

Two Seminal Poems, Malalacharitam and Sayajigauravm Mahakavyam of Rabindra Kumar Panda

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Abstract :

Malalacharitam is a biographical poem written on Malala Yousufzai, a Pakistani activist passionately working for the Girls' education. This is written for children in Sanskrit. The language of this Charitakavya is simple and lucid. The poet has described that why she is called Malala. The poet writes about her childhood, her family and friends as well as her teachers. The torturing of Taliban is very nicely described. The poet also describes about the problems of women in Pakistan, the attack of Taliban to kill her and her survival and how Malala is working for the cause of education with courage. She is honoured with the Nobel prize and many other awards. There are also beautiful pictures of Malala in the poem which add additional beauty to the book. Dr. Sweta Prajapati has contributed Upodghata in Hindi describing entire life and struggle of Malala. The charitakavya is written in very easy language. So it's useful for those who start to learn Sanskrit.

Keywords :

Mahakavya, Charitkavya, Biographical poem, Modern Sanskrit Literature, Mangalacharan, verses, metres, literary criticism, play, dialogues.

Introduction :

Now a days many Sanskrit poets are trying to enrich the field of children's literature in Sanskrit and this neglected field is rapidly growing. The growth is now clearly visible and it creates both interest and curiosity. The students and common Sanskrit readers are enjoying this literature. Modern research has brought to light many seminal Sanskrit works having many varieties and forms. The poets who have made significant contributions to this field are Digambara Mahapatra, Sampadananda Mishra, Rajendra Mishra, Viswasa, Janardana Hegde, Rabindra Kumar Panda and many others. It gives me pleasure to say that the Sanskrit Magazine Kathasarit is regularly publishing short stories for children in Sanskrit.

Professor Rabindra Kumar panda, a well-known poet and writer has been experimenting with different forms of Children's literature in Sanskrit and his passionate commitment has made him able to produce some literary works which have received appreciation and love of the student-readers.

Dr. Sweta Prajapati rightly remarks :

“Panda has composed poems both in metre and free style. His poems are completely free from the artificiality and pedantic showmanship, which sound much but contain nothing, He succeeds in depicting the sweet feelings of human being, which are touching and striking. He profusely makes use of symbols and abstract objects for the better expression of his ideas. In many of his poems one can notice simplification of grave philosophical ideas which are not easily comprehensible in the Shastras. He has written many long poems on the current events like the Kargil war, Orissa Cyclone, Gujarat's earthquake and riots of Gujarat etc.”¹

Samlapasarani is his first work which contains dialogues Samvadas to be communicated between two persons like the dialogue between husband and wife, Lakshmi and Saraswati, Dharma and Adharma etc. Though these dialogues are mainly written for developing the communication skills in Sanskrit, still the dramatic elements present in the structure and presentation give them a different form of drama, not found in the Sanskrit literature to the best of my knowledge. Professor Panda's second book Yo madbhaktah sa me priyah is a collection of one act plays which have enhanced the popularity of the writer as most of the plays are satire and humorous.

Dr. Preeti Pujara rightly observes :

The plays are written in modern style. Scenes of the dramas are short and easily enacted within the short span of preparation. Actually these plays are meant for young and teenage students. The playwright has revealed some evils and politics which entered the field of higher education. How guides and observers or referees award the degree of PhD to the undeserving and dull students just because of the greed of money and for receiving special favours from the students. The play-wright cannot tolerate the downfall and devaluation of the Sanskrit language which is clearly visible from the dialogues of his

characters. Majority of his plays revolve around the uplift of the Sanskrit language. The dialogues are very much effective and express the spirit of the dramas clearly.2

The third book written by Professor Panda is Subhasitasudhakumbha which contains one hundred verses written in the Anushtup metre. The verses impart practical wisdom and insights to the children who are interested to learn not only the Sanskrit language but also desire to know the objective world and its social realities. The practical wisdom that is given in the book along with the traditional wisdom that has been given by the great Nitishastrakaras like Vidura and Chanakya and others make the work more relevant for the learners as we see that many of the wise sayings are simply idealistic and therefore do not appeal to the modern readers.

The fourth book in this series is Malalacharitam which is a biographical poem written on Malala Yousufzai, a Pakistani activist passionately working for the Girls' education. We have an age old and long tradition of Charitakavyas in Sanskrit starting from the Buddhacarita up to Malacharita, an important literary work of 2017. Professor Panda has also written a comprehensive paper on the Biographical poems in modern Sanskrit literature and he has guided a Ph. D. student who wrote a thesis on the charitakavyas in modern Sanskrit literature submitted to the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda and in this literary culture, innovation is also made by the great stalwarts like Satyavrat Shastri, the author of Indiragandhicaritam, Rajendra Mishra, the author of Janakijivanam, Dasharatha Dwivedi, the author of the Janakijivanam, Revaprasad Dwivedi, the author of Sitacharitam, et al. All these works are Mahakavyas and written for the learned scholars as per the standard definition of Mahakavyas given in the text books of Sanskrit literary criticism. But a long poem, not a Mahakavya or Khandakavya especially for children in Sanskrit is written for the first time in the 21st century and so the well-established poet deserves appreciation and commendation.

The poem contains 148 verses in Anushtup metre except two, one in Shardulavikridita and other in Malini. The poet sketches the character of Malala very nicely. The powerful personality of Malala Yousafzai is depicted by the poet in very convincing and logical style

with the use of simple and sweet words. The beauty of the verses is felt as they are meaningful and lucid. Many figures of speech mainly similes are used by the poet to highlight the noble character of Malala. This wonderful poem is a unique composition in the field of children's literature in Sanskrit. Some of the verses are here:

यथा स्रोतस्विनी शान्ता सागरमधिगच्छति ।
 तथेयं कोमला कान्ता स्वलक्ष्यं प्रति धावति ॥
 न चिन्तयति सा कष्टं न भयं तस्य विद्यते
 साहसी साधनानिष्ठो धावति धावको यथा ॥
 लौहतुल्यं मनो यस्याः साहसेन विनिर्मितम् ।
 स्वर्णपद्मसमं देहं वैश्वानरेण तापितम् ॥
 तुलना न मलालाया बालिकयान्यया सह ।
 एक एव सहस्रांशुर्न द्वितीयोऽस्ति भूतले ॥
 अन्याश्च बालिकाः सन्ति तटिन्यो जलगर्भिताः ।
 असामान्या महाशक्तिर्मलाला स्वर्गजाहनवी ॥

In this poem the poet begins with Mangalacharanas as prayer to Goddess Saraswati.

प्रणमामि परां वाचं जननीं परमेश्वरीम् ।
 यत्कृपासलिलैश्शुष्को घटोऽपि सागरायते ॥

The six verses are presented in the form of prayer to Saraswati. Then the poet writes about Svata velly, the birthplace of Malala. It is a beautiful place full of trees and rivers. Then the poet describes about her school and education. The poet also describes why she is called Malala and then about her childhood, her friends, teachers, brothers, sisters, parents and relatives. The torturing of Taliban very nicely described. The poet also describes about

the problems of women in Pakistan, the attack of Taliban to kill her and her survival and how Malala is working for the cause of education with courage and commitment. Her dedication and contributions are recognised by the international community and she is honoured with the Nobel prize and many other awards. There are also beautiful pictures of Malala in the poem which add additional beauty to the book. Dr. Sweta Prajapati has contributed Upodghata in Hindi describing entire life and struggle of Malala.

The poet writes in the Prastavikam:

कोमलबालानां चञ्चलां चित्तवृत्तिं मनसि निधाय काव्यस्य रूपपरिपाटी संगठितास्ति । सहजावबोधाय यथाशक्यं सरला भाषा, सरला शैली, सुकुमारभावविन्यासरीतिः तथाच कोमलपदावली मया अङ्गीकृता । तेन साकम् अनुष्टुब्धवृत्तं यदवबोधाय उचितं तदपि स्वीकृतम् । काव्यकलेवरे अनावश्यक्यी वृद्धिर्न करणीया क्लेशदायकं भविष्यतीति कारणात् काव्यमिदम् अष्टचत्वारिंशदुत्तरशतश्लोकपरिमितं कृतम् ।³

The poet has used selective words which bring sweetness and pleasure to the reader at the time of reading the poem. The style is characterized by lucidity and simplicity. Though it is a short poem but it is worth reading and useful for the students and the beginners of Sanskrit. This work will definitely enrich the contemporary Sanskrit literature for its unique theme and the style of presentation as it is different from the available literary works found in the world of Sanskrit literature which bound by the stereotype trends.

Conclusion :

Professor Rabindra Kumar panda has also composed three mahakavyas namely, Sayajigauravam, Pratapchandra Caritam and Pramukhaswamicharitam Mahakavyam. The Sayajiuravam is published and other two mahakayas are under publication. The Sayajigauravam is a historical epic having 29 cantos and 1500 verses. It presents the noble personality and works of the Maharaja Sayajirao Gaiwad III of Baroda. The present epic received the Gujarat Sanskrit Sahitya Academi Award in 2019. The poem is a significant contribution to the field of contemporary literature.

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