

## The Art of Ecological Perspective in Sanskrit Literature

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### Abstract

The art of Ecological thoughts in literature means is the study of the relation between literature and the physical environment which necessitates looking at Sanskrit literary studies through a green lens. While Sanskrit literature has always engaged with nature and the environment from a creative and aesthetic approach. Ecological study demands a close critical look at nature and the environment. These are there in a plenty form in Vedic Sanskrit as well as modern Sanskrit literature. Eco- criticism through literature can provide a new perspective on environmental issues. Sanskrit literature has made enormous contributions in representing the world, analyzing its various changes and projecting perspectives in various forms in order to entertain and enlighten the global masses.

**Keyword:** Sanskrit, Vedic , Literature, Ecological, Kalidas, Abhigyān Śākuntalam etc.

### Introduction

This is a country where from beginning time immemorial has worshipped BOTH NATURE AND WOMEN AS THE PRIMAL FORCE OF LIFE AND ESSENCE. Eco-feminism for us Indians is a concept which is as old as the hills are. For us it is a way of life, which represents the power within. The power on which depends the survival of the whole creation. The planet Earth itself. Nature worship and female worship go hand in hand in this ancient land of Lord Buddhā. At the same time it is indeed an unfortunate and a sad reality that India sees a highly skewed male and female ratio at birth. The ratio is there are 944 females for every 1000males. That apart there is also the problem of female illiteracy, dowry deaths, and female infanticide and so on. This presents a baffling and confusing scenario for all of us and it creates a sad form. That which is regarded as the source of energy or Shakti should be discriminated against and oppressed is a paradox. Eco-feminist argues that patriarchy, violence against nature and women are responsible for the gradual degradation of the environment, and women's status in the society as well.

The various Goddesses that are worshipped on different occasions are associated with possessing powers to grant wishes to people. Secondly, trees too are worshipped in this country from time immemorial for sustaining and protecting mankind and humanity. The humble holy basil is worshipped in almost every Indian house. For this plant we can call it as a store house of medicines. It is said to have therapeutic values, the leaves of this plant are used for a number of reasons, right from treating minor coughs and colds to treating cancer if detected at an early stage. The banyan tree, the wood apple tree and the Indian Margosā are all worshipped as per Indian culture and tradition. The rivers here are treated with the same reverence as some of our shrubs, plants or trees. They are referred to as Mothers. So we have Ganga which we called such a Mata. Rivers have long been venerated as they are the source of life and livelihood, trade and commerce. They are the cradle of civilization, hence revered and worshipped since ancient time in India. Mountains too are revered. The lofty Himālayā's have been guarding the Indian subcontinent ever since the creation of it. The majestic Himalayan range is said to be the abode of Lord Shiva and Goddess Pārvati, They represent the power of Shiva and Shakti, the source of all creation.

## ECOLOGICAL PRESPECTIVE OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE:

It is worth mentioning here that we are facing a global crisis today. In the ancient times man was aware of the indispensable relation between nature and himself. He protected nature and cherished nature so that nature might protect and nourish the human. This interdependence was highlighted in Sanskrit literature. In contemporary Indian society, tradition, rituals and culture have an important place in the day to day life. Our ancient texts teachings can be utilized to counter ecological degradation. Ancient literature like the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad-Gita and Parana advocate ecologically informed practices

## THE HARMONIOUS BOND BETWEEN NATURE AND MAN FROM ANCIENT SCRIPTURES:

A very Sever environmental crises await us of we are unable to mend our present ways of destroying nature and its resources. There is a dire need to create a sustained balance between nature and the society at large and this '**need of the hour**' must be addressed immediately. People seem to have lost the ecological awareness, which has been part of our ancient scriptures right from the beginning. The Vedās, The Ramayana and the Mahabharata, to name just a few, all are every bit, ecologically vibrant. One can find a brilliant example at almost each and every step. Composed by great seers and thinkers, the repositories of our age –old wisdom reflect the *summum bonum* of an all-encompassing world view. It's a Latin Idem by which it observes the highest deed of goodness. It is produced by Roman Philosopher Cicero. It deals with some fundamental principal on which some system of ethics is based. The great Indian philosophical thought has always laid great emphasis upon the organic relation of humans to the biological nature, It expounds that "**Man is Nature**" and not "**Man Against Nature**" This unified view of Man and nature is the fundamental truth and essence of the Indian World View as such, the globally accepted and acclaimed "**Vaṣudhaiva Kutumbkaṃ**". **It is tempting to explore at this juncture how the ancient Indian literature addressed the environmental issues many centuries back.**

It seeks to analyses the seminal issues at hand and presents a comparison of what was and what is/ further also what needs to be done in the face of the calamities that threaten us intermittently and instill the much needed coconsciousness and awareness into our beings as a human.

*Now a day's environment is a most discussant topic because humane one has created problems with disturbing the atmosphere. The later days of nineteenth century the adverse effects of Industrial Revolution and misuses of technology during the time of Second World War created a huge damage of environment. Though this type of occurrence was absent in ancient India, like any other civilization, till the people of that had some perceptions and awareness on this particular issue. Hence there was no ancient text composed exclusively for environment but the people of that particular period presented an overview of the society and culture through their various thoughts already available in Indian culture.*

This study will explore the different components **of nature along with the then people's conception and concern** on environmental ethics and perceptions on ecology, which is quite relevant at present and has modern outlook.

This study purely stands on few Vedic texts and Polity literatures and also eminent scholars innovative research based articles and several internet links which help to make the study complete. It may be concluded that the modern people presently revolve around the basic concepts of environment through their movements, the idea for which we get from the ancient texts. So it can be said that modern environmental concerns can be addressed by an embryonic form of ancient Indian texts.

**ECOLOGICAL PRESPECTIVE OF KĀLIDĀS'S POETRY:**

Kālidās's, the Indian poet called as the Shakespeare of India is describing the various aspects of nature. In his literary world, human beings become perfect when they are properly related to nature. Nature becomes acceptable to humans when it is interpreted and understood in proper manner with love, respect and compassion. In this context, the contributions of Kālidās's poetry are remarkable.

In Kālidās's Kumārśambhav canto V represents like that:

**“Atandritatā sā swayamewa brukhyākaṇ  
Ghataṣṭana prasarwanyei vyabardhayat  
Guhoapi yesaṃ prathahamapta jaṇmanā  
Na putra vātsalya mapakariṣyati.”<sup>1</sup>**

That Pārvati not espousing laziness nourished those plants those plants with water from her breast like jārs. As a result, Kārtikeya, after his birth, would not be able to dislodge the filial love of Pārvati towards those plants born first.

**“Api twadavarjitabarīsambhrutam  
Prabalamasamanubandhi birudham  
Chirojhitalakta kapatalenate  
Tulamyadarohati dantabasasa.”<sup>2</sup>**

The verse mentions that what is the discipline of penance? If a Tapaswi want to know another penance, he should his Ashram trees and creepers first. So the Bramhachari said to Parvati that, I hope leaves of creepers watered by you whether they are continuously burgeoning or not. It indicates that, how much eco-friendly Kali Dash poetry is. *No doubt Kālidās's poetry has plays a remarkable role in the shaping of the human nature in its many forms and functions.*

**ECOLOGICAL PRESPECTIVE OF ABHIJĀNĀNA ŚĀAKUNTALAM :**

**“Pātuṃ na prathamam vyavasayati jalam yushmāsvapīteṣuya  
Nādatte priyamvadanāpi bhavattam snehen yā pallavam Aādye vah  
kusumprasutisamaye yasyaḥ bhavatyutsavah  
Seyam yāti Śakuntalā patigriham savairnugyayatam<sup>3</sup>**

O neighboring trees of the penance-forest she who never desires to drink water first, when you have not drunk it, she who though found of ornaments, never plucks your leaves, through affection for you, she to whom it is a festivity when you first put forth your blossoms that same S kuntala now leaves for her husband's house, let her be permitted by you all.

The above lines from the play **Abhijyana Śakuntalam** by the renowned Sanskrit poet and dramatist Kālidās are a part of the lamentation at Śakuntalā departure for her married home from the Ashram of Kavya rishi who begs the trees, flowers and plants around to grant permission to Shakuntala to leave. **Śakuntalā 'the child of nature' celebrates** the birth of the first flower and does not pluck these even though she loves to deck herself with flowers. The lines may be seen as an apotheosis of not just identification between the human and the natural world but as underscoring the centrality and equipoise between the two. The clear overlapping of the image of the innocent, doe eyed deer with **Śakuntalā** in fact incorporates the human world within the natural. This theme is conveyed equally strongly as we move from classical to folk and ādivāsi literature. Bhojpuri,

<sup>1</sup> Kālidās's Kumārśambhav canto V Vers-No-14 and 34

<sup>2</sup>Ibid Verse No 34

<sup>3</sup> Abhijyana Śakuntalam 4rth canto

the language of eastern Uttar Pradesh and western Bihar has a popular folk song sung at the time of bride's departure in which she says to her father, 'Do not chop down the neem tree, my father, for it has the nest of the bird that comes back to it every evening. 'Much like **Abhiṣyana Śākutalaṃ** the symbolism clearly sees the human and natural world as extensions of each other. There are however, enough literary references of destruction of the natural world in ancient as well as contemporary texts, one of the most obvious being the burning of the Khandavā Van in the Mahabharata, The motive, as some historians have argued, is to acquire land for pastoral use, indicating the shift from forest dependent existence of the human world. The process simultaneously symbolizes a transformation in human perception of treat in nature as a commodity for servicing the human world. The vision of coexistence with nature is replaced by locating the Homo sapiens at the core of the universe.

The questionable ethical position becomes even more problematic when coupled with the inequities and manipulations within human society and socio cultural formations,

### ECOLOGICAL PRESPECTIVE OF UTTARRAMACARITA:

**Uttarrāmacarita**, a Sanskrit play by 8th century scholar and playwright, Bhavabhūti, who very skillfully succeeds in representing the natural phenomena as personified figures, serving significant purpose in the play. This play is a theatrical representation of the later phase of the story of Ramayana with certain changes. The play, having been based on one of the greatest theological treatises of Hinduism, that is, Vālmiki's *Rāmaṅya*, significantly contributes to the cause of religion by purporting to the furtherance of the arousal of the similar feelings of reverence and owe in the heart of the spectator more powerfully due upon the visual presentation for the established noble figures of the epic, and in addition, by the representation of personified figures it accomplishes in showing the concerns of the beings of nature towards men, who also considered them as their relatives/ kinsman/ gods. The play, vindicating the godliness of the beings of nature, very aptly presents their benignity towards the mankind. This play can suitably be recognized to be an appropriate instance of an eco-theological work, which contrary to forming environmental crisis, professes to the intimate interaction and reciprocal relation of the two.

### CONCLUSION:

The need of the hour is to re-examine nature-oriented Sanskrit literature that redirects us from **ego consciousness to eco-consciousness**. Sanskrit literature has content many eco-frantic observer that-hegemonization of Nature and environment coupled with war, deforestation, various types of pollution, destruction of animals and birds leads to formidable threats to the sound eco-system. So, to keep balance with nature and man we have to create awareness along man through Sanskrit literature.

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