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**ASPECTS OF CULTURE AND EQUALITY IN KANAKADASA LITERATURE**

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**Abstract:**

In broad sense two different types of views were expressed in Dasa literature, namely, Vyasa classical religious group literature, is based on the philosophy of Veda Vyasa Maharshi (sage) and the other one is Dasa folk literature group. Though there are differences of opinion regarding the basic tents and concepts. But in general these two views are considered as Dasa literature. If it is so, which group is considered as the main root cause for the formation of the Hari Dasa literature? Then why there is an internal cold war between these two groups. It is more feasible to know which one is more prevalent among the different sections of society. What are the factors that lead to the religious co-ordination of the Madhvacharya Philosophy? What the religious repercussions of the two sections above the religious coordination? How Dasa's got full support from the society and what was their major role in culture. This paper tries to focus on culture and equality dimension during Dasa period. Keywords: Dasa Literature, Vyasa classical religious group, Dasa folk literature group, Dasa period, Co-ordination of the Madhvacharya Philosophy, Hari Dasa literature


**Key Words** : Dasa Literature, Medieval Kannada Literature, Culture

**INTRODUCTION :**

In broad sense two different types of views were expressed in Dasa literature, namely, Vyasa classical religious group literature based on the philosophy of Veda Vyasa Maharshi (sage) and the other one is Dasa folk literature group. Though there are differences of opinion regarding the basic tents and concepts. But in general these two views are considered as Dasa literature only. If it is so, which group is considered as the main root cause for the formation of the Hari Dasa literature? Then why there is an internal cold war between these two groups. It is more feasible to know which one is more prevalent among the different sections of society. What are the factors that lead to the religious movement of the Madhvacharya Philosophy? What the religious repercussions of the two sections in the above religious movement? How Dasaru got full support from the society and what is their major role in culture, how they attracted the attention of the rulers to solve the problems of the common man through devotional Keerthans, are some of the highlighting features in the forth coming pages.

**Groups of Dasa sahitya : classical religious And folk literature**

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**Criticizing one another through the devotional songs :**

As already expressed about the differences between the two groups, the time has come that they openly started criticizing one another through the devotional songs. It was mainly seen between the keerthans of Sri Kanaka Dasa and Sri Purandara Dasa. Usually the criticism was based between the Sanskrit poets and lay men, but now it is in different angle. There is an open fight between the two local devotional preachers and it is publicly seen on the open platform of *bhakti* (devotional) songs. In case of Purandara Dasa, he is explicitly criticized Kanaka Dasa, whereas Kanaka Dasa used to express his feelings with so much pain in the heart and in an indirect way of referring the local proverbs of the society. The former used to show his anger through his hatredness and do not feel the stress and strain of the other.

**The golden era of the Hari Dasa literature :**

The golden era of the Hari Dasa literature was the period during the time of Kanaka Dasa and Purandara Dasa. Kanaka Dasa was praised as the poet of the Golden era and it led to the criticism by the other section of the same group. He wrote the religious text of "Ramanadyana Charitha" and stand as a role model for his followers. He has focused that the god is in favour of the poor and it was shown to them through the medium of devotional songs. Thus in the preaching of Hari Dasa literature Sri Kanaka Dasa stand as a pillar in the religious movement. In this article his writings and the views are expressed in the form of devotional songs and are limited to them only.


The main difference between the two views, that is the classical one is more rigid in relation to its basic ideology and values because they are the learned Sanskrit scholars and the other one is emerged from the folk level of the society and is liberal in the sense that it is developed from the masses, represents the other side of the same coin. It does not mean that the former is not having any kind of moral and devotional attachment towards the other and vice versa. The views expressed by the Vyasa religious group are not strictly generated either from the organization of any religious body. This section is originated neither keeping through the genealogical line of the spiritual mentor of Sri Purandaradasa by name Sri Vyasaraya as a focal point. But to some extent we can agree that the root cause for this spiritual branch may be from the Sri Veda Vyasa Maharshi (*sage*) who belonged to the period of Vedic time. In this way the writings and preaching of most of the Sanskrit scholars who mainly followed Sri Vyasaraya are familiarly known as Vyasa religious group. These Sanskrit scholars have disgraced the other section of the same religious movement. This distinction is clearly visible through historical sketch of the Sri Veda Vyasa Maharshi (*sage*). Which is the best example for this citation? The author of this book Somanath even does not mention the name of the spiritual mentor Sri Purandaradasa. In due course of time efforts were made to bring the fame and name of the Dasa literature through the contributions of second wing of Dasa spiritual group. In one way we can agree that these two views are two sides of the same religious movement.

**Culture And equality in Kanakadasa literature :**

All the requirements of society are imbedded in the culture. Sri Kanakadasa explains it in the following way :

Hasidu bandavarige asanaveyalu beku  
Shisuvige palemenniyaninisabeeku  
Hasanada bhoomiyana dhareyareyalu beku  
Bhasa kotta balike nigaviralu beku  
Olyava nanendu balu hemme padabedi  
Baalve shiravendu neenu nimbi kedabeeda  
Doratana bandaga kettuda nediyalu beeda  
Siri banda kaalakke balu marayabeda.

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The above hymn explains that those who are hungry feed them. We should rear the child during the childhood. To irrigate the land we must plough it for the greenery. Do not provoke that you are a good person openly. Do not believe that the material life is eternal. When you became king do not do harm to the poor. Do not forget the past when you become rich.

The facts reflected in the devotional song are seen through the preaching's of Lord Budha in his preaching of eight principles. They are true belief, right decision, good suggestion, correct attempt, right duty, speaking truth, right thinking, perfect life, and self styled sketch of determination. These principles are meant for the right living and good directions of the society. These principles are strictly followed by the saints and sages. There is no need to see them, but they showed their way of life in a right path. It is assumed that Sri Kanaka dasa has followed the path of Lord Budha. It is seen in his preaching and way of life. His way of life and devotional attitude is depicted in the following way:

Hinde enna baidavarella chandagerali  
Munde enna baidavarella anandadindirali  
Kundu ittivarella duduri katti alali  
Samy bandu oddannarana bhattada gadde belayali  
Enna noodi chituke hodadu nakkavarige  
Kanyadanada phala bandu tottalvarige  
Enna nodi tala hodedu nakkavarige  
Saalaudeepa hachida pahal odalagalaavarige  
Janara olage manabhanga madabedavarega enna  
Jeenu thuppa Sakkara oota agalavarege  
Hani baradhanthe madu lokada janarige  
Samy gyana bhakthi mukthi koodu kanaka avarege.

The meaning of the above *keethana* (song) of Sri kanaka dasa wishes that the future generation should happily lead their life. The upcoming generation should be good. Those who are wealthy should be kings. Those who have land be prosperous. Those who lead the life of inhuman have the sweet dishes of honey. Oh god gives them righteous way of life for the human beings.

Sri Kanaka dasa has depicted his way of life through the sketch of Halumatha (Caste) culture being an insider of the society. What is the use if you do offerings to god, when you do not respect your parents who have brought up from the childhood? This is the emotional reply given by Sri Kanaka dasa to the activities of Sri Purandaradasa and to the learned Sanskrit scholars of the classical poets of Vyasa religious section. With this one can expect how the cold war was hidden in the Dasa literature. This also exhibits the internal dissatisfaction among the dasa scholars. This distinction clearly visible between the Sanskrit wing and the folk wing in dasa literature. The displeasure was expressed by Sri Kanaka dasa in the stanza as "kurula janangalu chirakala eruvanthe karuva mugidu varava beduvenu" in his prayer. He even stressed the folk to read the Vedic literature and understand the concepts of Vedas and lead a right life and culture.

The rulers of the Vijayanagara Empire stand at one side of the religion and their religion was called the classical religion and they followed the religion of Vaishnavism. It was clearly depicted in terms of the history of Vijayanagara period. They were looked down by the followers of Shaivism followers, especially Sri Kanaka dasa who criticized the loop holes of the Vijayanagara rulers. He pin pointed the draw backs of the then local government in the following Keerthana:

Kaduvaa veerarige kaasu kuduvarilla  
Hariharara poojagalu hagaranagaladavu.

The Shaiva spiritual followers through their keerthana openly criticized the kings that the wealthy people are leading the life by way of spending lavishly on the gold, diamond, pearls jewelry and they do not have money to pay to the soldiers who were the security forces of the kingdom. They do not have even courtesy to pay their salaries to the military army, who stand for the development of the kingdom by way of sacrificing their lives. They even criticized the Vaishnava gods as follows:

"ninakku ninna hengekku ninna namada bavundiddare saaku

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Aaru badukirayya Hari ninna nimbi

Thoru jagadolalu obbarannu kane".

Not all dasaru belong to the group of Bhagavatharu, but in the present context Sri Kanaka dasa and Sri Purandara dasa fall in this category. The speciality of the Bhagavatharu is that they will give equal respect to all gods irrespective of either Vishnu Incarnations or Shiva. For example the Vishnu Incarnations such as Lord Krishna, Lord Rama are given same devotional merit at par with the Shiva god. The Vishu is as equally meritorious with the Rudra Devaru known as Shiva. They even chant the greatness of Shiva as "Shiva darusa nanagayithu kele mahashivarathriya jagarane".

Since fourteenth century to the present day we may say that the golden era of Haridasa literature was the period of Vijayanagara kings. In such period they never hesitate to bring forth the facts of the life irrespective of the kings or the local people. For them the rulers, the courageous soldiers or the wars was just like the bubble on the water. Thus Hari dasa literature stand as a mile stone to the native people in respect to culture, criticism and equality.

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