताम् ) (Ku.VI.35) and suggests Madhava that in making respectful offerings to Smara to extend him mango-blossoms with twirling leaves as he was fond of mango-blossoms (Ku.IV.38). (It may be recalled that Manmatha is known as kusumayudha, priyachuthaprasava, and so on and his wife Rathi is called as Kusumaayudhapathni in Sanskrit Kavyas.

In the PANCHAMA SARGA (Fifth Canto), the poet Kālidāsa continues to cherish the plant life in general as can be seen in the subsequent part of the kavya. Parvathi determines to attain Shiva by undertaking arduous penance. Mena stops her daughter by saying "What disparity is there between her fresh youth and penance; the delicate Śīrīśa flower can bear the bee’s tread but not that of a bird 26. Bark apparel or valkala was the common dress for penance. Parvathi also wore Valkala (Ku.V.8). Her face became intensely attractive by her tangled locks as by her well-dressed hair; for the lotus shines as well by moss adhering to it, as by a swarm of bees (Ku.V.9). She wore the thrice folded Maunji-girdle (maunjim) (Ku.V.10). Her bed was painted by the flowers fallen from her hair (Ku.V.12). As Parvati observed vows for penance, she kept her graceful movements with the petite plants (Ku.V.13). Unwearied, she herself care for the trees, watering them tenderly; Being elder, her affection for the plants was deep (Ku.V.14). She fed handfuls of grains (nivara) grown in the forest to the deer to win their confidence (Ku.V.15). The trees welcomed guests with their fruits, inside the new cottages where the sacred fire was fed (Ku.V.17). Uma’s attractive appearance was so burned by the rays of the sun, that it appeared like a blooming lotus (Ku.V.21). She became such a
close part of the groove that like trees, water and lunar-rays became the only means of gratifying her hunger. With her, She resembled the lotus-lake with a lotus whose wealth of flowers was destroyed by a shower of snow as her mouth scented the odour of lotus (Ku.V.27). Parvati lived on the fallen leaves as her penance reached pinnacle. Even that was rejected by her later and that is why she is called Aparna (tyakta parna) (Ku.V.28) Shiva, in the disguise of a Vatu (bachelor), asked Parvathi about the availability of samidhas and kusha grass sufficient for the performance of penance (Ku.V.33) and whether the leaves of the creepers watered by her are continuously burgeoning (Ku.V.34) by addressing her as Utpalaxi (lotus-eyed) (Ku.V.35). Siva asked Parvathi why she has discarded ornaments when so young and wore barks (valkala) befitting old age (Ku.V.44). Parvathi made her body like a lotus which wards off heat. (Ku.V.52) by applying sandal (chandand) to her fore-head (Ku.V.55). Fruit appeared in trees planted by Parvathi herself as penance grew, but the desire in her heart for Candramauli did not seem to sprout (Ku.V.60). The disguised Vatu interrogate her how she, who walked only on the flower covered ground, can walk in the cemetery ground with Shiva after marriage (Ku.V.68) and her breasts fit to be plastered with harichandana should be bespattered with funeral ashes by embracing Hara. (Ku.V.69). Parvathi tells vatu about the feet of Shiva, red with the pollen of full-blown mandara flowers (Ku.V.80).

SHASTHA SARGA (Sixth Canto) carries through Kalidasa’s immense veneration for and love towards the plant kingdom. As the story of Kumarasambhava proceeds, Uma felt more attached to Hara than ever, like a branch of mango, favouring the nightingale at the onset of the Spring (Ku.VI.2). Seven luminous sages (Saptarsis), having creeper-like arms
[बाहुल्य] (Ku.VI.8), who came down to discuss Siva’s marriage with Uma (with king Himalaya), bathed in the heavenly Ganges, whose waves bore scattered clusters of Mandara flowers (Ku.VI.5). Shiva suggests Saptarsis to proceed to ‘Osadhiprastha’ [the place of herbal medicine], the capital of Himalaya, for conveying his message of marrying Uma (Ku.VI.33). That palace was encircled by the streams of Ganges, with medicinal herbs shining in the rampart (jvalithaoushadhi) (38). Vidhyadharas of odorous Gandhamadana slept under Santanaka trees. (Ku.VI.46). Himavan himself had arms as drawn out as devadaru (Ku.VI.51). The sight of Saptarsis was ‘like a shower without clouds, like fruit without flower’ (अपमेयोद्यं वर्ष अदृश्यकुसुमं फलम् त) to Himavan (Ku.VI.54).

In the SAPTHAMA SARGA (Seventh Canto) Kalidasa the poet inaugurated his love for the flora by calling Himavantha as athousadhinaam adhipa (king of medicinal plants)(Ku.VII.1). The city appeared to be heaven itself with Mandara flowers (santhanaka) (Ku.VII.3). Parvathi’s garments accelerated their beauty by durva grass blades (dhurva pravala) sprinkled intermittently by white mustard seeds (ku.VII.7). With her oily body purged by lodhra powder (Lodhra kalka) and dry kaleya smeared on to her body as lotion (Ku.VII.9). Uma, with her limbs, pure from the auspicious bath, shone like earth with kasa flower blooming (Ku..VII.11). Maid braided Uma’s hair into a high coiffeur and strung a chaplet of Madhuka flowers interspersed with Durva in it. (Ku.VII.14); beauty of her face surpassed the beauty of the lotus with bees clinging to it.(Ku.VII.16). The Yava sprout, kept on her ear, looked gorgeous, preceding beyond the ordinary confines of beauty, against the setting of her
forehead, distinct by *Lodhra* paste, and crimson by the use of *Gorochana*.
(Ku.VII.17). Her eyes looked as lovely as lotus-petals (*utpala patra kanthe*)
(Ku. VII.20) and she radiated like a plant whose buds have yet to appear
(Ku.VII.21). Seven Auspicious Mothers followed God Īśiva, turned the sky
into a lotus-lake, with their faces, red with the rays of the auriole, that
surrounded their heads(Ku.VII.38). Himavantha went forth to meet his son-
in-law, Siva, accompanied by his relations as if they were his own
incentives clad with trees in flowers (prapulla vrakshaibhi
katakaairiva)(Ku.VII.52). Himavan forwarded to meet Shiva along a road
which was strewn with flowers up to the heel(Ku.VII.55). The Brahman
performing the marriage sat as Kamalasana (lotus-seated) (Ku.VII.70). After
the wedlock Uma fried grains (*laaja moksha*) in the blazing fire (Ku.II.80)
and because of the heat of the Agni (fire) the *yava* sprout waned
(Ku.VII.82)Goddess Laskmi, held over them a parasol of lotus, with a long
stalk as the rod, at the periphery of whose petals were assemblage of
beautiful water drops (Ku.VII.89).

ASTHAMA SARGA (Eighth Chapter) gives a final touch to this
splendid and proficient recital of flora by Kalidasa. Breathing from the
mouth of Parvathi bore the aroma of a blooming lotus (Ku.VIII.19). As
Shiva enjoyed sex, the Malaya mountain breeze, charged with the pollen of
*Lavanga* (clove), shook the sandal creeper (Ku.VIII.25). Shiva adorning
Parvathi with *Parijatha* flowers (Ku.VIII.27). Elephants suck up in their
trunks water, infused with the scent of *Sallaki* tendrils, and in which bees
clinged to lotus flower (Ku.VIII.33). The peacock roosted at the top of the
tree (Ku.VIII.36). The lotus, though it had furled itself into a bud, poise for
awhile with an open split as if to give shelter to the bee that was seeking a
home in love (Ku.VIII.39). The West, with the crimson Sun in the evening, looked like a bride adorned by *tilak* mark of the *Bandhujiva* flower with filaments (Ku.VIII.40) The sun seemed to have distributed his evening light to the trees that flowered with leaves on the peaks of mountains (Ku.VIII.46). The twilight troubled by increasing darkness like a river of liquid minerals with *Tamala* groves lining (Ku.VIII.53). Kalidasa envisions Shiva as addressing Uma as *pundareeka mukhi* (lotus-faced). The cool-rayed one imitates the Cakravaka pair whose image shone like the ripe fruit of the *priyangu* (Ku.VIII.61). The night-lily, unable to hold the liquid light of the moon, bursts open, and, quickly letting forth the murmur of bees, opens from the stem upwards (Ku.VIII.70). Uma's face is naturally redolent like wet saffron. (Ku.VIII.76). When Uma drank the wine, the mango changed itself to became the fragrant *Sahakara* by her imagination process (Ku.VIII.78). That couple enjoyed the breezes from the interior of the gandhamadana forests, that raised ripples on the Manasa lake and that indicated the busting of the kind of lotus. (Ku.VIII.86).

This brings us to the close of Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhava kavya*. What should be noticed here is Kalidasa's in-depth knowledge of not only the variety of plants in the Himalayas, but also their heterogeneous usage for the community. Although most of the time, the poet engages in utilising the floral varieties to describe charm and beauty, his ideas are certainly above sheer description of attractiveness of a person. Instead, the poet compares the vegetation varieties to different limbs of human beings, their different moods, possible functions of trees, plants and creepers so as to seek a harmony between societal life and the environment around him.
Two literary works of Kālidāsa are invariably included among the five remarkable poetic works (Pañcha Mahākāvyas) traditionally listed as great poems in Sanskrit literature. These two are Kumarasambhava (which has been discussed in detail above) and Raghuvamsha. Raghuvamsha corresponds to the basic tenets of Mahakavya outlined by Dhandin. However, the greatness of Raghuvamsha lies not in its adherence to the rules of Mahakavya but incorporating all of these norms in a natural and profound way in the unhurried maturation of the tale of a celebrated clan. In fact, the integration of Dhandin’s standard prescriptions is so unfeigned in the story that the reader never feels the constraint of literary laws in the smooth stream of the chronological narrative. The floral portrayal in the mahakvyya is also so opulent and unconstrained that the poet can be rated as a poet par excellence of forests and plant life, besides his distinction of being the ‘greatest of great poets’ in the classical sense.

Raghuvamsha opens with the praise and salutation to Parvathi and Paramesvara, a Sloka known for its literary, pensive and linguistic wit. The story is adopted directly from Ramayana and Purana describing the noble and brave kings of Iksvaku dynasty in which Visnu incarnated himself as Lord Rama to destroy the demon Ravana. The poetic work has a total of nineteen cantos unfolded in a paradise of imagination.

PRATHAMA SARGA (First Canto) of this Mahakavya begins with a note of modesty in poet’s ado in undertaking such an arduous assignment as that of composing on the distinguished echelon of Raghu dynasty. This
task, the poet feels, is like the attempt of "a dwarf who raises his arms to pick a fruit which only the lofty may grasp."  

Dilipa, the noble and brave emperor, who was eager to have a child, travelled with his queen to the hermitage of sage Vasistha to seek counsel. The hermitage of Vasistha was being filled by sages who returned from the depth of forests bringing with them sacred fuel and Kusha grass and fruit. Deer of the hermitage looked for a portion of the Nivaras (Dhanya) of the sages (Rv.I.50). After watering the trees the hermit-girls moved away from them, lest they frighten the birds that drank water from their tubs (Rv.I.51). In the uncovered expanse in front of the hut the Nivara grains were heaped in a hunk, squatted the deer chewing cud (Rv.I.52). King Dilipa recounts to Vasistha - that the sacrifice which the sage duly performs is turned into the rains that upraise the crops withered by drought (Rv.I.62). Dilapa asks Vasistha "O Creator, does it not pain you to see me bereft of it, like a young tree of the hermitage affectionately watered by yourself remaining barren?" (Rv.I.70.). The concept of Kalpataru or Kalpavruksa (heavenly tree that offers everything) is also mentioned in Raghuvamsha (Rv.I.75) like his other 'kavyas'. The concept of the bed of Kusha grass (कुशशायज - Rv.I.95) of Raghuvamsha reminds us also of his other poetic works.

In DVITIYA SARGA (Chapter Two), King Dilipa unbound the holy cow Nandhini to the forest after she was honoured by his wife with scents and various flowers (Rv.II.1), after offering savoury morsels of grass and scratching her body (Rv.II.5) and also her hair secured into a knot with tendrils of creepers (Rv.II.8). The forest, with its trees on both his sides, seemed to utter "all hail" to the King who was an equivalent to lord Varuna (Rv.II.9). The tender plants receptive to the breeze spread flowers
ahead of him treating him like the friend of the wind and worthy of this
honour, looking like the virgins in the city scattering fried grains before his
arrival customarily. Dilipa heard his own fame sung aloud in the
underbrush by forest deities (vanadevatha), where the bamboo (kichaka)
sounded Raghuvamsha through their holes, Dilipa follows the holy cow
Nandini. The trees grown on the way cheered his victory through the
breakings of excited birds (Rv.II.9). The creepers showered blooms
(Rv.II.10.) in the company of winds blowing melodious tone emerging
from the holes of bamboo (Rv.II.12) like the goddesses of the forest singing
royal glory. The woods attended on him with their fruits and flowers and
with the shower of waters from the hilly springs, the aroma of flowers
radiated all over (Rv.II.12). The wind itself was perfumed with the scent of
the flowers with the slight wave on the trees (Rv.II.13). Immediately after
Kings entrance into the woods, flower and fruits bloomed rich and enlarged
(Rv.II.14). He followed grazing Nandini into the deep forests as the
peacocks turned their perch to the trees and the deer-herds squatted on the
meadow plants and grass (Rv.II.17). One day, the holy cow of the sage
entered a cave in the Himalayas near a cataract of the Ganges where the
grass grew afresh (गंगापरपालत्विसिद्धश्च) (Rv.II.26). The king saw a lion
there standing over the flushed cow like a Lodhra tree full-blossoming on
the upper ledge of a hill. One may notice here that the ‘Rakhasikta’ cow is
compared to the red Lodhra tree by Kalidasa in an inimitable style
(Rv.II.29). When the king failed to attack the line because of some magical
spell, the lion said ‘Vain would be your shaft though discharged at me; the
force of the wind which has power to uproot a tree does not prevail against a
mountain’ 31. The lion told him that he was a servant of Shiva sent to guard
a devadaru tree cherished by Uma. devadharu tree has tasted the water poured by the mother of Skanda from breast-like golden pitchers. The beauty of the statement lies in recollecting the fact that in *Kumarasambhava*, Kalidasa designed it the other way: as *Skandha* tasted Uma’s milk coming out from her breasts as from golden jars’. The unity that is seen between the human and the ecological processes is of a very distinguished class. Once a wild elephant rubbed its temples against the tree and stripped it of its bark; whereupon the daughter of the mountain lamented it as she would her son Skandha if wounded by the missiles of he demons (*Rv*.II.37). From that day onwards, Shiva commissioned the lion to frighten away wild animals from the cave (for protecting the forest). While offering his own body to the lion in return to the holy cow, he says that the lion is protecting the *Devadaru* tree with anxious zeal (महान हि यत्नस्तव देवदारु) for his master’s sake as he is protecting the cow (*Rv*.II.56). When the king cast himself a prey before the lion, a shower of flowers trickled upon the king (pushpavrusthi) (*Rv*.II.60).

THRATHIYA SARGA (Chapter Three) goes on with the story of the majestic dynasty but the description of flora to mirror the human feeling, thinking and acting keeps glistening throughout. King *Dilipa’s* wife became pregnant with the boon of Nandini and she appeared like a plant which, having shed its ripe leaves, was covered with beautiful young leaves (*Rv*.III.7). And as days passed, her breasts grew full and rounded and shamed the beauty of lovely lotus-buds where black bees cluster (*Rv*.III.8). The king considered his pregnant queen as the Śami tree with fire concealed within it (*Rv*.III.9). The son was born and the King saw his
son’s steady eyes which looked like lotuses in a windless spot (Nivatha padma) (Rv.III.17). Royal glory was transferred in part from original abode (Dilipa) to the infant one beside him, like the beauty of lotuses partially moving from one lotus to another in fresh bloom (Rv.III.36). After certain period, Dilipa entrusted to his youthful son the royal insignia and withdrew to the shade of trees. Here Vanagamana and Kulavrtti demonstrate Dilipa’s intense desire to be one with the forest and the woodlands environment.

In CHATURTHA SARGA (Fourth Chapter) Kālidāsa describes Dilipa’s son Raghu as the king who was installed on the imperial throne by holding over a lotus-umbrella whose presence was to be inferred from the circle of light which surrounded him (Rv.IV.5). King Raghu’s virtue surpassed his father Dilipa’s virutues and his subjects remembered his father less (due to Raghu’s greatness) as when the fruit appears the mango’s blossom is scare remembered. Here Dilipa is considered by the great poet as the flower and Raghu, the fruit. The season of Sharat (autumn) with its emblem of lotuses appeared then as if it was another royal glory approaching him (Rv.IV.14). With the white lotus (Pundarika) for its umbrella and the blooming Kasha flower for its chowrie (chamara or fly-flap), this season simply imitated Raghu but could not acquire his glory. During the conquest (Digvijaya) of the king, the female guardians of the rice-fields sitting in the dense shadow of sugar-canes chanted his glory.

Struck by the smell of the Saptaparna blossom which was like that of rut, his elephants, as though through jealousy, began to drip ichor (Madha) in seven streams. (Rv. IV.23). The modest city-dames showered fried-grains
(laaja) on him (Rv.IV.27). Then in his might he turned deserts into places full of water, and made navigable rivers fordable and cleared the forest. His passage was clearly marked by kings who were dispossessed, or deposed, or time and again overthrown, as the march of an elephant is shown by trees the fruit of which is being plucked, which are uprooted, and are broken in many places (Rv.IV.33). Thus conquering the various countries of the East, the conqueror now swept to the vicinity of the great ocean which was dark with clumps of palm-trees (Rv.IV.34). In this context Kalidasa excels any poet of his class when he says: `And from him who uprooted those who would not humble themselves before him the Suhmas saved themselves as from the violence of a river by behaving in the manner of reeds. People of Suhmas saved themselves like Vethasi (a kind of grass) bending to the stream of the river initially and gets up again. In the same manner those who bowed down before his lotus-feet and who were (on that account) reinstated, honoured Raghu by presenting him with their wealth, like paddy-plants yielding their crop when they are transplanted after having been first uprooted (आपात पद्म प्रणत: कल्मा इव ते सहुम्। कल्मातः संवेंधसङ्गुरुस्चाकाराल्पकारप्रतिरोपित: ॥) (Rv.IV.37). These and many other such meters corroborate my earlier observation regarding Kalidasa’s intimate perception and involved comprehension of the plant kingdom of his era. When Raghu reached Mahendra mountain, his warriors constructed drinking booths there and drank up water in betel-leaves, the milk of the coconut like the fame of their rivals. Herein after, along the sea-shore sheltered with rows of fruit-laden betel-trees, Raghu advanced towards South (Rv.IV.44). Here again, Kalidasa’s knowledge of the variety of plants, not only in the North, but also in the Southern part of the Sub-continent is astonishingly impressive.
As could be observed in this chapter, the knowledge of the plant kingdom proceeds hand-in-hand with the endowment, triumph and the glory of the hero of this section of the narrative. King’s forces in the next stride involved the border of the Malaya mountain where the harita birds flew about in pepper groves (मलय बीमार भाग हरिता... - Rv.IV.46). In this range of mountains, knocked down by his steeds, the up flying grime of the cardamoms clung to the temples of enraged elephants possessing an identical fragrance (Rv.IV.47). The neck chains of elephants were secured to the sandal-trees (chandhana) in the groves (Rv.IV.48). The king enjoyed the two mountains Malaya and Dardura, with sandal-trees on top. (Rv.IV.51). The pollens of ketaka flowers scattered by the breezes of the Murala river became the powder, gathered without any exertion, to odourise the armours of his soldiers (Rv.IV.55). The yoke of the horses, as they moved on, produced a clanking sound which drowned the murmur of the forests embodying Rajathali trees (Rv.IV.56). It may be of some considerable interest for those who study flora in ancient India that western coastal belt contains a large number of Rajathali trees. Further, this may be noted that Rajathali and Khalithali trees cause sound in response to breeze, a specific fact that is noticed only by a keen observer of wild life. Swarms of bees rising from punnaga flowers dropped on the temples of elephants tied to the trunks of kharjura trees and their ichor has become fragrant. The king could not sustain the flush of wine upon the lotus-faces of the Yavana ladies, just as assemblage of untimely clouds upsetting the tender light of the morning sun upon the lotuses (Rv.IV.61). In Kalidasa’s poetry, lotus flower keeps on appearing frequently. Most of the time, the face of his hero/heroine is invariably compared to lotus, as in the case of mukha
padma and the like. His entertainers forgot their drudgery of war, celebrating in thickets of vine-creepers strewn with the best of the deer-skins (Rv.IV.65). The Kambojas were incapable of tolerating Raghu's force in battle, and prostrated themselves before him. Kalidasa brings in here the simile of the akśota trees that were strained by the chains of elephants (Rv.IV.69). On his way to ascend Himalaya King Raghu was applauded by breeze charged with the spray of the Ganges which whispered among the bhurja leaves and caused the bamboo to cause tune (Rv.IV.73). The soldiers deceived their exhaustion positioned in the shade of the Nameru trees (Rv.IV.74). The herbs in the vicinity assisted the chief as oil-less lamps at night, their brilliance flashed back from the chains of elephants fastened to the Sarala tree (Rv.IV.75). The idea that these plants aided Raghu as the night-lamps is enchanting both in terms of its stretch of imagination as well as deep-seated cultural wisdom. In the camping places which the king Raghu abandoned, the Devadaru trees whose barks had been rubbed away by the chains of tied elephants indicated the foresters (kiratebhyaha) and the stature of their bodies (Rv.IV.76). And when Raghu crossed the river Lauhitya, the King of the Pragjotisha began shivering along with the black-aloe trees (Kaalagurudhumaihi) which were utilised for tying his elephants (Rv.IV.81). While describing King Kamarupa's act of washing Raghu's feet, the concept of Rathnapuspha (flower of jewels) is construed by Kalidasa (Rv.IV.84). While returning, the defeated princes, as their parting salutations, made emperor's feet red by means of the honey and pollen dropped down from the garlands on their crowns (Rv.IV.88).
PANCHAMA SARGA (Chapter Five) concentrates on the conquest journey of king Aja, the son of Raghu. When a Brahmin approached Raghu after his sacrifice and the resultant deprivation, Raghu says 'I hope storms and other calamities have not injured the trees of the hermitage which remove fatigue, and which have been fostered with the care bestowed upon a son, by constructing water-basins and such-like operations' (RV. V.6). One may notice the tender loving care offered to the plants at hermitages when the poet uses the phrase 'the care bestowed upon a son' (...

पुलिनिविशेषम्...आश्म पादपानाम् II) delineating the affectionate care given by sages towards trees. Next several verses present Kalidasa's concern over the welfare of the plant kingdom in general through the expressive enough questions of the King. 'Are the fawns of the deer safe - the fawns whose desire for the Kusha grass is indulged by the hermits through their love for them, although the grass is required by them for religious rites (RV. V.7). The sandy banks are impressed by a sixth part of the gleanings of corn.(RV. V.8). Further the King expresses: 'I hope the ripe Nivara corn and such other forest products, upon which you depend for subsistence, and a part whereof is to be set apart for guests who arrive in time, is not eaten up by country-cattle that feed upon chaff. (RV.V.9). Giving away all his wealth to worthy recipients Raghu looked towards the sage like the Nivara plant of which only the stem is left when the fruit is gathered by the foresters (RV. V.15).

When Aja, Raghu's son, reached proper age to marry, Raghu sent Aja to Vidharbha to marry Bhoja's sister Indumathi. Having travelled a good distance Aja encamped his tired army on the banks of the Narmada river where the Naktamala trees were designed to dance by the flurry of wind,
humid with mist (Rv.V.42). Because of the unendurable odour of ichor, bitter like the milky-juice of the Sapthacchada tree, the elephants in the military took diversions becoming arrogant in spite of the rivers (Rv.V.48). The great tree Kalpadhruma or Kalpavraksha appears here again (Rv.V.52) making it a very special entity in Kalidasa’s imagery in the plant kingdom, looming beautifully in several of his major works. Proceeding on his path further, Aja reached Vidharbha. His beautiful eyes with their soft and throbbing pupils looked to the poet like the lotus with a black bee moving inside as he got up in the morning (Rv.V.68). The breeze during the daybreak, seeking to win the natural fragrance of his breath, lamented at the trees and received the flowers loosely hung upon their stalks, and mingled with the lotuses opened by twilight rays (Rv.V.69). The dew-drops, milky like the glistening pearls of a neck-lace, fell upon the red sprouts of trees making them look exceptional, and could be taken as Aja’s graceful smile brightened by the glimmer of his teeth acting over his lower lip (Rv.V.70). The moth-eaten flower-offerings got weakened in their distribution to wake up king Aja (Rv.V.74.).

SHASTHA SARGA (Sixth Chapter) begins with the description of Svayamvara of Indumathi with an engagingly beautiful description of the plant kingdom by the princes. The noblemen from different places assembled in Svayamvara hall to compete for Indumati’s hand in wedding. Those kings showed their passion for the princess by various arts looking like the beautiful sprouts of trees exhibiting the signs of the advent of spring (Rv.VI.12). One among them held a beautiful lotus by its stalk, revolved it in circles so that its rotating petals struck the bees, and the pollen formed a ring inside it (Rv.VI.13). Another chivalrous prince, clearing away his
flower-wove garland entangled on the ends of his jewelled armlets as it slipped from his shoulder, and put it in its place (Rv.VI.14). Another young man ripped with the edge of his nails a blanched Ketaka leaves as if it was a graceful substitute for the ivory ear-ring of his adored one (Rv.VI.17). In essence, what we cannot fail to notice is that Kalidasa’s competing princes here were employing flowers and plant-parts to reveal their love towards Indumathi; and even while being introduced to the princess, the reference to Mandhara flowers by the poet is distinct (Rv.VI.23). While Indumathi was to select or reject her life-partner, she held a garland of Madhuka flowers, intertwined with Durva (Rv.VI.25). The lass led the princess from one king to another, as wind-stirred rippling wave on Manasa brings a female swan from one lotus to another (Rv.VI.26). Kalidasa states: ``The princess did not fix her love on different kings, even as the night-lotus loves not the Sun, he who caused his friends to bloom, as the Sun the day-lotuses, and dried up through his valour his enemies, as the Sun the mire through his intense heat” (Rv.VI.36). Like the lotus that does not receive her grace from the Sun due to the veil of clouds dispersed by autumn, Princess Indumati did not like any king (Rv.VI.44). Roof of the foeman’s In spite of the fact that several of these princes had rich resources with the nature, such as mansions of king of Nipa are overgrown with grass( Rv.VI.47), Sudhakshina can provide a life couched upon flower-beds spread upon soft young leaves (Rv.VI.50), or if the princess marries Kalinga king, she can enjoy the life with him on the shores of the sea where forests of palm-tree whisper, and where drops of sweat are removed by breezes that bring clove-flowers from different isles (Rv.VI.57), and the like. The maid introduces Pandya king with details of the floral wealth owned by him. In his kingdom amid the
natural sights of the Malaya mountain, encircled by areca-palm with betel-vine, covered by the cardmom creepers clasping the Sandal trees, and the Tamala leaves covering the ground. He is dark like a blue lotus and Indumathi is fair as Gorocana. Let each be enhance by the union of other’s beauty. Maid Sunanda’s this advice did not enter the mind of Indumathi, as the moon-beam does not enter the lotus that stays close shut when the Sun is invisible. When she stood before Aja, the maiden stopped from going to any other prince. To Kalidasa, this looked like a swarm of bees not crossing on to another tree, when it found the mango in full flower, another classic illustration for the poet’s love toward the plant life. When they were married, Aja felt that the wedding-wreath put by Indhumathi is like the delicate arms of her clasped round his neck (VI. 84) echoing here again poet’s affection towards the flowers in comparing them to the delicate arms of the lovely princess. Even an argumentative scene is painted gorgeously when Kalidasa says: ‘That coterie of princess, with the bridegroom’s assemblage glistening in delight on one side, and the rest fallen in dejection on the other side, manifested the picture of a lake at dawn where the day-lotuses fully expand in one part, while the lotuses that open to the moon are sealed up in another part’ (VI. 86). It may also be noted that Kalidasa likened Padma to Aja’s team and Kumudha to the kings who lost in the contest for Indumati.

SAPTHAMA SARGA (Seventh Canto) does not elaborate much on flora. While in the marriage, clasping Indumathis’s hand in his, Aja gained greater sheen, as when a mango clasps with its sprout the tendril of the Ashoka plant (RV.VII.21). The bride then threw her offering of fried grain (Lajjavathi Lajavisargamagnaa) into the sacred fire (RV.VII.25) and there
rose the sacred smoke, possessing the aroma of sacrifice, cassia-shoots and fried grain, which, with its crest fleeting over her cheeks, looked like a dark-blue lotus adorning her ear (RV.VII.26). As the smoke reached her, the barley-sprouts worn as ear-ornaments withered away (RV.VII.27).

ASTHAMA SARGA (Eighth Canto) presents the floral affluence in a divergent light altogether. Aja was crowned King of the earth. Not over-harsh, nor yet too lenient, he nonplussed the kings without uprooting them like the wind to the trees (RV.VIII.9). The rushing wind, greedy of the scent bore of the wreath of heavenly flowers hung at the top of Narada’s lute created a problem (RV.VIII.33-34). That wreath which by its exceedingly aromatic scent chagrined the seasonal glory of the plants, fell on queen Indumati and took her life (RV.VIII.36). Aja is shocked about the action of the Fate which has used the delicate flower as the instrument to cut short his wife's life (RV.VIII.44) and the Death which ends a tender life by tender means, like the lotus-plant destroyed by fall of snow (RV.VIII.45). Through a reverse of fortune, the creator has modelled the blast for the king by striking down not the tree (Aja) but the creeper (Indhumathi) which has spread over its branches. Her face looked like the lotus that rested in tranquillity by night when the hum of bees inside is stilled (RV.VIII.55). Her body suffered pain even on a lounge of refreshing leaves (जलपल्लकसंस्तरः ... ). Aja was not ready to place her on the pyre until the wedding celebrations of the mango and the jasmine, betrothed by Indumati (RV.VIII.61) and he was not prepared to make a funeral offering of the blossoms of Ashoka which she liked intensely (RV.VIII.62). Ashoka tree mourns for her shedding tears of flowers as it remembers the favour which other trees would find it difficult to secure (RV.VIII.63). Aja’s grief and
mourning for his departed wife in moving expressions made even the trees sob in the form of butts dripping form their branches (Rv. VIII.70). Vashistha sends his words of consolation with Vamadheva to Aja who consoles him by saying that there won't be any difference between trees and mountains if both move in the wind (Rv. VIII.90) meaning thereby death (wind) should not impede a king like Aja (mighty mountain) as it does to ordinary men (tender tree).

As the NAVAMA SARGA (Ninth Canto) moves on, the poet brings in Dhasharatha, son of Aja, who succeeded his father to the Uttarakosala realm and wisely ruled it. Came the season of Spring with fresh flowers (Rv. IX.24), in the beginning burst the flowers, then sprouted fresh shoots, and later the hum of bees and the cuckoo’s note were heard (Rv.IX.26), and, like the suitors sought the wealth of King Dhasharatha, the bees and aquatic birds came to the lotus plant in the lake Rv.(IX.27). Not only did the fresh spring-tide blossoms of the Ashoka arouse romance in the hearts of the chivalrous but the tender shoots, worn by their loved ones as ear-drops, also replenished their hearts with passion (Rv.IX.29). Kuruvaka flowers, looking like fresh paintings drawn by Spring on garden’s fair beauty, affected the bees to hum by their intensity in giving them honey (Rv.IX.29). The bursting blossoms of the Bakula tree which had fostered wine from beauteous lips and which bore a quality similar to them, induced the bees to swarm at the tree, where, avaricious of tenderness, they clung in long-drawn rows (Rv.IX.30). The clustering buds of Kimshuka tree, which the splendour of spring bestowed, appeared like the adornment of nail-marks made by a woman on the body of her lover, when her sense of shame is interdicted by her intoxication (Rv.IX.31). The fully flowered mango-tree,
whose leaves were disordered by the Malaya breeze, seemed to be designing
to learn acting, and stirred love in the hearts of even those who had
conquered passion and hatred (Rv.IX.33). The creepers on the garden-skirts
that sang with the pleasant hum of bees, while their flowers glossed like the
tender spark of teeth, seemed to beat (the dance's) time with wind-waved
buds for hands (Rv.IX.35). The flowers with soft petals and filaments were
offered to beloved by their paramours (Rv.IX.40). The Tilaka-tree, marked
by bees that fell on its rows of flowers, dilated the charisma of the forest-
glades like the Tilaka mark of a woman 41. And the Navamallika (jasmine),
the tree's fair bride, with the gleam of a smile that her flowers gave her, that
played on her lip-like foliage, which was followed by the scent of honey,
entrapped the hearts of men (Rv.IX.42). The bunched blossoms of Tilaka,
whose parts were made full with white pollen, radiated like pearls in the
garland intertwined with hair, as they came in touch with swarms of bees
(Rv.IX.44). Dhasharatha enjoyed with his wives the Season's festival
generously, and longed to go for hunting (Rv.IX.48) and dressed in a style
that was suited for the forest-haunt of beasts. Twining his hair with
woodland wreaths, and wearing the colour of the leaves of trees, he glanced
through the Ruru-haunted glades (Rv.IX.51). The forest deities, who
concealed their forms in slender vines (तनुलताविवेशितविश्राहा ...) watched
the king as he advanced along (Rv.IX.52). He turned the tigers into quivers
by filling their yawning mouths with arrows like blooming Asana sprouts
broken by tempest (Rv.IX.63). The woodland breeze burst the folds of buds
(Rv.IX.68). He passed the night on a couch of delicate flowers and twigs
where luminous plants alone were the burning lights 42. Dasharatha received
the curse of a sage while mistaking a sage-lad to deer, he accidentally killed
him. The curse, which was caustic, was nevertheless packed with nature’s love and bless. Like the fire, kindled by fuel, although it may consume corn bearing land yet makes it productive of seedlings.

In DASHAMA SARGA (Tenth Canto) priests led by sage Rsyasrunga embarked upon the sacrifice for King Dhasharatha who longed for offspring (Puthrakameshti Yaga) and at the same time, gods troubled by Ravana, went to Vishnu, as heat-worn sojourners resort to a shady tree (छायावृक्षमिभाववागः) (Rv.X.5). Lakshmi, lotus-throwned, held in her lap his feet, where she had spread her leaf like hand, wrapping her zone in silk (Rv.X. 8). Like elsewhere, Kalidasa is enthralled by the beauty of nature and therefore he associates all natural beauty in the forms of flowers, leaves, and the like to his divine characters. We may clearly mark the poet using similes and words such as padmanishannayaahaa, astheernakarapallava, pundarikaksha (full-blown lotus like eyes), bhahughirvitapaakara (branch-like arms), etc. evincing his sonorous engrossment in the flora around. Vishnu appeared in front of gods like the Parijatha tree sprung in the water (Rv.X.11) and said that Ravana is so powerful owing to the boon granted by Brahman who also is suffering like the sandal tree enduring the ascension of a serpent (Rv.X42). Vishnu promised to born as Dasharatha’s son (Rama) and cut the lotus-head of Ravana the demon king (Rv.X.44). Having showered these words, like a rain of nectar on the crops, Vishnu - the dark cloud - melted away the gods’ grieving through aridity in the cast of Ravana (Rv.X.48). The gods, headed by Indra, went after Vishnu as trees follow in the wake of the wind by means of their flowers. At the end of the sacrifice performed by Dasharatha to pray for progeny, a divine form emerged from the fire and offered
mingled milk and rice. All the three queens of Dharatha conceived, and looked like flourishing crops when the incipient corn is shaped within. Laxmi appeared in their dream holding her lotus fan in her hand (पद्म व्यजनहस्त्या - Rv.X.62). When Kausalya delivered Rama, it was like the herb receiving the light at night that dispels darkness (Rv.X.66). Then she looked like the Ganges, slim in autumn, with an offering of lotus on her sandy bank (Rv.X.69). The shower of flowers from the trees in Paradise fell on Dhasharatha’s palace to celebrate Rama’s birth.

Later as the Kavya motions on, in the EKADASHA SARGA (Eleventh Canto), sage Viśvāmitra came to Dhaśaratha and requested him to send Rama to protect his sacrifice from the obstructions of demons. When Rama and Laksmana went with the sage for this purpose, the wind-driven clouds showered down rain and flowers (सपुष्प जलवर्षिणि:) (Rv.XI.3). In the forest of Vishvamitra, the winds eliminated their fatigue with the fragrant dust of flowers (Rv.XI.11). The sight of Rama and Laksmana cheered the hearts of the hermits, more than brilliant lotuses more than the trees that ease away all drudgery (Rv.XI.12). When the sage reached his hermitage, the trees folded their foliage like hands (Rv.XI.23). The sage stroked them gently with his darbha-grass bruised hand (Rv.XI.31). Rama looked like the snake-girt sandal tree with the mighty bow (Rv.XI.65). Later sage Parashu Rama tells him: ‘Know that Shiva’s bow, which you have broken had lost its strength through Vishnu’s power like a gentle breeze uprooting a tree on a river bank when the stream has weakened its roots (ख़ातमूलमलितो नदीस्ये: पातयत्यपि मृदुस्तट्टद्वम्: II Rv.XI.76). After Rama’s
return, Dhasharatha hug him and the joy he felt after a moment of misery was like a rain-shower to a tree that is caught in a forest fire (Rv.XI.92).

DWADASHA SARGA (Twelfth Canto) narrates the story of Rāmāyana in a nut shell. King Daśaratha who had attained old age wanted to install Rama as the crown prince. The news of the exaltation of Rama gave joy to every heart as a channel-stream refreshes every garden-tree (कुल्योद्योगानपादपान् - Rv.XII.3). But Dhasharatha’s queen Kaikeyi objected to it and asked for two boons: bye the first, to send Rama into exile for fourteen years and by the second, to install her own son Bharatha as the crown prince. Rama accepted father’s direction, entered the forest with Sita and Lakshmana wearing Valkala - bark apparel. In the forest on forest-food, it looked as though Rama entered Vanaprasthashrama at a very young age, the vows that bind the Ikśvakus in their old age (Rv.XII.20). Kalidāsa narrates instances of Rama using forest products for his periodic activities, beside food and shelter. For instance, once he laid his head to sleep on Sitas’s lap fixing the shade of a forest-tree with his divine power. (Rv.XII.21) or once he used a reed-missile to shoot Indra’s bird which troubled Sita (Rv.XII.23).

Ravana’s sister, Shurpanakha, blind with lust, reached to Rama, as a female-snake, oppressed with heat seeks the sandal tree (व्यालीव मल्यवृक्षम् - Rv.XII.32). Her fingers looked like hard knotted reed (Rv. XII.41). When Surphanaka’s efforts in getting Rama became fruitless, in order to avenge the insult offered to his sister Ravana carried away Sita to Lanka. Searching through Lanka, Maruthi found Sita compassed by demons, like the life-giving plant (महीपधि-) clasped by poisonous creepers (विषवधीि-)
During the encounter with Ravana, Laxmana became unconscious and Maruthi brought Mahashadhi (great herbs which removes pain and restores life). Rama cut Ravana's head as easily as cutting a plantain tree (Rv.XII.96). The poet permits fair measures of expressions in two Shlokas (Rv.XII.94 and R.XII.102) to describe the idea of flower rains (Puspavrusthi) here.

THRAYODHASA SARGA (Thirteenth Canto) elaborates on Rama's return to Ayodhya after completion of the period of exile along with Sita, Lakshmana, Sugriva, Vibhishana and others. Rama while proceeding to Ayodhya by the aerial car, shows Sita the trees and creepers growing on the sea-shore and bending with the heavy burden of fruits, flowers and blossoms. The blue ocean surfaces like an iron wheel looking dark with the rows of Tamala and palm-forests (Rv.XIII.15). The land with thick jungles (Rv.XIII.18) appears as if emerging out of the bluish high seas. Rama remembers the past when he was searching for Sita in the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest. The creepers, incapable of speech, yet pitiful, lead him the path, by which the Rakshasa had carried her, with their branches and leaves of which were bent (Rv.XIII.24). The emerging idea to be noted here is, the poet visualises and depicts flora always to uphold the virtuous against the evil. However, in the deprivation of Sita, the kadamba flowers with filaments half-opened and the melodious tones of the peacock became detestable to Rama (Rv.XIII.27). The couple saw the mango trees, nourished by Sita in Panchavati, after a long time (Rv.XIII.34). The trees of Sharabhangasage were like his immaculate sons (सुपुत्रेखिव पादपेतु) and were offered shade to dissipate the exertion of the travel and offered delicious
fruits (Rv.XIII.46). Rama explained the beauty of Chitrakuta mountain and plucked a fragrant leaf from a well-grown tamala tree to make an ornament for Sita, which shone on her cheek like a barley sprout (Rv.XIII.49). In the hermitage of Atri, the trees bore fruits without awaiting blooming (Rv.XIII.50). They stood rectilinear due to breeze and appeared like the row of sages meditating in Yogasana. Rama noticed the beauty of the Vata tree with dark-green leaves and blood-red fruits; the mass blue sapphires commingled with ruby.

Kalidasa in the CHATURDASHA SARGA (Fourteenth Canto) of this Kavya presents the beauty and application of the kingdom of plant species in even more elegant fashion. After returning to Ayodhya Rama and Laxmana regarded their mothers, reduced to a melancholic condition through the loss of their Lord, like the two creepers whose supporting tree is cut down (Rv.XIV.1). When Rama entered the native-born capital, mansions showered fried grains (ताजवर्ष ) on him (Rv.XIV.10). The Puspaka Vimana (air car) which he wrested from the enemy looked like the flower from the heaven (Rv.XIV.20). Rama underwent coronation and reigned happily form the throne of Ayodhya over his ancestral kingdom. In course of time, Sita expressed her dhohada (desire during the pregnancy) to Rama. She wanted to visit once again the penance forests along the banks of the Bhagirathi where Kusha grass grows, and wild beasts swallow eagerly the Nivara offerings and where dwelt hermit girls bound to Sita by ties of friendship. Although Rama sent Sita to the forest with Laxmana, he, in animation, abandoned her because of the scandal that she lived in Lanka under the rule of Rakshasa king Ravana. However, Sita did not know that Rama had given her up and in doing so, also had given up the
character of a wish-yielding tree (कल्पद्रम् ) and had now become a sword-leafed tree to her 48. When she recognised the real intention of Rama by Laxmana, she fell on the Earth, her flower-like ornaments shed around her, like a creeper torn by a blast of wind (Rv.XIV.54). In empathising with the grief of Sita, the peacocks ceased their dance, the trees shed their blossoms and rows of Kusa grass that they had cropped, and a loud scream rose in the forest that had become an equal partner in her remorse (Rv.XIV.69).

Sage Valmiki, who had been out of his hermitage for gathering Kusha grass, and sacred faggot, took her to his shelter. He also consoled her that hermit-girls soothe her by bringing fruits and flowers of the season and grains fit for divine offerings, gathered from the uncultivated land (Rv.XIV.77). He further suggested her to foster the nursing of the hermitage with water-jars, as much as it agrees with her strength and by doing so, can enjoy mother’s joy, like her own son (Rv.XIV.78). She stayed in a hut which was lighted by lamps fed with the oil of Ingudi. She wore Valkala as her apparel (Rv.XIV.81). Thus Sita passed her days of exile in the hermitage of Valmiki.

PANCHADASHA SARGA (Fifteenth Canto) commences with the description of the conquest of Rama for Asvamedha sacrifice. Śatrughna went forth fearlessly, to kill Lavanasura (demon), viewing the flowery, fragrant and beautiful woodland spots on his way (Rv.XV.8). That demon uprooted a tall tree as if it was a sheaf of grass, with the intention to kill him (Rv.XV.19). The tree however did not reach Śatrughna and he got pollen of flowers instead (Rv.XV.20). Lavanasura looked like a mountain with Ekatala trees (Rv.XV.23). Here in the hermitage, Valmiki removed the
moisture of the body of one infant immediately after the birth by the Kuśa grass and named him Kuśa (Rv.XV.32) and the other infant was named Lava. On the other front when Rama lopped the head of Shambuka demon, it looked like a lotus whose filaments were wilted by snow (Rv.XV.52). He was showered upon with presents by the lords of demons, monkeys and kings like the clouds pouring down showers in the thirsting crops (Rv.XV.58). The royal assembly shedding tears in grief over the songs of Lava and Kusha look like a grove of trees trickling dew drops in the early hours of the winter (Rv.XV.66). Later, the people of the kingdom retracting their glance from the path of Sita when she underwent fire test (आज्जि परिश्र) stood with their mouths downwards inclined like rice-plants with the burden of grains (Rv.XV.78). In the end of it all, after constituting Kusha, his son (as the king), Rama started for Vanaprastha. Monkeys, demons and subjects of Ayodhya cried, their tears being as big as Kadamba buds (Rv.XV.99).

SHODASHA SARGA (Sixteenth Canto) recounts that Kusha was ruling Kushavathi happily. Once at midnight Gramadevatha (the presiding deity of the city of Ayodhya) appeared in front of him and pronounced about the dilapidated position of Ayodhya. As she said, the garden creeper whose flowers were plucked by damsels, bending their boughs with compassion are now being rutured by monkeys of the forest and by wild Pulindas (Rv.XVI.19). After listening to her, Kusha ordered for the immediate transfer of his capital from Kusavathi to Ayodhya. At that hour when he reached Sarayu river, the breezes wafted by the branches of trees in the gardens welcomed him (Rv.XVI.36). The black bees in the
forest, placing their foot on each of the buds of evening-blooming jasmine-
creepers, discharging perfume in the act of opening, counted, as it were,
their number (Rv.XVI.47). Due to the excessive heat, the Śiriṣa flower did
not fall down because its filaments had stuck fast to women’s cheeks
(Rv.XVI.48). During the spring season, the long sprout of arjuna tree, a
little tawny because of its reason of the pollen, appeared like the bow-string
of the cupid, ‘the mind-born’ (Rv.XVI.51). The time of the summer that
brought together the pungent piece of mango-blossom, the odoriferous old
wine, and the aromatic fresh Patala-flowers, caused discoloration in lovers’
distempers (Rv.XVI.52). The triumphant ornament, which Rama having
obtained from the Agastya had made over to Kuśa along with the kingdom,
dropped into water while he was sporting in it without his knowing of its
fall (Rv.XVI.72). The king did not survive its deprivation because it was a
charm of victory and was worn before by his father, and not because he was
greedy: for, with the sagacious monarch ornaments and flowers
were equal.

SAPTHADASHA SARGA (Seventeenth Canto) narrates the incidents
after king Kusha. Kusha was extinguished in a battle with demon Durjaya
and his wife Kumudvathi, followed him and shared a portion of the
Parijatha of Indrani (Rv.XVII.6-7). Athithi, the son of Kusha, was subjected
to waving rites, by the old and the aged among his relatives, in which
Durvas, barley-blades (यव), pippala barks (प्लाक्षा त्वक्) and tender-leaves
were used (Rv.XVII.12). Having attained the warmth and fondness of his
subordinates, the king Athithi was like a tree, which had impressed its root-
stock firmly (Rv.XVII.44). His altruistic activities being properly mirrored
upon were productive like rice-grains, which are cooked unobstructed. The lunar rays do not enter into the day-lotus, and those of the sun, not into the night-lotus; but the virtuous of the righteous monarch found access in the hearths of his enemies also says the poet (Rv.XVII.75).

ASTADHASHA SARGA (Eighteenth Canto) moves the narrative beyond. Kālidāsa recounts the rest of the story succinctly. After Athithi, his son Nala was accorded the crown. He attained the glory of the house; pounded hostile kings like an elephant destroying the thickets of bamboo (Rv.XVIII.5). Athithi also took to barks (तत्कलवान ब्रम्भव) after attaining old age (Rv.XVIII.26). Like the lake with a lotus bud, the family of Raghu had a child named Sudharshana as the king (Rv.XVIII.37). At the age of six then, he was as delicate as Shirisha flower (Rv.XVIII.45).

Kālidhāsa the poet, in EKONAVIMSHA SARGA (Nineteenth Canto) of Raghuvamśa deals with the last king of that dynasty and indicates the down fall of that great and sublime clan. Sudharshana installed his son Agnivarna, who possessed the lustre of fire, retired to the Naimisha forest in his old age (Rv.XIX.1). He amassed penance around ground strewn with Kusha-grass, and by the leafy huts (Rv.XIX.2). Agnivarna started spending all his time only in amusement and indulgence. He was showing his lotus-like foot through the aperture of the lattice for his subjects as a token of ruling (Rv.XIX.7-8). Led by the love-confidants to covers of creepers, where flower-beds were arranged for him, Agnivarna enjoyed caressing and fondling maid-servants, after having shivering and tremor at the thought of his queen-wives (Rv.XIX.23). His extra-ordinary love-sports were exposed by his bed, which was brownish allow with the
powder of sap-flower dropped from the hair of women, strewn with wreaths of flowers dwindled, as also with clapped waist-bands, and marked by Alaktaka dye, as the brave mounted from his bed (Rv.XIX.25). During the rainy-seasons, he had chaplets of kutaja and arjuna flowers overhanging his neck. He was powdered by the dust of the pollen of nipa flowers and he sported and turned aside himself in the artificial pleasure-mounds, where the peacocks were gladdened in their hearts (Rv.XIX.37). Women seeing mango-blossoms together with leaves brought to bloom by the southern breeze, ignored conflicts and not suffering from anguish, appeased and accommodated him (RvXIX.43). Damsels smeared sandal paste to their breasts (Rv.XIX.45). The king consumed intoxicating beverages which were stewed with mango-blossoms and red patala flowers. His passion, which was enervated by the passing away of spring (his youth), was revived afresh by these flower-mixed drinks (Rv.XIX.46).

Summing up Kalidasa’s portrait and description of flora around him is a mammoth task. To his reader it seems that he was taken over and engulfed by the elegance and serenity of the plant kingdom. He saw all human characteristics - often upright but at times ugly - in the floral world that abounded on every side. All along this Chapter of the research work, an attempt has been made to illustrate that the kavyas by Kālidāsa abound in the description of trees, plants, creepers, blossoms and flowers, and all these objects of Nature are painted with their full glory and brimming beauty. In some respects, Kālidāsa surpasses - in fact way ahead, at times of - Valmiki in depicting the flora. Not only does he name heterogeneous varieties of trees, plants, creepers, blossoms and flowers as Valmiki and a few other
classical poets do, but he also observes the charms and loveliness of these objects microscopically in his kavyas. He presents these natural objects collectively as well as individually. In his writings the objects of flora flower in their accomplished resplendence. Kālidāsa accentuate on their personification and productiveness in the total existence of life forms. The kavyas often manifest their humane nature and illustrate their kinship with humanity. Kalidasa’s description of natural objects, while it looks ornamental and fancifril, is his expression towards ecology of which he had been an integral part. In this sense he surpasses Valmiki and other poets while presenting plant life.

**KIRĀTARJUNĪYAM OF BHĀRAVI**

Moving away from Kālidāsa, another major work that should be considered on flora at this juncture is Kirātarjuniyam of Bharavi. This poet probably lived around sixth-century AD. Not much is known about this great poet, but later writer have showered immense praise on his writing skills. He is well known for his adept application of words and their diverse meanings.

Kiratharjuniyam *Kavya* is a literary epic which has taken its subject matter principally from Śivapurāṇa and the Mahābhārata (Vanaparva). The kavya contains eighteen Cantos or Sargas. The work is considered as a Mahākāvyya (epic), one among the Pañcha Mahākāvyas, and is titled after its central event, namely the confrontation between Lord Śiva under the guise of a Kiratha (mountaineer) and Arjuna, one among Pañchapāṇḍavās, the third son of Pandu and Kunthi. The topic of the
kavya centres around the journey of Arjuna to the mountain Indrakila in the Himalayas for the appeasement of the Indra and Lord Shiva, and the ultimate attainment of divine weapon *Pashupatha* and others from them. Practically, a major portion of the work ranging from Cantos I to XII giving long and full discourses on politics, ethics and duties of heroes and detailing vivid descriptions of the beautiful scenery of the Himalayan region and the seasons, is the outcome of the poetic genius of Bharavi. Descriptions of mountains, rivers, seasons, sunrise and sunset, sporting of women, plants, creepers, etc. are found in their befitting places in the poetry. Of the composers of the Mahakavya who succeeded Kālidāsa, Bharavi is perhaps the earliest and certainly the foremost.

In PRATHAMA SARGA (First Canto) Bharavi introduces the plot of the *kavya*. Vanechara (forester) whom Yudhistara had appointed to know ascertain the behaviour of the Lord of Kuru Vamsha towards his subjects. The dhūtha (messenger) while describing the greatness of Duryodhana explains how his rut is full of elephants, got as presents from different kings having the fragrance of the flowers of *Saptaparna* trees (Kr.I.16). People of Kuru state have not depended on rain for fertilisation which are well-irrigated and smiling with plentiful crops obtain without cultivation. They grew on unploughed lands (Kr.I.17). Having known this accomplishments achieved by the opponents, Draupadhi, unable to restrain her emotions, asked her husband Dharmaraja how is it that his animosity (towards enemies) does not kindle as fire with flames like a dried *Shami* tree being inflamed कथं ज मन्युज्ज्वलयत्तुद्वीरितं: श्रीमताः शुष्कामिवान्निर्द्दिष्टवः।। - Kr.I.32). Draupadhi’s attempt to excite Yudhistira’s anger is described by the poet in
detail (Kr.I.32-41), and similes are borrowed from the plant kingdom to present a few of her thoughts. For instance, she remarks about the lifestyle they are leading in the forest where the great warrior Dhananjaya carries Dharmaraja’s *valkala* (bark garment) (Kr.I.35). Dhraupadhi feels hurt that Dharmaraja rests on the ground topped with luxuriant *kusha* grass during the *vanavasa* instead of luscious cot (Kr.I.38). His body now became awfully underfed along with his glory, because he is living now on wild fruits (Kr.I.39). His feet repose on forest-grounds with over matured *kusha* grass with its topmost part cut off by deer or the Brahmanas (Kr.I.40).

In DWITEEYA SARGA (Second Canto) while reacting to Bhima who has supported Draupadi’s stand on Dhuryodhana’s welfare and encouraging his elder brother for the war, Dharmaraja respected Bhima’s sentiments but did not accepts his suggestions fight against Dhuryodhana prior to the exile period. He elucidated that a sensible person, who nourishes the seeds of the objects to be achieved with the water of forethought, safeguarding them (till the time of fruition), attains command over his labour with rich fruits. One should posses power over the majestic autumn with its harvest, that is, reap the harvest in autumn (Kr.II.31). The word phala is used by the poet Bharavi with two different intentions: It may be taken as the attainment of the desired object, as well as the fruit (object) itself. If Pandavas lead an attack against Dhuryodhana without waiting for expiry of the time agreed upon, this action will have no justification and will alienate Pandavas from the commiseration of Yadavas and their friends. This, the poet feels, is like the sun opening the lotus flowers which indicates the parting of their petals pieces which were together before (Kr.II.46). The wind makes the roots of the tree to be
detached and it is easy to uproot the trees then. In the same manner, with the misunderstandings between the king and the ministers, it will simple for the adversary to destroy the king (Kr.II.50). Even a small convulsion (revolt) caused by the disagreements between the internal constituents in a Kingdom kills a king like the fire produced by the friction of tree branches burns the whole mountain (अखिलं हि हिन्दस्ति भूधरं तस्माभ्यावाच्यान्तिविग्रहं ज्ञानः ॥ - (Kr.II.51). Here it is important to notice that the term vigraha is aptly equated with fire, and a king encircled by his ministers is compared to a mountain with trees growing on it. In both cases, the destruction is caused by internal means and not by external force. When Dharmaraja stands up to indicate his reverence to sage Vedavyasa, his purple colour bark garments shake (Kr.II.57).

Sage Vyasa, in Triyathya Sarga (Third Canto) advises Pandavas that Arjuna should obtain paashupathastra from Lord Śiva to triumph over Kauravas. On his advise, Arjuna receives Divya Mantra (outstanding hymn) from him for the sake of penance. The poet remarks that the ‘mantra vidhyā’ entered Arjuna’s mouth from Sage Vyasa’s mouth like the early rays of the sun entering the lotus (Kr.III.25). Vyasa sends Yaksha to help Arjuna to reach the Himalaya for penance.

Arjuna embarked his expedition from Dwaitavana towards Himalaya for penance as Chathurttha Sarga (Fourth Canto) of the Kavya opens up. At the hinterland of the villages, Arjuna was very pleased felt to see mud-less natural sites of lands, ornated with paddy stalks bent down through the burden of their corns and, possessed water and lotuses elsewhere (Kr.IV.2). The Sali plant delighted him as much as safaris and
lotuses. Further, having perceived exceptional charm of full-grown paddy stalks in water blooming with lotuses, Arjuna felt delighted (Kr.IV.4). The powerful thumps of *boal* fish on water producing foams to appear there and causing the look of lotus-buds on water. This dismissed Arjuna’s question as to whether these lotuses were land or water lotuses (Kr.IV.5). The spouses of peasants there decorated themselves with *bandhuka* flowers. Having seen wives of Saligopa anxious to scale the beauty of their twig like lower lips garnished red with lace-dye of *bakula* flowers placed on the middle of eye-brows, and looming exquisitely red being adorned with fine pollens. What the poet means is freshly blossomed *banduka* flowers were put on the middle of eye-brows of these dames, that is on the spot where *tilaka* is normally applied (Kr.IV.7). Pollens of lotuses were also used as beautification and their setting elated Arjuna. It was a pleasure to see the wives of peasants there decorating even the rising sun-like pollens of lotuses placed round their budding breasts. Creepers grown in the village houses attracted him.

After crossing roads Arjuna reached other villages and there he looked at creepers budding with flowers in houses resembling hermitage toward which he was greatly attracted (Kr.IV.19). Yaksha who was piloting Arjuna explained him the beauty of Himalaya mountain. Like complimentary luck bears good results favourable autumn made agricultural work quite flourishing (Kr.IV.21). Poet Bharavi is overtaken by the thick-stalked *sali* plants which were brown in colour due to perfect maturity of paddy stalks, inclined on waters in the fields and he expressed it through the vision of his hero, Arjuna. To Bharavi, they looked as if they were inclined on field-waters to take the smell of blooming fragrant red lotuses known to
others by their aroma. Swans were rushing towards water in the domain which were like the dissolved rainbow of Indra, with varieties of green lotus-leaves, red lotuses and brownish sali plants due to matured shining stalks. The swans further rushed towards mother forest, who were the upper garment in the shape of white pollens of saptaparna trees scattered by the wind. The lady called forest had eyes in the shape of blooming Bana Pushpa (variety of Kasa) and whose smile resembled budding flowers of autumn. Owing to the lovely fragrances of the lotuses, the aerial passage became exquisite (Kr.IV.29). Matured sali was now crumbling and looked pale due to autumn. This process was perceived by Bharavi as it the sali plant, due to the insult spanked by the lotus, began drying up along with water and changed into a thorn. Disturbed by love, every day it looked as though becoming brownish and colourless increasingly. The sali plant looked like stooping down by its tip and in spite of it being prostrate by the head was as if repudiated by the blooming lotus-plant (Kr.IV.34). Bees bearing sweet lotus-pollens scattered by breeze and being attracted by cool wind laden with water-sprays, rush like thieves looking for protection (Kr.IV.35). Putting it in mundane objective terms, Bharavi considers lotus pollens to wealth being stolen away by the thieves - in this case, the bees.

Bharavi explains the beauty of Himalaya in the PANCHAM SARGA (Fifth Canto). Many rivers full of bloomed lotuses originate in Himalaya (Kr.V.7). The mountain is filled with kadamba flowers and tamala garden. There are no rivers which are not covered with lotuses, there are no trees without fruits and flowers (vipuliruha . . ) (Kr.V.10). The delicate and fresh creepers and flower pollens are the lovers of the snakes in the mountain (Kr.V.12). The celebrated 'Manasa Sarovara' is overflowing with lotuses
Yaksha tells Arjuna that only Brahma knows the number of different forest in Himalaya (Aputha vipinam veda) (Kr.V.18). The creepers with tender leaves and flowers and ponds full of lotuses, urge lovers for indulgence (Kr.V.19). The Himalaya, having flower beds with 'Laksha' colour of young ladies and dried flowers suggests the occurrence of frequent love making (Kr.V.25). The medicinal plants shed light without break for the entire night (Kr.V.24). The water in the ponds is filled with lotuses and trees with flowers on the river banks (Kr.V.25). The green grass here never gives up it beauty, the blue lotuses never become old, and the leaves of the plants with colourful flowers never fall down. Because of the pollen of the lotuses (padmaparaga) the sky looks like an umbrella (Kr.V.39). The mountain looks gorgeous as the wind trembles the trees casually allowing the sun-rays to enter between the trees branches (Kr.V.41). The lunar beams of Shiva sprinkle on young plants and tender creepers thus shedding light on the forest even on new-moon nights (Kr.V.44). Sandal tree is free of snakes as well as elephants (Kr.V.47). The poet engages in comparison between the mountain Indraneela and Arjuna, both being 'fruitful' and both are 'unbreakable' and strong (Kr.V.52).

The poet set forth into SASTA SARGA (Sixth Canto) of the kavya with the narration of Indrakeela. As Arjuna climbed Indrakeela mountain the flowers in the trees, shaking from the wind, welcomed Arjuna: the breeze with the fragrance of different flowers and pollens of lotus embraced him as a close friend (Kr.VI.3). The foam of the Ganges looked like the white peak of the kethaki flowers (Kr.VI.10). The blossoms of the creepers with tiny and large froth appeared like the lips of lovers to Arjuna (Kr.VI.13). Heavy with flowers, trees bent as if they were respecting the
mighty Arjuna (Kr.VI.17). The creepers, flowers and trees with fruits encouraged Arjuna for penance (Kr.VI.18). Dark complexion Arjuna, with twisted hair, was compared to tamala tree whose branches at their tips covered by sun rays (Kr.VI.23). The power of Arjuna’s penance was so strong that it bent the trees, so as to facilitate his collecting flowers; the land was covered tender grass, which he could use as his bed (Kr.VI.26). His physique was covered with tender bhurja patra or the leaves of bhurja tree (Kr.VI.31). Plants, trees and creepers of Indrakeela mountain offered flowers in his demand, accepting his authority (Kr.VI.34). The intention of the poet here seems to argue that plants of all kind help righteous person.

In the SAPTAMA SARGA (Seventh Canto) narration centres around the mountain and the forests within. On the orders of Lord Indra, Apsaras (celestial damsels) reached Indrakeela to ruin the penance of Arjuna. The ground was full of flowers and soft grass to welcome them (Kr.VII.24,26). The beautiful flowers and creepers with new blossoms became fruitful after those angelic dames reached Indrakeela, because they utilised them for decorating themselves (Kr.VII.28) These dames cleaned the forest area which, after this clean up, looked like a city garden (पुरोपवन्जः वनपादपानाम् - Kr.VII.40).

The ASTAMA SARGA (Eighth Canto) contains the plant related activities of Apsaras who moved further instead of plucking effortlessly accessible blossoms just for fun. Bees were engaged in drinking the nectar (honey of flowers) from aśoka creepers. The creepers too looked at the beautiful Apsaras through their wide flower-eyes (पुष्पविलोचने: लता: -

Their lovers were assisting these females to pluck flowers and decorated them with delicate leaves as the ornaments. Their palms turned red due to the plucking flowers and their breasts became white with pollens of flowers. With the flowers and pollens their body secured the attributes (गुण) of the tree (Kr.VIII.13-21). Their faces looked like lotuses but lotuses are without eyes and hence, their faces were superior to lotuses (Kr.VIII.29).

The NAVAMA SARGA (Ninth Canto) contains beautiful description of sunset. The lotus started closing its petals expressing its sympathy with the chakravaka bird couple which could not meet as the moon had not yet arisen. The beauty has left the closed lotus and went to the sky (आकाशमंडल) with the sunset meaning thereby that even the charm has deserted lotus as it lost its beauty (Kr.IX.14,16). The intention of the poet here may be that everybody want to safeguard one’s interest. The moon beams looked like the pollen of kethaki flowers. The tall trees with dim lit moon-light gave an impression that the milk from the milky ocean was brought and poured on the forest (Kr.IX.19). These beams driven between the branches made the shades of the trees look as though the entire ground is full of flowers (Kr.IX.29). The wind was carrying away the fragrance of bloomed blue-lotuses. (Kr.IX.31). After consuming Sheeghu wine (इष्टुरस), Apsaras got intoxicated, they became sensuous, left their shyness and approached their paramours on their own (Kr.IX.42). An Apsaras wore blue lotus on her ear ornament which resembled the colour of her eyes (Kr.IX.61).

The DASHAMA SARGA (Tenth Canto) also recites the beauty of the places where Arjuna engaged in penance. The ashoka tree which carried
Arjuna’s wet bark garments on its bowed branches was respected by the damsels (Kr.X.9). On the request of the Apsaras, all six seasons were created by Gandharvas simultaneously in different forests to distract Arjuna from penance. The Canto describes the varieties blossomed in different seasons as a result of this act. The rainy season (वर्षा ऋतु) initiated in the vicinity of Arjuna’s hermitage with the blooming malathi flowers (Kr.X.20). Nightingales ate rose apple (Jamboo fruit) and the peacock danced to distract Arjuna with the fragrance of kadamba flower. Mranala thantu (Mranala) was the bangles, kumudhini (blue-lotus) was the costume and blue jisti flower was adored by the bride-like Šarad Rtu (autumn) (Kr.X.24). During the Ruthu Sandhi (meeting of seasons) garden of Kumudhini looked beautiful along with kadamba flowers illustrating Bharavi’s intention that good character matching with another upright quality will increase the strength of both 56. In Shrad Rutu bees left ketaki flowers and went to newly blossomed bandhuka flowers (Kr.X.26). Later, the bees reached more beautiful palasa flowers bloomed on the land covered by green grass (Kr.X.27). With Hemantha’s (part autumn and part winter) arrival, the breeze got scented by fully bloomed priyangu and kunda flowers (Kr.X.28). Arjuna was pleased but was not distracted by the bunch of flowers of the lavalee creeper and the aromatic air of lodhra tree (Kr.X.29). Occasional mango blossoms and nirgundi flowers also welcomed the Śīśira Rtu (winter) (Kr.X.30). Vasantha Rutu (Spring) entered the forest with recently sprouted and brimming, blossomed of mango and lotus (Kr.X.31). Manmatha (cupid) whose lips looked like the bloomed flowers of kurabaka, sat on Ashoka tree during this season (Kr.X.32). Grīṣmarṭu (Summer) set foot in with Mallika flowers(Kr.X.36). However, the eyes of
Apsaras were more gratified by looking at Arjuna than watching bloomed lotuses, bunch of Sapthaparna and Malathi flowers (Kr.X.39). One among those Apsaras left the flower-bed (पुष्प शब्द्या ) and slept on the bed of leaves without controlling her deep love; another cudgelled him, by her karnotpala (lotus ear ornament) (Kr.X.49).

The EKADASHA SARGA (Eleventh Canto) centres around the conversation between Arjuna and Indra. In this Canto Bharavi makes use of some important idioms related to trees and grass. Indra himself meets Arjuna in disguise when Apsaras were unsuccessful to distract Arjuna’s mind. Arjuna said Indra when Dhushyasana took Draupadhi to Rajasabha of Duryodhana, seniors like Bhishma, Drona, etc. glanced her like the evening’s weak shadow of a big tree (खायामिन्न महातरो:) (Kr.XI.51). Friendship with wicked people is like the shadow of a tree on the bank of a river, resting under which may result in a hazard (असमृती हि दोषाय कूलचछायेव सेविता) - Kr.XI.55). Person without respect is similar to (जन्मिनो मानहीनर्ष्य तृणस्य च समा गति:) - Kr.XI.59). As described by Arjuna, the behaviour of Dhuryodhana with innocent and unprotected Draupadhi was like the bursting of thunder on dry grass (शुष्के अशान्निरिय) - Kr.XI.65). The existence of that person, who fails to respond to enemy’s prosperity, is like the dead one comparable to the dry grass (Kr.XI.70).

The existence of that person, who fails to respond to enemy’s prosperity, is like the dead one comparable to the dry grass (Kr.XI.70).

DWADASHA SARGA (Twelfth Canto) introduces another major character of the kavya, Śiva. The Theja (flame) of Arjuna’s penance did not burn the group of trees but intolerable to the sages (Kr.XII.16). The beams of God Shiva’s moon appeared whitish like the Malathi flowers (Kr.XII.24). Lord Shiva and his Gana entered the forest as Kirathas to
protect Arjuna and to kill demon Muka. As a result, running elephants broke down sandal trees; wild buffaloes ruptured Agaru, Tamala and Usheera trees, resulting in the fragrant air which bloomed stone flowers (shila ksuma) and comforted the passage fatigue of the forest-dwellers; due to the running of the wild animals, plantains and Gavedhuka grass were destroyed; thus God Shiva reached Arjuna’s hermitage, hiding behind the thick trees and following the foot steps of the boar-demon, where the grass was pierced by the cheerful deer (Kr.XII.49-54).

CHATURDASHA SARGA (Fourteenth Canto) narrates the war between Arjuna and Kirataas. The entire forest was full of soldiers (Kiratha) fighting Arjuna who, moving on all sides, set the huge coils of creepers in disorder and caused the sala and sandal trees to crumble by the storm caused by their speed, and thus appeared to set the whole forest in shamble (Kr.XIV.34). With his excellent quality of gravity and patience, Arjuna is compared by the poet here with the Eastern mountain overgrown with thick and impenetrable forest (Kr. XIV.39). Just as the lustre of the moon causes the contraction of lotuses, the cluster of arrows cast by Arjuna struck the vast army of Shiva with terror (Kr.XIV.56).

Flora as presented in Sanskrit padhya kavya is bountiful in its content and poignant in its faculty as this Chapter endeavoured to demonstrate with illustrations from the compositions of Kālidāsa and Bharavi. The illustrations were contextual and were borrowed from these compositions specifically in support of the research objectives to accomplish the research task of the present work in an comprehensive manner.
In the next Chapter, an attempt will be made to look into the contributions of Bāṇa and Daṇḍin in Sanskrit Prose - *gadhyā kavya*. Harṣacārītha and Kādambari of Bāṇa, as well as Daṇḍin ’s Daśakumārācarita provide us with rich material on the plant life of their era, and how they have conceived floral tributes by the nature. Major literary lay outs by these two great composers - their conception of forest, floral elements, and nature’s bounty in terms of shrub, flower, weed and the like are explored and discussed to bring home the objectives of this research work.
1 See Deodhar, C. R., Abhijnana Shakuntalam, Delhi, Motilal Banarasi das, 1934 for a full-fledged discussion on this issue.

2 Jayadeva in his work Prasanna Rahava writes:


5 Turiotkariyagritakomalaabhi: . (Rtu.II.8).

6 Vilokane出手双tohitamvakar: . (Rtu.II.9).

7 Mudita eva matamajjataprabh: Sambhata

8 Kazaimhi . . . malatihi: . (Rtu.III.2).

9 Vasuvatmikutumam paham jumabtevad is the orginal expression of the poet. It is interesting here to note that Kalidasa compares a lotus to a woman’s face not the other way round providing the reader a fine example of his intense sensitivity and love towards the flower. It is also pertinent to note that lotus is a variety of flower which is remembered a hundred times all through the poetry of Kalidasa.

10 Vicharagratva: kusumajalipalakh:Vicharagratvakashveetvad vo darnana.

11 Nandavatelodarmasamahalmy . . . . hemakal: samapramitdadym . . . (Rtu.IV.1)

12 Bandungmariyay dohakas sindhaati. . . . II (Rtu.IV.18).
The beautiful original words by Kalidasa run as - कुसूमभराग्रामस्त्रीकृतीदुःखूळे: रत्नमण्डलयम् II (Rtu.VI.4).

कण्जुषा हारः सिन्दुर्वनाशी मुखेशु साही वलयांवलि। प्राणक्षणहर्तुभासमानसालं नितिमिट्टलेऽजगन्यु काव्यः II (Rtu.VI.5) is the original expression of the great poet.

मोहं तावधारु... (P.Meg.13).

हरेरे लीलाकमलमके बालकुण्ड़लिविंद... (U.Meg.2).

तस्वयंपाले कृतकलनयः काव्यमा वर्णितमें हर्षाप्रायम्यरतंगनमितो बालमुनइशाम् II (U.Meg.12).

अमुतपुष्पस्य मध्योहिष्ठुऽत्तु दिशेकमाला सविशेषसः। (Ku. I. 27).

महिभूत: पुजवलैःपि... (Ku. I. 27).

अपविद्धः बालभूतशाख इव दुःः। (Ku.II.22).

विवःकृष्णपि संवर्तं स्वर्यं हेतुमसाप्रतम् II (Ku.II.55)

बीताहर: प्रायुद्याविवाम्भः। (Ku. III. 18).

अग्नितुः: कुसूमभत्वशोकः सक्ष्यात्मभृत्येव सप्तस्वालः। (Ku. III, 26).

प्यास पुष्पस्वरतनाम्यः... बन्धनालि II (Ku.III.39).

अशोक... (Ku.III.53).

पद सहित भरस्यं पेलं विशिष्पुष्पं न पुनः: पतिनिः। (Ku.V.4).

... वृक्षवृत्तित्वतितिरितरायणः। (Ku.V.22).

.... प्रायुलभे फलं तोभास्वदानुर्वि बायनः। (Rv.I.3).

.... समिच्छुः फलाहरः। (I. 49).

अवाकित्वालतमः प्रसूराग्रामस्तराजिर्व पौरबक्षमः। (Rv.II.10.).

न पादपोक्तानुशाशि रः: शिलोच्चिह्ये मृताभिः मारुस्तशः। (Rv.II.34).

पुष्पिकृष्णसि वृक्षबालजे। (Rv.II.36).

मुन्यक्षमस्वक्षां बेल्या तया... (Rv.III.70).
Refer Krishnamurthy, K. et al *Samskrita Bhashastra maththu Sahithya Charithre*, Bangalore, Government of Karnataka, 1933, p. 328 for a detailed discussion on the evidences of the time of Bharavi. There are different opinions on the date of poet Bharavi but the general agreement on this issue is of the sixth century.

It is important to note that the smile of ‘lady forest’ was the flower she wore. The poet experiences positive human elements in the flora, making the human being a part of the nature.
54 ध्युकजंवंकंक्रंक्षकारजवते (Kr.V. 9). The poet astonishes the reader with the artistic and skilled zig-zag of words repeated with split meanings in this shloka.

55 रम्या नवशृणिमैविति न शाहलेख्या: श्यामीं वन्यनुबिध्यं नलिनीद्वालि।
अस्मिनविनिलकुसुमस्तवकादित्वां शाखाभ्रूः ततं परिणामति न पहुँचावि॥ (Kr.V.37).

56 गुण महतां महते गुणायोगः ॥ (Kr.X.25).