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#### Abstract

Alamkāraśāstra is one of the most developed schools of thought in Sanskrit. The term Alamkāraśāstra denotes not only the study of figures of speech but also the deep thinking about the entire literary criticism. The knowledge of the Kāvyaśāstra is essential for the correct understanding and proper appreciation of a kāvya. There are different schools of thought in the field of Alamkāraśāstra and each school approach the subject from a different point of view. The eight schools of literary criticism are: Rasa school of Bharata, Alamkāra school of Bhāmaha, Guṇa school of Dandī, Rīti school of Vāmana, Dhvani school of Anandavardhana, vakrokti school of kunthaka, Aucitya school of Ksemendra and Anumāna school of Mahimabhāṭṭa. Among the eight school - Rasa and Dhvani concepts developed to be the most predominant factors of literary appeal. The scholars put forward different theories with regard to the soul of poetry. Some hold Rasa (sentiment) as the soul of poetry. Some other attaches greater importance to the figures of speech. Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata is regarded as the oldest extant work on Sanskrit poetics. It contains the first exposition of the rasa theory and it provides considerable information on many topics related to the Alamkāraśāstra. Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata emphasizes the realization of rasa as the soul of any literature. Thus, rasa is treated as the aesthetic objective of any dramatic representation. Rasa theory is universal in its application. After the period of Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata, a large number of veteran scholars such as Bhāmaha, Vāmana, Daṇḍin, Rudrata, Udbhata, Anandavardhana, Bhaṭṭanayaka, Rajasekharā, Danika, Abhinavaguta, Mahimabhāṭṭa, Kunthaka, Bhoja, Kshemendra, Ruyyaka, Hemacandra, Viswanatha and Appayadiṣita enriched this branch of poetics. Jaganatapāṇḍita was probably the last eminent critics of considerable merit.

**Keywords:** Rasa, Alamkara, Guna, Riti, Dhvani, Vakrokti, Auchitya and Anumana

#### Introduction

The term 'Alamkarasastra' is ordinarily used to signify literary criticism of poetics in Sanskrit. But it literally means only the figures of speech. Even though it is taken in the earlier and wider sense of 'beauty of poetry' it does not convey the ideas-understanding or appreciation and judging- that are primarily denoted by the term literary criticism. Literary criticism is the proper interpreter in literature. And as literature forms one of the most important branches of the culture of any nation, it has its distinct place as the path that leads to the enjoyment of a noble sphere of human activity. The popular view of the function of literary criticism more especially literary criticism in Sanskrit, is very defective. Alamkāraśāstra is commonly believed to be a branch of knowledge which deals with figures of speech. Understood in this narrow sense, one might easily say that literary criticism in Sanskrit is at the best dogmatic criticism which is tradition-ridden. The word alamkāra should be understood in its wider sense. Vāmana explains the term alamkāra to mean saundarya, beauty or literary charm in general. An amended name for this śāstra is saundarya śāstra or even in a more technical fashion, rasa śāstra.

Alamkarasastra is the name of treaties dealing with literary criticism. According to Rajasekhara it occupies the fifth place in the sphere of knowledge. Ancient authors used to say that alamkāra is the judgment of poetry and the law book of the poetic world. The chief topic dealt with in the Alamkāraśāstra are the definition and classification of poetry, the figures of speech, the sentiments, the type of character, literary merit and defects, style and such other matters concerning literature are also discussed here.

The history of Kāvya śāstra of poetics in Sanskrit is very rich. The study of Kāvya śāstra is very essential and of great importance in Indian context. The concept of kāvya and kavi, the utility,