

# The role of 'anauicitya' in the comprehension of a proverb

Dhanashree Lele, Malhar Kulkarni

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## Abstract

There are many theories in Indian poetics which discuss different characteristics of poetry. However, each theory focuses on a specific characteristic of poetry except the aucitya theory put forward by the alankārika Kṣemendra. Poetry is considered to be flawless, beautiful, impactful and gets appreciated by the Sahṛdayas i.e., connoisseurs only if it has propriety. What type of propriety does Poetry need? And how can one find it out? These questions are answered by the theory of aucitya. Kṣemendra has thought of twenty-seven types of aucitya which can be examined in poetry. Kṣemendra, by putting forward this theory, as if has given us a tool to investigate the propriety of different components in poetry. While putting forward the theory Kṣemendra has discussed and given examples of not only of aucitya but also of anauicitya.

Since it is observed that there are many commonalities shared by proverbs and poetry, this paper attempts to apply the theory from the domain of Indian Poetics i.e., aucitya theory to proverb comprehension. Kṣemendra, while putting forward this theory shows how anauicitya proves to be a flaw/hurdle in enjoying poetry. This paper, on the contrary, attempts to elaborate on how anauicitya in proverb helps in the comprehension of proverbs. This paper also explains the process of the comprehension of the proverbs with the help of an unpublished Sanskrit text.

**Keywords:** Proverb, Poetry, Aucitya, Anauicitya, Ksemendra, Proverb Comprehension

## 1.Introduction

The Aucitya theory put forward by Kṣemendra-

Aucitya is a theory from the domain of Sanskrit poetics. It is put forward by alaṅkārika Kṣemendra (c.990-c.1070) who was the pupil

of ācārya Abhinavagupta. He was an 11<sup>th</sup> century Sanskrit poet from Kāśmīra. His literary output includes still-studied works on poetics, devotional, didactic verse, social satire and history of the kings of Kāśmīra. He was indeed a multifaceted writer and alankārika. He has put forward the theory of aucitya in his well-known treatise 'Aucityavicārcarcā'

He defines aucitya as 'ucitasya yo bhāvastadaucityaṃ pracakṣate' (Aucityavicārcarcā 1.7). The learned call a thing Ucita i.e., proper (relevant) when it is in conformity with the other elements in poetry. 'Aucitya' is the condition of being appropriate or suitable (i.e., Ucita). When things suit each other well and match properly, such relevance or propriety is called aucitya. For e.g., propriety between anga and aṅgi, propriety between harmony and proportion, propriety between chief and subsidiary, propriety between the whole and the parts.

The implication of Kṣemendra's definition is explained in this manner-'yatkila yasyānurūpaṃ taducitam ucyate |' Aucitya presupposes two separate entities. If the relation between these two entities is within the accepted limits or suitable to each other then, that relation is called Ucita. This state of Ucita is aucitya. This theory specifically deals with poetry. Aucitya is an indispensable factor in the creative stages of a literary activity.

### 1.1 Twenty-seven types of *Aucitya*

Kshemendra has discussed 27 types of aucitya (AVC 1.8,9,10)

Pada (Phrase), Vākya (sentence), Prabhandhānārtha (the meaning of the whole composition)

Guṇa (qualities), Alankāra (poetic figure), Rasa (State of being), Kriyā (Verb), Kāraka (case ending), Liṅga (Gender), Vacana (Number), Viśeṣaṇa (Qualification), Upsarga (Prefix), Nipāta (Redundancies), Kāla (Time), Deśa (country), Kula (Family), Vrata (custom), Tatva (Truth), Satva (Inherent self), Abhiprāya (Motive), Swabhāva (Nature), Sārsamgraha (essential property), Pratibhā (Innate ability), Avasthā (state), Vichāra (Thought), Nāma (Name), Āashirwāda (Blessings)

## 1.2 What is Anaucitya ?

Anaucitya is the condition of not being suitable or fitting among other components. This definition goes with poetry and with the world around as well. Bharata in his Nāṭyaśāstra says that nāṭya is nothing but the imitation or repetition of what is seen in the world around. That means what is ucita i.e., proper in the world should be considered proper in literature and what is anucita in the world should be considered anucita in drama.

Abhinavagupta, while elaborating on what constitutes the basis of the comic, points out that anaucitya is at the root of the comic. Kṣemendra also gives a series of anaucitya and concludes by asking : 'Nāyānti ke hāsyatām' (AVC 6) who does not laugh? (Everybody laughs.) In comic, anaucitya becomes the main ingredient. Inappropriateness is at the root of the laughable. anaucityappravṛttikṛtameva hi hāsyavibhāvatvaṃ. This aspect of anaucitya is not fully applicable to proverbs. Anaucitya in proverb does create laughter but in proverbs the motive of anaucitya is satirizing or mocking wrong behaviour rather than creating laughter. In the Marathi proverb 'guḍaghyālā bāśinga' (headgear on knee), this anaucitya, does create laughter but its aim is to underline the vice (doṣa) of haste out of over excitement.

Bharata has said that Hāsyā Rasa or the sentiment of laughter is produced by anukṛti and ābhāsa. Aucitya is Rasa and anaucitya is Rasābhāsa. The illustrative verse quoted by Kṣemendra gives a series of anaucitya and concludes that necklace at the foot will be laughed at. Bharata also says : mekhalorasi bandhe ca hāsyāivopajāyate |

This takes us to another aspect of poetry and of aucitya. In poetry aucitya is the very life, Jivita i.e., life is Rasa, but in comic writing, the very life is Rasābhāsa. Anaucitya is the secret of comic writing. It is only with various forms of anaucitya that hāsyā can be developed e.g., all doṣas of speech and thoughts occur in Śākara's dialogue in Mṛcchakatika. Inappropriateness is at the root of all varieties of the ridiculous and the laughable, and this has been shown by Abhinavagupta and Ānandavardhana.

The incoherent and the inappropriate themselves become

appropriate. Just as śrutidusta, a flaw in śṅgāra, is a great guṇa in Raudra and this adaptation is called aucitya. Anaucitya, which spoils all rasas, and is the rasa-doṣa, becomes guṇa in hāsyā.

Śrutidṛṣṭā doṣāḥ anityā: ye ca sūcitāḥ |  
dhvanyātmanyeva śṛṅgāre te heyā ityudīritāḥ ||

The principle that states that 'harsh sounds' that form a doṣa are to be avoided in śṅgāra. But these very harsh sounds become guṇa where they are highly suggestive of Raudra etc. This context – specific nature of guṇa and doṣa, is aucitya

According to circumstance, even a doṣa may become a guṇa. It is also very well realised by Rājaśekhara. 'The careful poet who has his eye on aucitya employs even the so-called flaws and makes them excellences whereas the careless writer abuses even the guṇas and spoils his expression by the absence of the sense of 'aucitya.' Aucitya theory states that poetry gets enhanced due to aucitya of multiple aspects in a poem but the anaucitya degrades poetry.

In Aucityavicārcarcā, Kṣemendra says 'Aucitya kṣayāt nitarāṃ saḥṛdayaḥṛdayahānīti bodhyam' [Anaucitya destroys the beauty of expression and interest of connoisseurs]. In the treatise Dhvanyāloka, Ānandvardhana says, 'Anaucityāḍṛte nānyad rasabhaṅgasya kāraṇam' anaucityāḍṛte nānyad rasabhaṅgasya kāraṇam [[There is no other reason than anaucitya/ impropriety which distorts the sentiments in poetry ]

Thus, in poetry anaucitya proves to be a hurdle in comprehending and in enjoying poetry.

However, in proverbs not only aucitya but anaucitya as well plays an important role. In the case of proverbs, the anaucitya in the parts makes the proverb more vibrant. Anaucitya attracts and impacts the mind of the listener. And helps them go the deeper level of the meaning and understand the essence of the proverb.

### 1.3 Significance and relevance of *anaucitya* in proverbs –

'Āndhaḥa daḷataya an kutra pīṭha khātaya ' (Naravane 1978, Vol 2, Pg 222)

Let us analyse this Marathi proverb through the lens of aucitya and anaucitya. First step is to apply the theory of Śābdabodha for understanding the meaning of the proverb. Here we follow the model of comprehension proposed by Malhar Kulkarni in his unpublished Sanskrit work titled विसप्रसादः Visaprasādaḥ. This model explains the process of comprehension of the proverb in 9 primary stages:

1. पदग्रहणम् (Padagrahaṇam), 2. पदार्थग्रहणम् (Padārthagrahaṇam), 3. वाक्य-वाच्यार्थग्रहणम् (Vākya-vācya-rthagrahaṇam), 4. समाज-संस्कृतिपरिशीलनम् (samāja-saṃskṛtipariśīlanam), 5. औचित्य-अनौचित्यपरीक्षणम् (aucitya-anaucityaparīkṣaṇam), 6. साधारणीकरणम् (sādhāraṇīkaraṇam), 7. अतिसाधारणीकरणम् (atisādhāraṇīkaraṇam), 8. निरीक्षणम् (nirīkṣaṇam), 9. संग्रहः (saṃgrahaḥ)

**पदग्रहणम् (Padagrahaṇam)**- This is the first step in the process of understanding the proverb through the lens of aucitya theory. This refers to understanding the padas in the proverb:

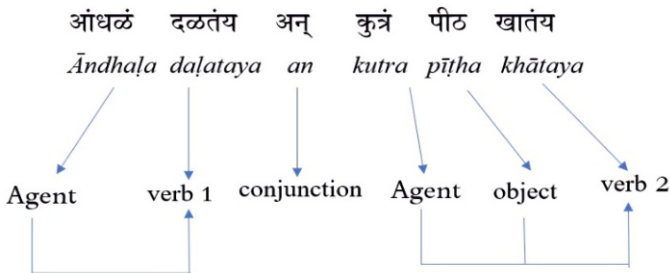
Āndhaḷa daḷataya an kutra pīṭha khātaya

**पदार्थग्रहणम् (Padārthagrahaṇam)**- After understanding the padas, the next step is to understand the meanings of those padas.

आंधळं दळतं (आहे) आणि कुत्रं पीठ खातं (आहे).

Āndhaḷa daḷata (āhe) an kutra pīṭha khāta (āhe)

**वाक्य-वाच्यार्थग्रहणम् (Vākya-vācya-rthagrahaṇam)** The next step is to understand the syntactical value of the padas.



According to Kātyāyana vārtika, 'Ekating vākyam i.e., in an expression if there is a ting (verb) then that expression is considered as a sentence. Here in the above expression, there are two ting- (verbs 1 and 2). It means, this proverb has two sentences and two different agents (Āndhaḷa and kurta).

The verbs 'daḷataya' (grinding) and 'khātaya' (eating) show present continuous tense. 'daḷataya' and 'khātaya' both the verbs used here are the colloquial forms. That can be understood as daḷata āhe and khāta āhe. Both the verbs in present continuous tense show that both the actions are happening concurrently. This simultaneity is essential to convey that a blind man is grinding and a dog is eating.

समाज-संस्कृतिपरिशीलनम् (samāja-saṃskṛtipariśīlanam) To understand the implication of that particular proverb one has to understand the socio-cultural aspect/context of that proverb since the proverbs have particular connotations and they are the frozen expressions.

This proverb is an ancient proverb therefore, it refers to the grinding stone and not to the grinding mill.

A blind man can grind using the grinding stone. But this type of work is hardly seen being delegated to a blind person. And a dog never eats flour. So, both the actions mentioned in this proverb are rare rather impossible to take place.

औचित्य-अनौचित्यपरीक्षणम् (aucitya-anaucityaparīkṣaṇam) As this paper attempts to comprehend the proverb through the lens of aucitya theory, the next step is to examine the aucitya and anaucitya and categorize them into different types of aucitya and anaucitya given by Kṣemendra

**Andhaḷa** – as mentioned earlier, a blind man is not given the job of grinding using the grinding stone since it helps to do the job better if one has eyesight. Therefore, this word is improper. It holds padagata anaucitya.

Secondly a blind man normally does not perform the job of grinding. Thus, it holds the impropriety of agent i.e., kartṛpada anaucitya.

Thirdly, in Marathi, 'andhaḷa' is a neuter gender. An agent is generally mentioned either in masculine 'andhalā' or feminine 'andhalī'. Here it

is in neuter gender. Thus, it bears *linga anaucitya*.

**Dalātaya-** Here verb दलतय dalātaya bears the suffix- neuter gender first person singular which goes with the karta- आंधळ andhaḷa which has neuter gender ending. Though kartṛpada is improper as mentioned above the verb is in coherence with the kartṛpada therefore, it bears the *kriyāpada aucitya*

**An-** it means 'And'. It is the conjunction which joins both the sentences together. Instead of 'an' if 'pana' i.e., 'But' is used then the meaning of the expression would be – 'A blind man is grinding but a dog is eating flour.' Because of the use of 'But' the expression becomes a general sentence losing its 'Proverbness'. Generally, proverbs in regional languages don't take the direct approach i.e., whatever message they want to convey they don't put it up overtly. Generally, they take an indirect way to convey it. But when 'But' is used it becomes more direct and 'an' ('and') holds the indirect approach which suits a proverb. Therefore 'an' bears the *avyaya aucitya*.

**Kutra-** indicates that it is a neuter gender in Marathi. Generally, when one refers to a dog, they call it either masculine *kuṭrā* or feminine *kuṭrī* (he dog or she dog) it is not generally called *kurta* as it has a different connotation in Marathi. While underestimating others generally a neuter gender of masculine word is used in Marathi. The word *kurta* also reflects the condescending approach to a dog. Thus, the neuter gender here bears *impropriety* i.e., *linga anaucitya*

Secondly, a dog does not eat flour. So, the agent of the action of eating flour is improper – *kartṛpada anaucitya*

**Pītha-** this is the *karma* – the object of the second sentence. A dog is eating flour (*pītha*). A dog is never seen eating flour. Thus, *karmapada* is *anucita*. It bears *karmapada anaucitya*.

**Khātaya -** Here verb *khātaya* bears the suffix- neuter gender first person singular which goes with the *kartā- kurta* which has neuter gender ending. Though *kartṛpada* and the gender are improper (as mentioned above) the verb is in coherence with the *kartṛpada* therefore, it bears the *kriyāpada aucitya*

**Daḷataya and khātaya** - these verbs have the present continuous conjugations (grinding and eating) which show that both the actions are taking place simultaneously.

Additionally, the proverb exhibits an impropriety of reality i.e., tatva anaucitya. In general, a blind man would not be assigned a task of grinding due to the requirement of good eye-sight. Moreover, flour is not the food a dog consumes. So, both the activities mentioned in this proverb do not align with the reality. Hence, the impropriety of reality is seen.

Thus, this proverb holds two types of aucitya-

Kriyāpada aucitya (propriety of verb), Avyaya aucitya (propriety of conjunction)

And five types of anaucitya -

**Padagata anaucitya** (impropriety of word)

**Kartṛpada anaucitya** (impropriety of agent)

**Linga anaucitya** (impropriety of gender)

**Karmapada anaucitya** (impropriety of object)

**Tatva anaucitya** (impropriety of reality)

**Pariṇāma anaucitya** – the end result of the action of grinding is enjoyed by someone who is undeserving. Thus, the result is futility of action.

Though having five types of anaucitya, this proverb can be comprehended as anaucitya draws receiver's attention and makes them go beyond that anaucitya and find out what exactly the proverb wants to convey.

If the agents of both the actions are improper and still this proverb has been in use for many years then one should ask the questions:

1. why the improper agent (**anucita kartṛpada**) is used and
2. how the meaning is conveyed through the improper agents.

The improper agent 'blind man' shows- a doer is incapable of performing the particular action.

The improper agent 'a dog' shows – an improper person who gets to enjoy the fruit of the action done by somebody else. However, that fruit is not meant for him.



The karmapada i.e., the object 'flour' is also improper which shows - although a dog gets to eat in ample quantity and no one would prohibit him from enjoying eating (as a blind man is grinding), the dog cannot eat it since 'flour' is not the food for any dog. Thus, **karmapada anaucitya** i.e., impropriety of object suggests that the object is of no use though it is available easily in ample quantity.

The **Linga anaucitya** (impropriety of gender) reflects condescending approach of the proverb towards the whole activity in which action is performed by an incapable karta i.e., agent and that goes in vain. It sheds light on the approach of society towards the useless endeavours.

And **tatva anaucitya** tells us that this kind of situation is not seen in the world around. And still if it is mentioned in a proverb then it is clear that through this situation this proverb wants to underline that the output of the actions done by improper agents becomes futile. It is of no use.

Thus, these various types of anaucitya make the receiver go to the deeper level and think beyond the literal meaning. These anaucityas express the implication of the proverb through which the people can have the universal learning. However, though there are five types of anaucitya the whole theme of this proverb is shouldered specially by karttpada anaucitya. Here, the incapable doer i.e., the blind man cannot protect the output i.e., 'flour' from a dog who does not enjoy it. Thus, the theme of the proverb is expressed by the improper kartā. The other types of anaucitya support the karttpada anaucitya to carry the theme and to express the universal learning of the proverb.

**साधारणीकरणम् (sādhāraṇīkaraṇam):** This refers to the overall import of the sentence arrived at after the process of inspecting the appropriateness as well as inappropriateness as mentioned above. In this case, it is: the action of grinding done by a blind man is futile because the output of it that is 'flour' is being eaten by a dog for whom actually the flour is not meant as food.

**अतिसाधारणीकरणम् (atisādhāraṇīkaraṇam):** This refers to the overgeneralisation of the meaning transcending the individual



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**Appendix :** The above discussion is presented in a tabular format.

Āndhaḷa daḷataya an kutra pīṭha khātaya (Naravane 1978, Vol 2, Pg 222)

Blind man is grinding and a dog is eating flour

Padagrahaṇam	Āndhaḷa daḷataya an kutra pīṭha khātaya
Padārthagrahaṇm	Āndhaḷa daḷata āhe an kutra pīṭha khāta āhe
Vākyavāc्यārtha-grahaṇam	A blind man is grinding and a dog is eating flour.

Padagrahaṇam	Āndhaḷa daḷataya an kutra pīṭha khātaya
Padārthagrahaṇm	Āndhaḷa daḷata āhe an kutra pīṭha khāta āhe
Vākyavācyaṛtha -grahaṇam	A blind man is grinding and a dog is eating flour.
Samāja -saṃskṛtipariśīlanam	This proverb is an ancient proverb therefore, it refers to the grinding stone and not to the grinding mill. A blind man can grind using the grinding stone. But this type of work is hardly seen being delegated to a blind person. And a dog never eats flour. So, both the actions mentioned in this proverb are rare rather impossible to take place.
Aucitya -anaucityaparīkṣaṇam	Kriyāpada aucitya (propriety of verb) - daḷataya, khātaya Avyaya aucitya (propriety of conjunction) - an Padagata anaucitya (impropriety of word) - āndhaḷa , kurta, pīṭha Kartṛpada anaucitya (impropriety of agent) - āndhaḷa , kurta Linga anaucitya (impropriety of gender) āndhaḷa , kurta Karmapada anaucitya (impropriety of object) pīṭha Tatva anaucitya (impropriety of reality) Pariṇāma anaucitya -
Sādhāraṇīkaraṇam	the action of grinding done by a blind man is futile because the output of it that is 'flour' is being eaten by a dog for whom actually the flour is not meant as food.
Atisādhāraṇīkaraṇam	the output of an action performed by an incapable agent is enjoyed by an undeserving person.
Nirīkṣaṇam	This proverb has more anaucitya than aucitya still it conveys the message. Anaucityas don't become the hurdle in comprehending the expression
Samgrahaḥ	One undivided proverb comprehended to convey one undivided meaning

