

## CHAPTER II

### PROSE AND POETRY LITERATURE OF MODERN PERIOD IN SANSKRIT

#### II.1. Prose Literature :

Prose literature in Sanskrit is a very wide area. This literature can be divided into two parts. One is prose Sanskrit texts, other is prose literary works. In the first group may be included the scholarly works of all the various scriptures written in the prose style. There are two types of Vedic *mantras* like *Ṛk* and *Yajus*. *Ṛks* are verse *mantras*, while *Yajus* are prose *mantras*. The entire Brāhmaṇa, Āranyaka literature and some Upaniṣads are samples of ancient prose literature. MacDonald says that the prose was employed in the Yajurveda and Brāhmaṇas which almost disappears in Sanskrit.<sup>1</sup>

The beginning of Sanskrit prose can be seen in the prose of Brāhmaṇa texts and Upaniṣads. For many days, the tradition of writing prose in simple natural style continued. With time, there was a tendency to introduce elements of poetry in prose as well. Prose-poetry is found in the early inscriptions. Rudradaman's Giranāra Śilālekha (150 AD) and Samudragupta-Praśasti (360 AD) composed by Harishena are the best examples of important prose poetry.

Sanskrit literature has mainly two branches; prose and poetry. Prose is easy and simple. It is free form of literature while poetry is the beautiful and lovely composition consisting of figures of speech and metres which show deep and profound meaning from different

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<sup>1</sup> Macdonell, A. A., *Origin and Development of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 189

levels and angles. Poetry touches our heart and prose touches our mind. Prose has many restrictions because of rules where as poetry has no bondage of rules and regulations. So the poet is free to write. The skills of poetic writing is completely tested by prose. The prose is also known as अपाद पदसन्तनो गद्यम् । The prose is originated from ancient times in Sanskrit.

Very little prose literature has been composed in Sanskrit. More labor than poetry, neglect of critics and high standards are the three main reasons due to which poets did not turn towards prose. Very little prose literature has been composed in Sanskrit. More labor than poetry, neglect of critics and high standards are the three main reasons due to which poets did not turn towards prose. This statement confirms the above mentioned things that “गद्यं कवीनां निकषं वदन्ति।”

In spite of the above problems, prose and poetry were created in Sanskrit literature. This composition was mostly done in the sixth-seventh century by *Triratna* of prose poetry – Daṇḍi, Subandhu and Bāṇbhaṭṭa. Daṇḍi's *Daśakumāracaritam*, Subandhu's *Vāsavadattā* and Bāṇbhaṭṭa's *Kādambarī* and *Harṣacaritam* are the best prose poems of Sanskrit literature. Sanskrit literature has another form of literature which is known as Champu Kavyam. In all the three forms of Sanskrit literature: *Gadya*, *Padya* and *Champu*. *Gadya* is most complex and complicated, because in *Gadya* author's skill, style, intelligence and abilities are counted and regarded.

The prose compositions are considered to be very difficult to be written. Prof. 'Abhraj' Rajendra Mishra has classified the Modern Prose into three heads viz. Khaṇḍakathā / Laghukathā, Kathānikā and Sakalakathā / Dīrghakathā. In the modern period, many scholars have contributed to the Sanskrit literature by their prose writings in

Sanskrit. Prof. Radhavallabh Tripathi, Prof. ‘Abhraj’ Rajendra Mishra, Prof. Banmali Biswal are some of the shining stars in the galaxy.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Sunnanda Y. Shastri observes, “There are very few biographies in Sanskrit literature. Old Sanskrit literature has almost no biographies written except first two chapters of *Harṣacaritam*. Bāṇa has written about his own life in the beginning of *Harṣacaritam*. There are few biographies written in prose in modern times.”<sup>3</sup>

Modern Sanskrit writers have contributed a lot in the field of poetry literature but there is less contribution in the prose literature. Similarly, all the regional languages of India are rich with both forms of literature, poetry as well as prose. We can get many varieties of the prose literature in the regional languages viz. short stories, novels and dramas. So, modern Sanskrit writers are also motivated to write prose compositions focusing on the problems of the modern era.<sup>4</sup>

The twentieth century is an important period in the history of Sanskrit literature. Lots of works have been composed and published in literary forms i.e. *Kāvya*, *Nāṭaka*, *Kathā* etc. These prove that Sanskrit is not a dead language. Modern Sanskrit literature is such an ocean which contains brilliant gems. It is well known that prose literature is very ancient in Sanskrit and hence we find some prose in Vedic literature.

The tradition of modern prose literature started from the ending of nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century. There are lots of

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<sup>2</sup> Panda R.K, Jejurkar S. A., Purohit D. & Pandya N., *Sanskrit Prose Literature of Modern Period*, Prof. Dr. M.L. Wadekar’s article *Punarnavā* by ‘Abhiraj’ Rajendra Mishra, pp. 80-81

<sup>3</sup> Panda R.K, Jejurkar S. A., Purohit D. & Pandya N., *Sanskrit Prose Literature of Modern Period*, Dr. Sunanda Y. Shastri’s article *Appāśāstrīcritam – Evaluation of a Biography*, p. 18

<sup>4</sup> Panda R.K, Jejurkar S. A., Purohit D. & Pandya N., *Sanskrit Prose Literature of Modern Period*, Dr. Daxa Purohit’s article *Anabhīpsitam* by Prashya Mitra – A Study, p. 87

prose literature composed in this century in different forms i.e. *Laghukathā*, *Upanyāsa*, *Lalita-nibandha*, Biography, *Yātrāvṛttāntam*, travelogue etc. We can see that many writers enrich the Sanskrit language through their contribution in modern Sanskrit Prose literature. Bibliography of some of the post-independent works is as under:

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- (3) *Abhinav-kathā-nikunja*, Shivadatta Sharma Chaturvedi, Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Varanasi, 1986
- (4) *Abhinav-nīti-kathā*, Devanath Mishra, Gayaprasad & Sons, Agra, 1956
- (5) *Abhinav-Samskṛta-kathā*, Narayan Shastri Kankar, Vidya Vaibhav Bhavan, Jaipur, 1987
- (6) *Ādhuniko Hitopadeśaḥ (Pañca-kathā-māyā)*, Jaydev Jani, Surbharati (Yearly Patrika), 1993-1994
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- (9) *Anantamārgaḥ*, Krishnalal, Vibhuvaibhav Prakashanam, Saraswati Vihar, Delhi, 1974
- (10) *Āndhradeśa-hāsyā-kathā*, Suryanarayan Shastri, Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Academy, Hyderabad, 1964

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<sup>5</sup> Shastri Kalanath, *Ādhunika Kāla Kā Samskṛta Gadya Sāhitya*, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, First Edition, 1995, p. 29

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- (20) *Dambha-Viāsaḥ*, Jaydev Jani, Saṃvid (Quarterly Journal), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, November-1996
- (21) *Diśā-Vidiśā*, Keshav Chandra Dash, Lokbhasha Prachar Samiti, Puri, 1988
- (22) *Ekādaśī*, Iccharam Dwivedi, Nag Publications, New Delhi, 1995
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- (25) *Guṇaka-Dānam*, Jaydev Jani, Saṃvid (Quarterly Journal), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, November-1996
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<sup>6</sup> Shastri Kalanath, Op.cit, p. 29

<sup>7</sup> Prajapati A.M., *Post Independent Sanskrit Literature – A Critical Survey*, Sannidhi, Patan, 2005, p. 204

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- (32) *Karuṇā*, Radha Vallabh Tripathi, Lokbhasha Prachar Samiti, Puri
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- (48) *Kathā-saptakam*<sup>10</sup>, Nalini Shukla, Shikshak Prakashan, Kanpur, 1984
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<sup>16</sup> Prajapati A.M., *Op.Cit.*, p. 204

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 203

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 203

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Sanskrit literature is vast and the modern period is important for different reasons. Both the literary forms prose and poetry flourished in this age. Many forms of modern literature like drama, novels, stories, essays, biographics, travelogues, came into vogue. On these lines, they not only have carried forward the traditional heritage but have made certain innovations giving it a modern touch.<sup>30</sup>

Sanskrit scholars of modern period across India have contributed to this field of Sanskrit literature. Almost all the aspect of human life are found scattered as the subject matter of these modern dramas. This shows the awareness of modern scholars and their wish to highlight current problems to reach to the literary mass. Many of the works have some moral to convey. A lot many works were brought forth as an outcome of this such an informative volume on modern dramas.<sup>31</sup>

Sanskrit literature is vast and its tradition is golden as far as drama literature is concerned. On the lines of the classical dramas written in Sanskrit many medieval and modern scholars have successfully attempted to write Sanskrit dramas. There are different types of Sanskrit plays in vogue like historical plays, mythological plays, social plays, allegorical plays, musical plays, symbolic plays,

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<sup>30</sup> Panda R.K., Jejurkar S.A., Purohit D. & Pandya N., *Preface to Sanskrit Drama Literature of Modern Period*, p. i

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. ii

street plays, radio plays or audio plays, abstract plays, melodrama, children plays, youth plays etc.<sup>32</sup>

The Modern period of Sanskrit Literature has stepped down to us with many new and unique literary form of the modern time. Today we have a wide array of entertainment available to us but radio still captivates many listeners around the world. Not everybody wants to watch televisions, some prefer to listen to the radio while they work. Radio play is an old but good art of entertainment. It has been proved successful in literary forms of Hindi and regional languages. But it has not been defined by any rhetoricians of Sanskrit as radio was not invented at that time. The authors of Sanskrit literature also thought of experimenting in this new form. Very few have tried in this form and Kanti Gor is one amongst them. In this literary form the dramatist tried to reach to sentiment only with the help of costumes, theatre, light effect, and body gestures and only with the help of *vacika – abhinaya* (in absence of any actors), the presentation of any literary piece becomes very challenging. Words are not eternal but their artistic pronunciation, suggestive style of various expressions, essential music etc. help in the delineation of sentiments in listeners. Thus the playwrights of radio have very few literary assisting elements to serve to connoisseurs. Very few writers have written radio plays like S.B.Velenkar's *Svatantryacintanani* and *Nabhonat-yadvayam* (Surbharati , Bhopal, 1969), Ramakant Shukla ,*Ghansyam* Trivedi have also written radio dramas. Kanti Gor of Gujarat has

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<sup>32</sup> Panda R.K, Jejurkar S. A., Purohit D. & Pandya N., *Sanskrit Drama Literature of Modern Period*, Dr. Shweta Avdhoot Jejurkar's article *An Overview of Vikrāntabhāratam*, p. 1

taken a step towards this direction and composed the collection of plays named sagarah (NabhovaniSanskruta –natyasangraha).<sup>33</sup>

Sanskrit language and literature down the centuries flourished in India, even from the Rgvedic age. The tradition of play has uninterrupted history of more than two thousand years. As well all know that during the period of Post Independence, Sanskrit works are composed and published in various kinds of literary forms i.e. Kavya, Mahakavya, Khandakvya, Satakakvya, Laghukavya, Katha, Laghukath, Nibhandha, Biography, Travelogue, and Dramas. Post independence Sanskrit is a reflection of social, political, and religious activities of our time. This category of literature is usually an expression of emotional feelings or authors own vision on a particular episode. Though plays are quite less in the comparison of poems but it is beneficial for the society. It significant media of modern Sanskrit, to send feelings, and emotions of poets, to the common people by performing on the stage as well as streets. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to focuses on the play viz. Akinakanakanam which was composed by Abhiraja Rejendra Mishra. He is the brightest star in galaxy of modern Sanskrit literature. He is a former Vice-Chancellor of Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, Varanasi. He is a winner of prestigious award like Sahitya Academy Award. He got the honor from the President's Certificate as greatest creative writers of the century who has contributed to every form of creative writing. He is one of prolific contemporary creative writer, profound scholar, and teacher also. In contemporary Sanskrit literature, he has composed

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<sup>33</sup> Panda R.K, *Op.Cit.*, Dr. Sweta Prajapati's article *Sāgarah: Sanskrit Radio Plays by Kanti Gor*, pp. 17-18

number of plays viz. Natyapancagavyam, Akincanankanam, Natyapancamrtam, Catuspathiyam, Rugarudriyam and so on.<sup>34</sup>

In the Post Independence era, Sanskrit plays have tried to march towards greener pastures. The modern drama movement passed through the stages of historical-mythological and literary drama to the realistic drama of social reform .although many of the plays are works translation the intent, theme and dramatic appeal have remained intact In the process, one such works is that of Dr. Kishore Chandra Dash of Orissa, who has shown laudable interest in translating the creative works of Oriya into Sanskrit. The original play ‘AranyaSasyam’ written in 1970 by Manoranjan Das is successfully translated in Sanskrit literature by Dr. Dash in the year 2000. Born in Mahanga of Cuttack district of Orissa in 1954, Dr. Kishore Chandra Das is a renowned Scholars of Sanskrit.<sup>35</sup>

A new form of drama made its appearance that disqualified all the standards and rules by which a drama has been appreciated from many centuries and was classified under the label ‘The Theater of the Absurd.’ The author tried to uphold the spirit of changing times in his experimental drama. Although experimental, the soul of the drama remains faithful to its tradition. The play depicts that the author is concerned with the changing pattern of life post independence and writes in the context of an ever increasing urban consciousness, in a rapidly expanding urban environment. It is to be noted that the feelings are concentrated to multidimensional attitude towards life and life’s problems and towards an expansive sophistication of an urban civilization related to the increasing nuclear realities of time.

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<sup>34</sup> Panda R.K, *Op. Cit.*, Vipul Patel’s article *Akiñcanakāñcanam of Abhiraj Rajendra Mishra: A Study*, pp. 84-85

<sup>35</sup> Panda R.K, *Op.Cit.*, Swati Ray’s article *Aranya Sasyam by Kishore Chandra Dash: A Study*, p. 95

The motiveless gathering of the characters in the jungle, which reaps the harvest of revelations of self conscience and valuelessness aptly, renders the name of the drama as 'AranySasyam'.<sup>36</sup>

Though the Sanskrit Drama in its present form is available only after the post-epic period, yet its origin and crude form can be traced to the dialogue hymns of the R̥gveda. The recitation of the epic poetry must have paved the way leading to the present form of the Sanskrit drama. Ramashankar Awasthi has composed prose, drama, poetry, epic, Gita-kavya, Khanda-kavya in Hindi . He has composed four (4) epic poems in Sanskrit Drama. They are:

- 1) Chidvilasah
- 2) Ahuti Swatantrya yagne
- 3) Damini Paryasfurantam
- 4) Kargila Yuddham<sup>37</sup>

The test of prose poets is "Gadyam Kaveena Nikasha Vadanti." We also get the introduction of the real talent of the poet in prose poetry. Emotions can be presented easily and beautifully in prose poetry because there is no binding like poetry in it. He is like a rain water. Express your feelings in it whenever, wherever and however you want. There is rhyme in poetry. His quality of lyricism and attractiveness comes in Sanskrit poetry and poetry like Mahatma Gandhi, but there is no element like rhyme in prose poetry. Therefore, more efforts have to be made to bring beauty in prose poetry. The way the origin of poetry is believed to be from the Vedas. Similarly, the origin of prose poetry is also believed to be from the Vedas.

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<sup>36</sup> Panda R.K, *Op.Cit.*, Swati Ray's article *Aranya Sasyam by Kishore Chandra Dash: A Study*, pp. 101-102

<sup>37</sup> Panda R.K, *Op.Cit.*, Swati Shukla's article *Plays of Ramashankar Awasthi*, p. 103

While delineating the difference between poetry, Bhamah has first made two distinctions of poetry. Committed and uncommitted. Story and legend are called loose poetry and clarifying the difference between the two, it is said that-

प्रकृतानाकुलश्रव्यशब्दार्थपदवृत्तिना ।  
गद्येन युक्तोदात्तार्था सोच्छवासाख्यायिका मता ॥  
वृत्तमाख्यायते तस्यां नायकेन स्वचेष्टितम् ॥  
वक्त्रं चापरवक्त्रं च काले भाव्यार्थशर्सि च॥  
कवेरभिप्रायकृतेः कथानेः कैश्चिदंकिता।  
कन्याहरण संग्रामविप्रलम्भोदयान्विता॥  
न वक्त्रापरवक्त्राभ्यां युक्ता नोच्छ्वासावत्यपि।  
संस्कृत संस्कृता चेष्टा कथा अपभ्रंशभाक्तथा॥॥<sup>38</sup>

Dandi says that there is no difference between story and narrative, it is only the names that are different. The Agni Puranakar has mentioned five types of prose poetry: *Kathā*, *Ākhyāyikā*, *Khaṇḍakāvya*, *Parikatha* and *Kathanika* and their forms have also been clarified. Pandit Ambikadatta Vyas has made nine distinctions of prose poetry- *Katha*, *Kathanika*, *Aalap*, *Kathan*, *Akhyān*, *Akhyayika*, *Khandakatha*, *Parikatha*, and others. Two distinctions have been made between prose and poetry in *Sahitya Darpan*, story and narrative. Some poets have said that other stories and narratives should also be included under these two genres.

Dr. Harinarayan Dixit has given the definition of Vishwanath Sammat Akhyayika very well in his words- “Vishwanath considers

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<sup>38</sup> Bhāmaha, Kāvyaṭaṅkāra, Prathamapariccheda, 25-28

Akhyayika very much like a story, he says that in it the poet describes his lineage, as well as also describes other poets as well.

## II.2. Poetry Literature :

In India, the epic is first seen in the Sanskrit language. The reason for this is that Sanskrit has been the oldest language. The first poem written in this language after the Vedas is the *Ādikāvya Rāmāyana*. In fact, the seeds of poetry are also found in the Vedas. But the condition of being compiled in his poetry book is not found. Later that text, *Rāmāyana*, *Mahābhārata* are great texts of poetry.

Ramayana is called *Ādikāvya* whose *Āṅgīrasa* is Karuna. *Mahābhārata*'s *Āṅgīrasa* is a *Śāntarasa*. The number of epics written after him is long. While worshiping him, all the later poets have obtained stories from him for the creation of their epics. From Panini, Vararuci to the great poet Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti, Māgha and all other great poets come in this tradition. Those who took subjects from the two previous poetry books and created their own poetry books.

### (i) The Definition of the Mahākāvya :

Before knowing the origin or origin of epic, it is most important to know the characteristics of epic.

Characterizing the epic, Āchārya Viśvanatha has said –

सर्गबन्ध महाकाव्यं तत्रैको नायकः सूरः ।  
सद्वंशः क्षत्रियो वापि धीरोदात्तगुणान्वितः ॥  
एकवंशभवा भूपाः कुलजा बहवोऽपि वा ।  
शृङ्गारवीरशान्तनामेकोऽङ्गी रस इष्यते ॥  
अंगानि सर्वेऽपि रसाः सर्वे नाटकसंध्यः ।

इतिहासोद्धवं वृत्तमन्यद वा सज्जनाश्रयम् ॥  
 चत्वारस्तस्य वर्गाः स्युस्तेष्वेकं च फलं भवेत् ।  
 आदौ मनस्क्रियाशिर्वा वस्तुनिर्देश एव वा ॥  
 क्वचिन्निन्दा खलादीनां सतां च गुणकीर्तनम् ।  
 एकवृत्तमयैः पद्यैरवसानेऽन्यवृत्तकैः ॥  
 नातिस्वल्पा नातिदीर्घाः सर्गा अष्टाधिका इह ।  
 नानावृत्तमयः क्वापि सर्गः कश्चन् दृश्यते ॥  
 सर्गान्ते भाविसर्गस्य कथायाः सूचनं भवेत् ।  
 सन्ध्यासूर्येन्दु रजनीप्रदोषध्वान्तवासराः ॥  
 प्रातर्मध्याह्नमृगया शैलर्तुवनसागराः ।  
 सम्भोगविप्रलम्भौ च मनिस्वर्गपुराध्वराः ॥  
 रणप्रयाणोपयममन्त्रपुत्रोदयादयः ।  
 वर्णनीय यथायोगं सांगोपांगा अमी इह ॥  
 कवेर्वृत्तस्य वा नाम्ना नायकस्येतरस्य वा ।  
 नामस्य सर्गपागेयकथया सर्गनाम तु ॥

The first form of poetry originated from the hymns sung in praise of gods like Indra, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu etc. The detailed form of these Vedic legends is found in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts. Oldenberg has mentioned hypothesis, the ancient form of Indian epic was dialogue-hymns of the *R̥gveda*.<sup>39</sup> This form later takes the form of an epic. Rudradaman's refined composition is found in an inscription of Junāgaḍha. The literature of the inscriptions of the ancient kings is the strongest proof of the power of the poetic literature of that time.

<sup>39</sup> Oldenberg, Z.D.M.G. Volume 37(1883), p. 54  
 Volume 39 (1885), p. 52

In the beginnings, epic poems are found in the early Vedic Literature. The R̥gveda contains hymns of a narrative character, short legends in prose. These verse called *Gāthās*, *Nārāśamsis*, *Itihāsa* etc. which are found in the Brāhmaṇa Literature.<sup>40</sup> The Nirukta contains prose stories.

### **I.5. Western influence on the Epics :**

The Epic-The Greek rhetorician Dio Chrysostom's finding some similarity in the leading characters of the Mahabharata with those of the Iliad, supposes the former to be a translation of the latter. It is also said that the worship of Krishna is but an outcome of the influence of Christianity. This theory is improbable on the very face of it. The evidence regarding the age of the Mahā-bharata and the statements of Megasthenes and the Mahabhashya point to its existence before the Christian era. Prof. Weber's assumption of the Greek influence on the Rama-yajna has been refuted by Prof. Jacobi.

The Drama - It is found in Philostratus's life of Apollonius of Tyana that Greek literature was held in high esteem by the Brahmanas of India, Indian inscriptions mention Vivana or Greek girls sent to Tuda as a tribute, Kalidasa and other Sanskrit authors describe that the Indian princes were waited for the Yavana girls, Kama, the Indian god of love, in his banner a dolphin (makara) resembling the Greek Eros. The existence of the above conditions led Prof. Weber to believe that the Indians imitated the representations of the Greek plays Opinion of

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<sup>40</sup> *Bṛihdāraṇyaka*, II.4.10; IV.1.2; IV.5.9  
*Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, X.7.1  
*Atharva-saṃhitā*, XV.6

performed at the Court of Greek princes in scholars. India. This is corroborated by the fact that the curtain of Indian stage is Yavanika or "Greek partition". According to Prof. Weber there is no internal connection between Indian and Greek drama. Prof. Wendish goes a step further and says that there is internal connection. The Mrcchakatika shows the influence of the new Attic comedy. The points of resemblance are so meagre that they can be explained. The earliest Sanskrit plays extant existed 400 years before the Greek period, The word Yavanika a reminiscence of Greek plays did not certainly form the background of the stage and it is not certain if the Greek theatre had a curtain at all. Thus, we see that these theories are baseless. The Indian dramas had a thoroughly national development.

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