

SANSKRIT LEXICONS: AN OBSERVATION

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Summary of the paper:

In the present paper, I have tried to bring to light some important ancient Sanskrit lexicons, their types, style and varieties. I have discussed about the एकार्थसङ्ग्रहकोशः, अनेकार्थसङ्ग्रहकोशः, मिश्रसङ्ग्रहकोशः, अव्ययकोशः, एकाक्षरीकोशः and द्विरूपककोशः. The discussion on different methods of arrangement of words in the lexicon and their chapterization are also incorporated here. I think, the present research paper will be a guiding tool for the further studies on Sanskrit lexicons.

➤ Introduction:

Lexicons or dictionaries are the essential tools for the study of any language. It serves multiple purposes depending upon the user. Today we have many forms of dictionary. Even the e-dictionary has become so popular that it has superseded the position of the book-dictionary. The new editions and version of dictionaries and lexicons are being researched by the linguistics and philologists. Then also, the ancient Indian lexicons have sustained their position amidst these variegated updated forms of modern lexicons and dictionaries. This fact astonished me; hence I decided to conduct further research on the ancient Indian art of lexicography and some of the popular texts thereon.

In my search, I came to know that there are more than hundred lexicons in Sanskrit. All of them are not available to me. I came to know about their names through primary and secondary sources. I have referred and studied some of the available lexicons which are variegated in nature. I have listed here their type and style of composition.

• Types of lexicon

Lexicons are basically composed in three different styles. First variety is एकार्थसङ्ग्रहः (synonymous lexicons), अनेकार्थसङ्ग्रहः (homonymous lexicons) and मिश्रसङ्ग्रहः (lexicons contains both synonyms and homonyms). Apart from these three main styles of lexicons, some other compositions of lexicons are also found like *Ekākṣarakośas*, *Avyayakośa*, *Dvirūpakakośa* and *Trirūpakakośa*, etc.

एकार्थसङ्ग्रहकोशः— It means lexicons comprising of synonyms (i.e. एकार्थः). *Abhidhāna Cintāmaṇi* of Hemacandrācārya (1088-1175 AD), *Nāmamālā* by Dhanañjaya (first half of 12th century AD), *Ekākṣarakośa* by Puruṣottamadeva (12th century AD), *Ekākṣaranāmamālikā* of Viśvaśambhu, *Ekākṣaranāmamālā* of Sudhākalaśa, *Ekākṣaranāmamālā* of Mādhava (1350 AD), *Ekākṣaranāmamālā* of Vararuci and *Ekākṣaranāmamālikā* of Amaracandra (13th century AD) and *Kalpadru Kośa* (1660 AD) are some of the famous synonymous lexicons (*Ekākṣarakośas*).¹

अनेकार्थसङ्ग्रहकोशः – The lexicons that are homonymous in nature (i.e. अनेकार्थः). They are also known as नानार्थसङ्ग्रहः. *Nānārthasamgraha* by Ajayapāla (circa 1075-1140 AD), *Viśvakośa* by Maheśvara (1111 AD), *Anekārthasamgraha* by Hemacandra, *Anekārthakośa* (also known as *Maṅkhakośa*) by Maṅkha (1128-1149 AD), *Nānāthārṇavakośa* by Keśavasvāmi (circa 12th century) and *Medinīkośa* by Mediīkāra (circa 13th century) are a few examples of homonymous lexicons.

मिश्रसङ्ग्रहकोशः – Composite Lexicons that combine both synonyms and homonyms. *Nāmalingānuśāsanam* by Amarasimha (Circa 6th century AD), *Vaijayantikośa* by Yādavaprakaśa (11th century AD), *Hārāvali* by Puruṣottamadeva (circa 12th century AD), *Śabdārthākara* by Vāmana Bhaṭṭa (1375-1445 AD) and *Kośakalpataru* by Viśvanātha (circa 16th century) are the examples of Composite lexicons.

अव्ययकोशः – The separate lexicons dealing with *Avyayas* (adverb) have also been composed e.g. the *Avyayakośa* of Mahādeva and *Avyayārṇva* of Jayabhāṭṭārka.²

एकाक्षरीकोशः – An *Ekākṣrīkośa* by Amara, is also found.³ It is a comprehensive in nature. Each and every letter of Sanskrit alphabet along with the conjuncts is presented as having special meaning. It is a unique style of lexicon where each letter is imagined as having potency of giving variegated meaning when comes within the contact of different vowels. But, it is not accepted as a form of lexicons by many scholars.

द्विरूपकोशः – In the *Dvirūpakakośa*, the words are spelled in the ways either according to mātras or letters or declensions or even usage e.g. अगारं-आगारं, चलुकं-चलुकं, भूमि-भूमि, चमरः-चामरः, etc. Some *Dvirūpakakośa* are – *Dvirūpakakośa* of Puruṣottamadeva, *Dvirūpadhvanīsamgraha* of Bharatamallika, *Dvirūpakakośa* of Śriharsa.⁴

त्रिरूपकोशः – Only one *Trirūpakakośa* by Kacaṇabihāṇ is available.⁵

Hemacandra has composed four lexicons. All of them differ in nature. His lexicographical works are - *Abhinadhānacintamaṇi* which is synonymous in nature; *Anekārthasamgraha* which is homonymous; *Nighaṇṭuśeṣa* which is botanical *nighaṇṭu* and *Deśināmamālā* which is Prakrit lexicon.⁶ In the last chapter of Hemacandra, much attention is paid to their subsequent disposition and these vocabularies therefore, although consulted with more facility than those which are described above.

¹ Amarasimha, *Nāmalingānuśāsanam*, Ed., Unni, N.P., New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi, 2008

² *Ibid*, Unni, N.P., intro. p. iii

³ विश्वाभिधानकोशानि प्रविलोक्य प्रभाष्यते । अमरेण कवीन्द्रेणैकाक्षरनाममालिका ॥ Dhanañjaya, *Nāmamālā* with the Bhāṣya of Amarakīrti & Anekārtha nighaṇṭu and *Ekākṣarīkośa*, Bharatiya Jnanapitha, Kashi, 1950, p. 106

⁴ *Op cit*, Unni, N.P., intro. p. v

⁵ Unni, N.P., p. vi

⁶ *Ibid*, p. xi

- **Style of Lexicons**

There were different methods for arranging the order of the words. In synonymous lexicons, the words are arranged according to the different categories of the objects in the world like *Svarga*, *Pṛthvi*, *Naraka*, *Deva*, etc. The synonyms of each significant are strung together in a metrical combination in which they take the situation that match rhythm. The inconvenience of this arrangement is obvious. It is not always easy in the first instance to know in which division of the work, the word is located. But when the word founded there occurs amalgamation of Sanskrit vocabularies which requires a sound knowledge of Sandhi and Samāsa. This difficulty of identification of desired word is, to some extent, nicely dealt with in the *Nāmārtha* chapter of most of the synonymous lexicons. The chapter having the title *Nāmārtha* contains words possessing various senses. In this chapter, words have been listed alphabetically like what we find in modern dictionaries.

The alphabetical arrangement, however, is in some cases partial, as in the *Amarakośa* where words terminating with the same fixed letter are contiguously placed, but they are then disposed at random; in other like in *Ajayapāla*, the initial letter in the connective characteristic as in the former case, the arrangement goes on further.

In *Medinīkośa*, which is exclusively appropriated to homonymous terms, a new methodical system is adopted, perplexing from its fastidious exactness. Here the vocables are compiled first according to their final letters, then that have been grouped agreeably to the number that befits syllabus they contain and finally they have been placed in strict alphabetical order.⁷

In *Medinīkośa*, the method adopted for the arrangement of words is quite similar to *Nānārthakośa*. Here the words are arranged according to their final letters and syllabic extent.

Another Kośa which is equally significant like *Medinī* is *Śabdamaḷā* of Rāmeśvara Śrmaṇa. It is a work of limited extent and value and is little better than a supplement to the *Amarakośa*.

The first Kośa after that of Amara is *Abhidhānaratnamāla* of Halāyudha Bhaṭṭa. It is a vocabulary of limited extent, divided into five books; the first book is related to Heaven and the Deities; the second to Earth; the third to Hell, Water, etc; the fourth to miscellaneous objects and the last contains words of various signification. The author cites as his authorities the *Amaradaṭṭa* and the *Kośa* of Vararuchi, Bhāguri, Vopālita and others. We may conjecture that his work should be of some antiquity as he is quoted by Mallināha who is certainly prior to *Medinīkara*. His omission of the *Amarakośa* from his list of authorities can scarcely lead us to infer the priority of his own work, but it is possible that the reputation of that vocabulary was not fully established in his time and therefore it is included in the appendix *Ādi*, or etc, added to his enumeration.⁸

⁷ Medinīkośa, Edi., Kumar Kuldeep, Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Delhi, 2014

⁸ Wilson H.H., Grammar & Dictionaries of the Sanskrit Language, Nag Publication, Delhi, 1979, p. 53.

Ajaya or *Ajayapāla* is a work of small extent but of considerable authority. It is confined to the *Nānārtha* or words of various meanings. Here words are arranged according to the initial letters. The author does not specify his authorities nor does he give any clue to his age or history. Another striking *Kośa* is *Dharaṇikośa* of Dharaṇi Dāsa. In this work, vocabulary is of some extent limited to words of various meanings. They are arranged according to their final letters and number of syllables. The author specifies no authorities and only states that his vocabulary is compiled from older writers. He himself is of some relic as besides the place he holds, he is often cited by Mallināha and other commentators.⁹ Another is *Trikāṇḍ Śeṣa*, which is a vocabulary in three chapters composed purposely as a supplement to the vocabulary of Amara and hence sometimes named as *Amarāśeṣa*. It follows a similar arrangement and adds a number of words of comparatively rare occurrence.¹⁰

Harāvali is a collection of uncommon words. It is divided into two parts; the first contains synonyms and the second, the words of various meanings. The first part is again divided into three portions according to the extent of the synonyms and their recapitulation through a whole stanza or a half or a quarter.

The *Nāmamāla* of Dhanañjaya is also a lexicon worth of referring. It is a small collection of synonyms strung together without any order or arrangement in 200 stanzas. Some techniques are given to derive the meaning of the words like if the word *Dhara* is suffixed to any synonym of earth, it gives render the sense of mountain; the word suffixed to the synonym of a tree, render the meaning of a monkey and so on.¹¹

Some *Dhatukośas* or catalogues of roots are also available in good number. The root appears to be different from the primitives of other languages in its fulfilling no other object and being incapable of entering into any form of speech. In order to make it fit for this purpose, it must undergo certain preparatory modifications and it is then evolved with the aid of additional particles into a noun or verb at pleasure. At the same time, as a matter of convenience, the grammarians have connected it more directly with verbal then nominal inflection and in the classification adopted in their lists it wears a more determinate shape and may then be regarded as the crude verb. The form of the Sanskrit root is as identified as its character and it is in fact only the general sign of all the positive varieties of action or being that are referable to a common nature. It is usually explained by a noun and the noun most frequently is in the seventh or locative case e.g. भू-सत्तायाम् (in being), ह्राद्-अव्यक्ते शब्दे¹² (in inarticulate sound), etc. Many roots also have a great variety of meanings like अक्-अवति (I.P.) has nineteen¹³ acceptances, etc generally signifies numeration or counting is susceptible of any meaning a writer may choose to employ it in, and this indeed so far applies to every other radical that in derivatives of which the form is clearly traceable to a root of a very different signification and thus the difficulty is immediately solved by the general rule धातोस्नेकार्थत्वात् (the roots are capable of various interpretations). However, these varieties of sense are either rendered perfectly intelligible in books from the

⁹ *Ibid*, p.55

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ तत्पत्तिः शैलभूम्यादिधरश्चक्रधरस्तथा ॥७६॥ *Op cit*, Dhanañjaya, p. 38

¹² Virkar, Krishnaji Bhaskar, *Dhaturupakosa* (Vol I-III), Keshav Bhikhaji Dhavale, Pune, 1949

¹³ To drive, to impel, to animate, to promote, to favour, to lead, to bring to, to be please with, to like, to accept, to guard, to defend, to protect, to govern, to consume, to devour, to satisfy, to refresh, to offer, etc. Williams, M.M., *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 2011, p. 69

context or they are explained in the commentaries and most of the verbal inflections are of an application sufficiently precise.

Conclusion

Thus, from the study of ancient Indian Lexicons, I conclude that Sanskrit vocabularies are in use in considerable number from the time innumerable. It is a fact that they imitate each other to some extent, but still each of them has made some additions to the labour of its predecessors. It was a well-developed and practiced tool for learning the language. Apart from this, these lexicons help to have thorough command over the language and for making fine poetic expression. It is a very surprising fact that the varieties that Sanskrit lexicons or dictionaries have is found nowhere in any other language of the world. That is why these lexicons have survived their unparallel position in modern era.

References:

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