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Employment of *Alamkāras* in the *Ankīyā* plays of Śaṅkaradeva : A Study

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The most noteworthy period of Assamese literature was enriched with the *Bhakti* movement initiated by Śaṅkaradeva, the great saint of Assam. A good number of literary works were composed to propagate the cult of devotion. Śaṅkaradeva powerfully used the dramas to win the hearts of the people taking the themes basically from the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. He believed that audio-visual media is the best media to attract the mass people. So he wanted to develop his own dramatic art form mainly to popularize his new faith of *Vaiṣṇavism*. Though his new genre is popularly known as *Ankīyānāṭ* it bears no resemblance to the *anka* type *rūpaka* of Sanskrit *Drśyakāvya*.

Alamkāras is the cause of excellence of *Rasa*¹. The poets add charm to the intended sense through the *Alamkāras*. Vāmana holds that beauty itself is *Alamkāras*². Of the two main groups of embellishments namely, *Śabdālamkāra* and the *Arthālamkāra*, most of the classical poets are found to be more interested in depicting *Arthālamkāras*. The works of Śaṅkaradeva are found to be beautified with the use of both *Śabdālamkāra* and *Arthālamkāra*.

According to Viśvanātha³, the *Anuprāsa* (Alliteration) consists of the recurrence of the same letters. There is the sameness of consonants, even though the vowels may be different. The *Vṛttyānuprāsa*⁴ (harmonious alliteration) occurs in similarity among a number of consonants coming twice or more in the same order or in the reverse order. The letters *ra*, *bha*, *ma*, *ja*, *va*, *pa* are repeated in the PH, which stands as an example of this type of *Anuprāsa*. For example,

ratane racita yata harik ābās/ yaican sura pura kara parakāśa and *līlāgati yāi, bhuvan bhulāi, madhur mūruti mūrāri* and *jay jaya yādava deva/ jayadhātā kṛta seva. jaya bhakatak bhayahārī/ jaya īśvara murāri. pada nakha paraśa prahāra, pāpa payonidhi pāra.*

The *Antyānuprāsa* is used in the following manner in the PH and RH respectively.

aurāvat skandhe vāsava āve/ āsahi nārade hari guṇa gāve
and jaya jaya kṛṣṇadeva nija amśa/ līlā nāśita kaṁśa savamśa.
otim motim vālā lule/ herite hāsi bhuvan man bhule.

The figure *Yamaka* (Repetition) which occurs in the repetition of vowels and consonants in the same order, with a different meaning or without different meaning is noticed in the play *RV-jagatak antaka antaka santaka/ pūrala paramā kāma.*

bhūmika bhāra utāraṇa tāraṇa/ sura-nara-rājā rāma. Here the words *antaka*, *utāraṇa*, though they convey no different meanings, but are repeated. Again the repetition of vowels and consonants in the same order with a different meaning is seen in the PH and KD as follows -

cāru udara dara hṛdaya viśāla.
kāraṇaro kāraṇa tumi se akāraṇa.

The figure *Upamā*⁵ (simile) which exists in a sentence wherein some similarity between two things is denoted despite a difference between the two things, gets illustrated in the plays of Śaṅkaradeva. In the PH, this figure is employed in the description of Lord Kṛṣṇa's unique beauty. The body of Lord Kṛṣṇa is compared to a piece of cloud, his feet is compared to lotus – *nava jaladhara śobhita tanu pāt ambaru bhāsā/ pada paṅkaja mañjira bhule pallava parakāśā.* The use of the *Upamā* increases the beauty of Kṛṣṇa which is evident in the *Bhaṭimā* of the RH sung by Haridāsa – *mukha indu koṭi parakāśa/ daśana motim manda hāsa. nayana paṅkaja nava pātā/ kara tala utpala rātā.* The cloth put on by Kṛṣṇa is narrated as – *śyāma rucir tanu pīta picorā/nabīna nīrada yaca vijurī ujoṛā.* In the play RV, this figure is employed in the delineation of beauty of Rāma. So the use of the words like 'nāsā nīla tilfula', 'bhujā yuga valita bhujāṅga', 'kara tala utpala rātā' etc. are praiseworthy.

The figure *Rūpaka*⁶ (Metaphor), which is said to be existing when there is maintained no difference between the objects and the standard of comparison, has its illustration in the plays of Śaṅkaradeva. For example, in the line '*jaya jaya raghukula kamala prakāśaka*' of the RV, there is the superimposition of glory of Raghu dynasty upon the luster of lotus which leads to the *Sāṅga* variety of the *Rūpaka*. Again, there is the superimposition of the beautiful mouth upon the moon and lips upon the sun in the RV as follows-

badana indu parakāśa. aruṇa adhara mandahāsa.

When the superiority or inferiority of the *Upameya* to the *Upamāna*, or the vice-versa, is stated or implied, the figure is called *Vyatireka* (Contrast)⁷. In the play RH, Rukminī is said to have won the moon in luster – *bhīṣmaka rāja nandinī bara bālā/ bārḍhe jini nava candraka kalā*. Such instances can be multiplied in the RH. For example- *koṭi indu nindi badana birāju*.

The figure *Sandeha* (Doubt) is included under *Upamā* and is named as *Samśayopamā* in the KD⁸. The later rhetorician Viśvanātha describes it to be present when an object is poetically suspected to be something else⁹. The figure is of three types, viz., the *Śuddha*, when the sentence ends with doubt, the *Niścayagārbha*, where the doubt exists both at the beginning and the end and the *Niścayānta*, where the doubt is dispelled at the end. An instance of the figure *Sandeha* is met with in the portion of the RH.

dui dhāre lotaka cakṣur parā bai/ hā prāneśvarī yen tok napao goi.

moi natupānte yono prāṇa jāi āge/ tor mor dekhā dekhi haiva kata bhāge.

The neo-*Vaiṣṇava* movement had influenced Assam greatly in its contribution to Sanskrit literature in medieval period. The neo-*Vaiṣṇava* movement was characterized by the replacement of Sanskrit by the vernacular languages as the medium of propagation of *Vaiṣṇava* cult. Assam was not an exception in this regard. Yet the utility of Sanskrit literature could not be totally discarded. The followers of the neo-*Vaiṣṇava* cult came to compose works in the form of translation or taking themes from the relevant Sanskrit works. Hence, we find bilingual pieces of both Assamese and Sanskrit, for example, the *Aṅkiyānāt* of Śaṅkaradeva. It is found that the *Aṅkiyānāt* of Śaṅkaradeva abound in high poetic qualities. Therefore, they deserve to be accepted as integral part of the literary output.

Foot Notes :

1. *utkarṣaheṭavo proktā guṇalanikāritayah.* – SD, 1.3
2. *saundaryamalanikāraḥ.* – KLSV, I.I.I.
3. *anuprāsaḥ śabdāsāmyam vaiṣamyē'pi svarasya yat.* – SD., X.3
4. *anekasyaikadhā sāmyamasakrdvapyanekadhā
ekasya sakrdapyesa vṛttanuprāsa ucyate.* – ibid, X.4.
5. *sāmyam vācyamavaidharyam vākyaiḥ upamā dvayoh.* – ibid, X.14
6. *rūpakamrūpitāropād viṣaye nirapahṇave.* – ibid, X.40

7. *adhikyamupameyasyopamānannyuatathava vyatirekaḥ*. – ibid, X.52

8. *sandehaḥ prakṛte nyasya saṁśayaḥ*

śuddho niścayagarbho'sau niścayānta iti tridhā. – ibid., X.35

9. *kim te lolekṣanaṁ mukham*

mama dolāyate cittamitiyaṁ saṁsayopamā. – KD., II.26

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3. Mahanta, Rubi : *Sankardevar Sahityar Nandantattik Adhyayan*, Sivasagar, 1999.
4. Sastri, Salagram : *Sāhityadarpaṇa* (ed), Motilal Benarasi Das Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1988.

Abbreviations :

KD – *Kāliyadamana*

Kd – *Kāvyādarśa*

KLSV - *Kāvyalaṁkārasūtravṛtti*

PH – *Pārijātaḥaraṇa*

RH – *Rukmiṇīharṇa*

RV – *Rāmviṇaya*

SD – *Sāhityadarpaṇa*