

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND ENVIRONMENT IN KĀLIDĀSA'S MEGHADŪTA

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Abstract: It is well known that *Meghdūta*, A short poem of 122 verses, one of Kālidāsa's most famous literary work. It is divided into two parts, *Pūrvamegha* and *Uttaramegha*. This lyric poetry shows how Yakṣa feel after having been exiled from Alakā. Suffering the agony of separation, Yakṣa, the lover, becomes completely love ridden and takes the help of a cloud, the *Megha*, address to his love message to his beloved. The graphical descriptions of nature and topographical details of ancient India have been shown in the lyric by Kālidāsa. There is lots of poetry which deal with the environmental theme from the beginning to the end. Literature can play an important role to ameliorate the environmental crisis. It can convey a message to human beings that living with nature and extracting limited resources is the only source to live in harmony. The study of *Meghdūta* from an ecocritical perspective beings with the depiction of landscape. It has defined the path of cloud from Rāmagiri to Alakā city through Yakṣa's instruction to cloud. This lovely journey is representing of nature, as Himālaya, Rājahaṃsa, Kailāsa, Mountain, bird, animals, flowers, trees, lakes, forests, rivers, stars, moon, sun, clouds etc. these elements are representing the beauty of nature and physical environment. This cloud journey is representing to environment from sky to earth. Primarily, ecocriticism involves the phenomena of natural environment; it includes cloud, plants, trees, forests, lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, landscape etc. Poet has given different names of cloud as messenger, character, sky, water, wind and nature. The cloud journey from Rāmagiri to Alakā is representing to the relationship between men and nature.

Key words: *Meghdūta*, Kālidāsa, Alakā, Yakṣa, *Pūrvamegha*, *Uttaramegha*, Rāmagiri, Himālaya, Rājahaṃsa.

Introduction: Environment is a general term that refers to 'the external conditions in which an organism lives.' The word environment comes from a French word 'environ' or 'environner' meaning 'around', 'round about', 'to surround', 'to encompass'. It is used to describe everything that surrounds organism. Environment is the total of the things or circumstance around an organism – including humans – though environs are limited to the surrounding neighbourhood of a specific place, the neighbourhood or vicinity.

The deteriorating environmental condition has forced people to rethink the environmental perspective during various developmental projects. The indiscriminate cutting of forests, rapid industrialization and urbanization make the environment more polluted. The environmental crisis is a tremendous problem for the whole world. Both developing and developed countries alike are all suffering from environmental pollution. An excellent reciprocal relationship between the human environment needs to be fixed to restore environmental quality. From this point of view, Vedic and Sanskrit literature is of great

utility to us and the world society. The Indian Saints prescribed acts to avoid environmental pollution. The central theme of this paper is to present a brief outline of the awareness for maintenance of balance in our environment and concern for the acts polluting nature, as it finds in the Sanskrit literature. Environmental consciousness and deep concerns for ecology can be seen in its full range of spectrum and in the origin and growth of our culture and civilization. All the texts like Vedic *Samhitās*, the *Gītā*, the *Mahāpurāṇs*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Upaniṣads* and Classical Sanskrit literature are also emphasise upon ecocritical study.

Man and Environment in Kālidāsa's Literature: Kālidāsa, a well-known great poet in Sanskrit literature, conveys the inseparable unity between man and nature again and again in his literature. In the 4th act of *Abhijñānaśakuntalam*, when Śakuntalā departed from Kaṇva's Āśrama, Kaṇva took permission from the trees of forest as men take from their nearest one —

भो भो: सन्निहितास्तपवनतरवः! —
पातुं न प्रथमं व्यवस्यति जलं युष्मास्वपीतेषु या
नादत्ते प्रियमण्डनापि भवतां स्नेहेन या पल्लवम् ।
आद्ये वः कुसुमप्रसूतिसमये यस्या भवत्युत्सवः
सेयं याति शकुन्तला पतिगृहं सर्वैरनुज्ञायताम् ॥¹

Ho! Ho! Ye neighbouring trees of the penance grove! She who doth never try to drink water first, until you are watered; She who though fond of ornaments, doth never pluck tendrils, out of affection for you; She whose greatest festivity is at the season of the first appearance of your blossoms, — even that same Śakuntalā doth now proceed to her husband's abode. Let this be approved by you all².

In *Meghadūta* Yakṣa said in the glory of Megha—

जातं वंशे भुवनविदिते पुष्करावर्तकानां
जानामि त्वां प्रकृतिपुरुषं कामरूपं मघोनः ।
तेनार्थित्वं त्वयि विधिवशाद्दूरबन्धुर्गतोहं
याच्ञा मोघा वरमधिगुणे नाधमे लब्धकामा ॥³

I know that you are born in the world-renowned race of the Puṣkarāvartakas (or, the Puṣkaras and Āvartakas according to Malli.), and that you are Indra's chief agent, able to assume any form at will; hence it is that I separated from my relative (wife) by the power of destiny, prefer my petition to you; a request addressed to a man pre-eminent by his merits, even though unsuccessful, is rather to be preferred, to one made to a base man, though its object be gained.⁴

Man and Environment in Meghadūta: Kālidāsa is 'the poet of nature'. All of his literary works are based on natural beauty and religious scriptures. *Meghadūta* is most prominent work in all his literary works, because he has described natural beauty, love and nature description, cloud, flowers, trees, mountains, rivers, mythological palaces and geographical-description. Thus, these components of ecocritical theory

which are showing in *Meghadūta* text. It is divided into two parts, *Pūrvamegha* (previous cloud) and *Uttaramegha* (consequent cloud). This lyric poetry shows how Yakṣa feels after having been exiled from Alakā. Suffering the agony of separation, Yakṣa, the lover, becomes completely love ridden and takes the help of a cloud, the *Megha*, address to his love message to his beloved. The graphical descriptions of nature and topographical details of ancient India have been shown in the lyric by Kālidāsa. There is lots of poetry which deal with the environmental theme and important lyrics Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* is entrenched with the environmental theme from the beginning to the end. Literature can play an important role to ameliorate the environmental crisis. It can convey a message to human beings that living with nature and extracting limited resources is the only source to live in harmony. Nature has been the theme of earlier writings, but serious concern of ecology seems to be lacking in the earlier works. There are lots of ecocritical concerns in the midst of this poetry. The study of *Meghadūta* from an ecocritical perspective begins with the depiction of landscape. Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* has defined the path of cloud from Rāmagiri to Alakā city through Yakṣa's instruction to cloud. This lovely journey is representing of nature, as Himālaya, Rajahaṃsa, Kailāsa Mountain, bird, animals, flowers, trees, lakes, forests, rivers, stars, moon, sun, clouds etc. These elements are represents to beauty of nature and physical environment. This cloud journey is representing to environment from sky to earth. Primarily, ecocriticism involves the phenomena of natural environment; it includes cloud, plants, trees, forests, lakes, ponds, streams, rivers and landscapes etc. The word cloud includes nature in general and also a number of event or spiritualism that are the parts of ecology. The thought of Poet describes as the main character 'Cloud' represents a long journey from lover to beloved. Poet has given different names of cloud as messenger, character, sky, water wind and nature. The Cloud Journey of Rāmagiri to Alakāpurī is representing to relationship between men and nature. For example of the emphasis on the interconnectedness of human being and Nature is Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*:

रत्नच्छायाव्यतिकर इव प्रेक्ष्यमेतत्पुरस्ताद्-
 वल्मीकाग्रात् प्रभवति धनुःखण्डमाखण्डलस्य ।
 येन श्यामं वपुरतितरां कान्तिमापत्स्यते ते
 वर्हेणेव स्फुरितरुचिना गोपवेशस्य विष्णोः ॥
 त्वय्यायत्तं कृषिफलमिति भ्रूविलासानभिज्ञैः
 प्रीतिस्निग्धैर्जनपदवधूलोचनैः पीयमानः ।
 सद्यः सीरोत्कषणसुरभि क्षेत्रमरुह्य मालं
 किञ्चित् पश्चाद् ब्रजलघुगतिर्भूय एवोत्तरेण ॥⁵

These verses are deal with Kālidāsa's ecological position as a poet of Nature and awareness of physical world. Kālidāsa symbolically interlinks the non-human world with human world. The aforesaid lines are expression of flowers and tress through the ecological way:

पाण्डुच्छायोपवनवृतयः केतकैः सूचिभिन्नै-
नीडारम्भैर्गृहबलिभुजामाकुलग्रामचैत्याः ।
त्वय्यासन्ने परिणतफलश्यामजम्बूवनान्ताः
सं पत्स्यन्ते कतिपयदिनस्थायिहंसा दशार्णाः ॥⁶

“When you will be in the vicinity, the Daśārṇa country will have the hedges of its gardens white-coloured with the *Ketaka* flowers opened at their apexes, the sacred trees of its villages will be greatly disturbed by the nest-making of the domestic birds, its skirts of *Jambu* forests dark with their ripe fruit, and the swans halting there for some days”.⁷ The complete existence of human being lies on the environment. The creation of human being has been a long term evolution process in which ecology plays as the important feature. Man is different from other species because of his literacy.

Ecology is not only connected but also studies between environment and human being. On the basis of ecological theory we can define the various part of nature has shown in the Kālidāsa’s *Meghadūta*. This reflects the important role of ecological perspective. Kālidāsa has used beautiful imagery in his poetry from ecological perspective and effect on human society. Every verse of *Meghadūta* represents the men and nature relationship with the Yakṣa’s instruction to cloud. The relationship between man and nature can be defined as interdependent. Our irresponsible actions cause an irreparable damage to nature. In this way the chain of ecosystem works in which everything is related to each other and shows its effect on one another—

वापी चास्मिन् मरकतशिलाबद्धसोपानमार्गा
हैमैश्छन्ना विकचकमलैः स्निग्धवैदूर्यनालैः ।
यस्यास्तोये कृतवसतयो मानसं सन्निकृष्टं
नाध्यास्यन्ति व्यपगतशुचस्त्वमपि प्रेक्ष्य हंसाः ॥⁸

It has also a pond attached to it, furnished with a flight of steps formed of emerald stones, and closely filled with full-blown golden lotuses with glistening stalks of vaiduryas, the swans dwelling in the water of which, being free from anxiety, do not long for (the lake) Mānasa, through close at hand, even on seeing you (at the approach of the rainy season).⁹

Eco criticism study is based on environment science, but in contemporary society this approach has been changed. This literary theory not only represent to social life but also to non-human society. Ecology is a part of main stream of human society. Kālidāsa’s *Meghadūta* is represent to social phenomena from ecocritical point of view. In the first part of *Meghadūta*, poet has defined Yakṣa is misses his beloved (Yakṣiṇī), and sees in the expression of her beauty in the nature and sharing her feeling in explain the verse:

नीचैराख्यं गिरिमधिवसेस्तत्र विश्रामहेतो-
स्तत्संपर्कात् पुलकितमिव प्रौढपुष्पैः कदम्बैः ।
यः पण्यस्त्रीरतिपरिमलोद्गारिभिर्नादराणा-
मुद्दामानि प्रथयति शिलावेशमभिर्यौवनानि ॥¹⁰

In order to take rest there, thou wilt stay on the mountain called *Nīcaiḥ* bristling, as it were, as they touch with the *Kadamba* trees having full-blown flowers; (the mountain) which, by means of its stony houses redolent of the perfume used by harlots when sporting, discloses the licentious youth of the townsmen. The reference of Nicā Mountain signifies the throbbing youth. The mountain is the treasure of stone – caves emitting the smell of perfume used in their sports by harlots, proclaims the unrestrained youth of Vidiśā. The care to give shade to female who plucks flowers, shows cloud's helping nature to benefit others which is part of society. On reaching the country of Avanti, the old villager sin which are conversant with the stories about Udayana, repair to the city of Viśāla, great by its opulence already mentioned to you-the city which is as it were a bright part of heaven brought brown down (to the earth) by the remaining merit of those, who, after having lived in heaven, have come down to the earth, (the stock of) the fruits of their virtuous deeds having run short.¹¹ The element of Custom, moral, law, religion soul, god etc. are well showing here which are the important aspect of human society that affected by nature. Thus, we can say that Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* is indicated to all the aspects of human and social ecology. Ecocriticism has given increased attention to literary representatives of environment and awareness. This approach shifts critical focus from social relations to natural relation and views the individual as a member of ecological system. This study has been a delightful aesthetic experience which has enhanced the knowledge in newly developed field of ecocriticism. The striking presence of coconsciousness makes the poetry ecocritical valuable.

Conclusion: The important aspect of ecocritical in Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* is represent to naturally culture which are glory Kailāsa and Rājahaṃsa Mountains, beauty of river, green grass etc. As we say that every verses of *Meghadūta* is represent to different culture of naturally beauty from Rāmagiri to Alakā city. The artistic Alakā city young women are representing to flowery decoration to their parts of body; flowery trees with humming of bees, lakes with blooming lotuses give pleasurable atmosphere with unique culture of Alakā to readers. Where the young women have a sportive lotus in their hands, interweave their hair with the fresh-blown *Kunda* blossoms, have the beauty of face rendered yellowish-white with the pollen of *Lodhrareṇu* flowers and wear the fresh *Kurabaka* flowers in their braids the lovely *Śirīṣa* flowers on their ears and the *Nipa* flowers, that spring up into existence at your approach, on the line of the parting of their hair.¹² Every things of Alakā city women custom, ritual, tradition, belief etc. are represent to naturally culture. The natural beauty of flowers like *Kunda*, *Śirīṣa*, *Kadamba*, *Nīma*, *Kutaja*, *Ketka*, etc., trees like *Vakula*, *Mandāra*, *Aśoka*, *Kalpavṛkṣa*, *Devadāru*, in Alakā city show the facets of nature. The historical places like Avantī, Vidiśā, Daśapura, Devagiri, Rāmagiri, Ujjayinī, Kurukṣetra, Kanakhala, Alakā etc., the reference of rivers like Revā, Gambhirā, Gaṅgā, Gandhavatī, Sindhu, Yamunā, Vetravatī, Sarasvatī, śiprā, Carmanvatī etc., and the great mountains like Himālaya, Kailāsa, Amarakuṭa, Vindhya, Nīcā enhance the quality of poetry with representation of Green studies (ecocriticism). Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* is portray of different mythological and historical character's God, Goddess, girls, female plucking flowers, etc. from human society. Thus, *Meghadūta* distinguish culture arise from nature, both nature and culture are deeply connected which is the element of environment approach.

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End Note

¹ Abhijñānaśakuntalam. 4.9.

² Bose, R M. p. 361

³ *Pūrvamegha*. 6

⁴ Kale. 6

⁵ Ibid. 15-16

⁶ Ibid. 24.

⁷ Kale. 46.

⁸ *Uttaraamegha*. 15.

⁹ Kale. 129.

¹⁰ *Pūrvamegha*. 26.

¹¹ Kale. 56.

¹² Ibid. 111.

