CHAPTER-I

THE NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
CONCEPT 'ALAṆKĀRA'

(A)

INTRODUCTION

The Alankāra doctrine in Sanskrit Poetics is perhaps as old as the theory on 'poetry' itself. The term Alankāra has a broad as well as a narrow connotation. It stands for Kāvyasaundarya or poetic beauty itself in its broad significance. In its narrow sense, it applies to poetic figures like Upamā, Rūpaka, etc. In this sense Alankāra is a means of beautifying poetry.

"A figure of speech is a deviation from the plain and ordinary mode of speaking, for the sake of greater effect. It is an unusual form of speech."1 The expressionional deviation, the striking disposition of words and ideas, is Alankāra. It constitutes the beautiful poetic form.

If we try to arrive at a clear definition of poetry with an objective differentia, certainly the definition
will revolve round the concept of *Alaṅkāra*, the word being taken here in the widest sense of the term in which Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin and Vāmana understood it. *Alaṅkāra* is 'the beauty in poetry':

'Saundaryamaḷaṅkārah'²

Examining the field of poetic expression, Bhāmaha found *Alaṅkāra* omnipresent in it.

A plain and ordinary statement regarding an object can hardly attract the attention of people at large but when it is presented under the cloak of a beautiful language then that expressional deviation adds charm to its expression and invites such attention. According to Bhāmaha, dry and insipid pedagogic talk becomes easily delectable on account of its *Rasa*-element as a sugar-coated pill even though bitter does.⁴ Even unattractive facts may attain excellence through proper wording by poets. It has accordingly been stated that even difficult and inaccessible matters may appear charming when applied in poetry:

'Saṣṭreṣu durgāho'pyarthah svadate kavisūktiṣu'¹
Poets then have the special acumen of setting of words (vinyāsa viśeṣa) by which they create situations pleasing, out of common place materials. Nilakaṇṭhādikṣita says accordingly:

\[\begin{align*}
Yāneva śabdānvayamālapāmah \\
yāneva cārthānvayamullikhāmah \\
Taireva vinyāsaviśeṣabhāvyaiḥ \\
\text{sammohayante kavayo jaganti} \\
\end{align*}\]

THE MEANING AND ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD ‘ALANKĀRA’

According to the famous lexicographer, Amarasimha, the word ‘alām’ (in Alankāra) has three different shades of meanings. It can denote,

(a) Bhūṣaṇa i.e., to adorn; in this sense it is always associated as a nominal suffix with root kr.

(b) Vāraṇa i.e., forbid; used as an adverb with instrumental case and

(c) Paryāpti i.e., to be sufficient.
The word Alahkāra etymologically means that which adorns or that by which something is adorned:

'Alaṅkarotiti alaṅkārah'

'Alaṅkriyate anena iti alaṅkārah'

In everyday life Alahkāra means ornament which decorates a person. In rhetorics, the word Alahkāra means poetic embellishments which add charm to poetry, as necklaces, bangles, etc., add charm to the beauty of a woman's body.

As is well known, the word Alaṅkāra in Sanskrit means ornament and in poetry it is used as a technical term (synonym) for those factors which bring in beauty to poetry, namely, the figures of speech. But if we go back to the beginnings of Sanskrit Poetics we find that the word Alaṅkāra-śāstra is used to denote the science of the poetics itself, of which the figures of speech form but a small part.

It is common belief that the original meaning of the word Alaṅkāra is 'ornament' and also in such expressions as Alaṅkāra-śāstra or Kavyaḷaṅkāra the same meaning is reflected with a slightly different shade, meaning 'the science of that particular element which
adorns poetry in some way or the other' and as such the word *Alaṅkāra* in its broader sense comprises everything which forms part of poetry.

But the word *Alaṅkāra* in older expressions like 'Kāvyālaṅkara' or *Alaṅkāra-śāstra* has a considerably different shade of meaning and it should not be confused with the word *Alaṅkāra* meaning mere ornament or figure of speech. *Alaṅkāra-śāstra* has been generally recognised as a system of poetics which attaches importance to the embellishment of the poetic expression, and the *Alaṅkāras* signify the poetic figures.

In fact, the word *Alaṅkāra* comprises not only the elements of Poetics but also of Aesthetics as well. *Alaṅkāra-śāstra* is therefore the science which tells what a Kāvyā should be like and judges as well as evaluates it with certain canons of propriety.

(C)

**HISTORY OF ALAṅKĀRAS**

*Alaṅkāra* may be considered as the very old concept of poetics popularly used in the sense of poetic beauty. Let us take a historical survey to understand the nature
and development of the Alaṅkāra concept in Sanskrit Poetics.

Bharata is the earliest rhetorician to define and illustrate poetic Alaṅkāras. But quite earlier to him, Panini used the word Upamā in the sense of Sādṛśya (similarity):

'Upamānāni sāmānyavacanaiḥ ।' ।

'Upamitaṁ vyāghrādibhiḥ sāmānyāprayoge ।' ।

The word Upamā used by Panini denotes in a very general way the simple relation of similarity and does not indicate any connotation of beauty. The first authority using the term Upamā with the connotation of beauty is Bharata. He defines and explains four Alaṅkāras which belong to drama.

Upamā dīpakarāṁ caiva rūpakaṁ yamakaṁ tathā ।

Kāvyasyaite hyalaṅkārāḥ catvāraḥ paraṅkīrtitah ।

He does not divide them into Śabdālaṅkāras and Arthālaṅkāras. He has mentioned only one Śabdālaṅkāra viz. Yamaka, the remaining three being Arthālaṅkāras.
For the first time, it is Bhāmaha who divides Alaṅkāras into Šabdālaṅkāras and Arthālaṅkāras. He calls Šabdālaṅkāra as Sauśabdya and says it is different from Arthavyutpatti i.e., the beauty of sense. He considers Sauśbdya and Arthavyutpatti as the real poetry. Alaṅkāras, thus, forms the principle of beauty according to Bhāmaha. The existence of beauty in sound and sense is the prerequisite of poetry.

"Vakrābhidheyaśabdoktiriṣṭa vācāmalaṅkrṭiḥ \( ^8 \)"

Alaṅkāra is the principle of beauty for Bhāmaha. It is exclusively found in poetry and distinguishes poetry from Šāstra or scriptures and Vārta or ordinary speech. So there can be no charm in poetry devoid of Alaṅkāras:

"Na kāntamapi nirbhūṣam vibhāti vanitāmukham \( ^9 \)"

He emphasizes Vakrokti as the essential basic entity underlying all Alaṅkāras:

"Saiśā sarvaiva vakroktiiranayārtho vibhāvyate \( ^10 \)
Yatno'śyām kavinā kāryaḥ kōlaṅkāro'nyā vinā \( ^10 \)

The extra-ordinary turn given to the ordinary speech is furnished by poetic figures.
Alaṅkāras are the beautifying factors of poetry and they are infinite in number. So according to Daṇḍin, whatever beautifies poetry is called Alaṅkāra:

'Kāvyaso bhākarān dharmānna-laṅkārān pracaksate' "11

It is the very nature of Alaṅkāras, one and all, to infuse beauty into a subject, an important aspect of which is to be free from vulgarity:

'Kāmaṁ sarvēpya-laṅkāro rasamarthe niṣiṇcatu !

Tathāpyagrāmyataivaināṁ bhāraṁ vahati bhūyasā '"12

Daṇḍin modestly observes that the principle underlying all the Alaṅkāras is stated by earlier rhetoricians, but his is the attempt to make it more intelligible. Dividing the whole range of literature into Svabhāvokti and Vakroktī, Daṇḍin says that poetry must either contain Vastu-varṇana or Svabhāva-varṇana. He deals with a few Sabdālaṅkāras and Arthālaṅkāras.

Vāmana places Alaṅkāras very high. He clearly states that it is a synonym for 'Saundarya' i.e., beauty; and because of this beauty, poetry becomes charming and different from Śāstra and Lokavārtā.
'Kāvyam grāhyamalaṅkārāt 1'

'Saundaryamalaṅkāraḥ 1'13

By indication, poetry is called only Šabdārtha, but Šabdārtha includes all the factors of beauty in poetry like Alaṅkāra, Guṇa, etc.

For Bhāmaha Alaṅkāra is the principle of beauty in poetry; Daṇḍin also considers the whole Vānmaya (literature) into two modes of figurative expression; but Vāmana's view is broader than that of Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin. For Daṇḍin Alaṅkāra is Šobhādharma but Vāmana calls it Saundarya itself. He not only considered Alaṅkāra as an essential element of poetry but also identified beauty with it. The general meaning of Alaṅkāra is beauty and Upamādi Alaṅkāras are its particulars details. These particular Alaṅkāras are extraordinary attributes of poetry which can be called Šobhādharmas.14 Vāmana shows that a big group of Alaṅkāras is based on Aupamya and following him later rhetoricians divided Arthālaṅkāras as based on Aupamya and Vyatirekha.

Udbhāṭa does not divide Alaṅkāras into Šabdālaṅkāras and Arthālaṅkāras, but he gives six groups of Alaṅkāras. Among the Alaṅkāras defined by him, four are Šabdālaṅkāras and the rest are Arthālaṅkāras. He has
given much importance to Anuprāsa and his concept of Kāvyavṛti is based on Anuprāsa. Among Arthālaṅkāras he has given great importance to Śleṣa which has been taken as the very secret of the poetic language. Udbhata ridicules the distinction between Guṇas and Alāṅkāras and considers them as the beautifying factors of poetry being intrinsic and the other extrinsic.

Rudrata restricts the scope of Vakrokti as the underlying principle of all Alāṅkāras, cutting it short to fit well as mere Śabdālaṅkāra. He brings all the Arthālaṅkāras under four heads, viz. (1) Vāṣṭava, (2) Aupamya, (3) Atiśaya and (4) Śleṣa.

He did not add anything new to the general principle. Thus we are not helped much by Rudraṭa in expounding the nature and scope of Alāṅkāras.

In Anandavardhana we find the three-fold treatment of Alāṅkāras, viz.

1) Alāṅkāras as ornaments like Kaṭaka.

2) Striking Vācyālaṅkāras possessing Vyaṅga which is subordinate to Vācyā, making it Guṇībhūtavyaṅga-kāvyā.
3) Alāṅkāradhvani where the beauty lies more in the suggested Alāṅkāra rather than in the other expressed Alāṅkāras.

'Tamarthamavalambante ye'ṅgāṁ te guṇāḥ smṛtāḥ /
Aṅgāśritāstvalaṅkārāḥ mantavyāḥ kaṭakādivat II'\(^{15}\)

The Dhvani theorists consider Alāṅkāras as the elements which help to heighten the charm of Rasa which is always suggested. Therefore Alāṅkāra is related to the suggested element in poetry. The position of Alāṅkāra is somehow justified in those poetic instances where the suggested element is not primary, while Alāṅkāras produce notable charm. Ānandavardhana insists on Aucitya in the befitting use of Alāṅkāras, Rasa being primarily important, all other poetic concepts like Guṇa, Alankāra are termed as subordinates. But Ānandavardhana is conscious of the beauty seen in Arthālāṅkāras like Samāsokti, Āksepa, Vyājastuti, Aprastutapraśāmsā, and among others, which contain some suggested beauty.

When an Alāṅkāra is suggested by the power of word or sense, it is known as Alāṅkāradhvani where Alāṅkāra enjoys very high importance. Alāṅkāras are said to gain more charm if suggested than being expressed. Thus we see a very broad treatment of Alāṅkāras given by
According to Anandavardhana, the Alāṅkāras form a variety among the infinite varieties of expression:

\[ '\text{Ananta hi vāgvikalpāḥ tatprakāraṁ eva cālaṅkāraḥ} \]

Abhinavagupta raises Alāṅkāras above the level of external ornament like Kaṭaka and says it to be an essential decoration like Kuṅkuma to a lady. But there must be Aucitya (propriety) in the use of Alāṅkāras. Impropriety of Alāṅkāras spoils poetry and becomes laughable as the ornamented body of a sage.

Abhinavagupta supports Anandavardhana. Though earlier rhetoricians, like Udbhata, were aware of the beauty of suggested Alāṅkāras, they treated them as Vācyālāṅkāras and not as Vyāŋgyālāṅkāras. They were interested only in the treatment of Alāṅkāras while Anandavardhana's motive is to re-establish all the concepts of beauty in the light of Rasa, which is suggested. Anandavardhana admits the countless number of Alāṅkāras and Abhinavagupta gives the reason:

\[ '\text{Alaṅkāraṇāmanantatvam pratibhānanyat} \]

So Abhinavagupta is aware of the fact that good Alāṅkāras depend on Kavipratiṣṭhā after all.
Kuntaka has revived the old tradition of Alankāra, headed by Bhāmaha. For Bhāmaha, Vakrokti was the principle underlying all Alankāras. For Kuntaka, Vakroti is the very life of poetry and the only artistic way of expression, embellishing poetic word and sense.17

The term Alankāra in fact is employed in Alankāra-School to connote the fundamental principle of charm of poetic expression. But to a very large extent, by a large number of rhetoricians it is applied only to the poetic form through certain decorative devices well known as 'figures'. Kuntaka through his all-pervasive theory of Vakrokti re-establishes the importance of Alankāras as the life-breath of poetry.

'Sālankārasya kāvyatā I'

When Kuntaka speaks about the nature of Alankāra his idea is the distinguished quality of feeling brought about by the beauty of word and sense together. The function of an Alankāra is often described as dressing the thought and emotions with beauty. Even in this sense Kuntaka treats every poetic concept in the light of Vakrokti, the life force of poetry, and so, the scope given to any other concept is subordinate.
Kuntaka includes all *Alaṅkāra* under his *Vākyavakrata*\(^{18}\). In all the varieties of *Vakrata*, *Alaṅkāras* are necessary because there cannot be any beauty or strikingness in poetry without *Alaṅkāras*.

Dr. S.K.De observes -

"*Alaṅkāra* system established by Bhāmaha was given a new turn or rather, the implicit ideas are developed by Kuntaka to its logical consequences. In fact *Vakrokti* system of Kuntaka may properly be regarded as an offshoot of the older *Alaṅkāra* system. Inspite of the obviously extreme nature of his central theory and his somewhat quaint nomenclature his work is of great value as presenting a unique system or rather systematising the *Alaṅkāra* theory of earlier writers in a refreshing original way".\(^{19}\)

Kuntaka clarified and vindicated his position, by pointing out that the correct term for the figure is not just *Alaṅkāra*, the ornament, or figure of speech, but *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, the poetic figure. Therefore *Vakratva Vaicitrya* which is a peculiar turn of expression depending on the *Kavivyāpāra* differentiates a poetic figure. This is the significant original contribution of Kuntaka to Sanskrit Poetics.
It is possible that Anandavardhana was aware of some such concept when he says, "Alaṅkāra hi cārutvahetuḥ prasiddhaḥ." Even Abhinavagupta refers Vicchitti-prakāra in his treatment of Alaṅkāras. But it was to Kuntaka's credit for having given very wide exposition to the characteristics that constitute a poetic figure.

Kuntaka has very clearly stated that Alaṅkāras should be regarded as contributing to fresh extrinsic charm of poetry, whose content is spontaneously charming. He insists on the exquisite beauty of the content described, otherwise it deserves not to be adorned.

Bhojas treatment of Alaṅkāras is peculiar. He classifies Alaṅkāras into three groups, viz -

1) Alaṅkāras belonging to Śabda, which he calls as Bhāva or outer embellishments, and compares them with the actions like dressing, decorating, etc. These outer ornaments are like Kaṭakādi.

2) Alaṅkāras belonging to Artha are inner or Ābhyaṁtāra like cleaning the teeth, cutting the nails, dressing the hair, etc., which are essential and more intimately related to the soul of poetry.

3) Alaṅkāras belonging to both the Śabda and the Artha,
are Bhāvabhyan-tara like taking bath, applying Kuṅkuma and sandle paste etc.

This comparison of Alāṅkāras with man’s daily actions is novel in Sanskrit Poetics. Bhoja includes Gunas and Rasas also under the category of Alāṅkāra, quoting Dañčin that all the factors of beauty are called by the name Alāṅkāras.

Though Kuntaka’s theory as a practical criticism, is more useful as Kaviśikṣā, it is neglected by later rhetoricians; and the school of Dhvani became more popular as it was followed by all prominent later rhetoricians like Mammata, Ruyyaka, Vidyanātha, among others who consider Alāṅkāras as external means of decoration as Kaṭakādi are to the human body.

Mammata says that there is no Kāvyahāni if there is no Sphuṭālāṅkāra. He accepts the necessity of Asphuṭālāṅkāra in poetic expression. In actual practice, he has given a great deal of space and shown great admiration for the Alāṅkāras, in the ninth and the tenth chapters of his ‘Kāvyapraṅgāśa’. This is true also of all later rhetoricians like, Vidyanātha, Viśvanātha and Jagannātha. Ruuyaka devotes a whole work, ‘Alāṅkārasarvasva’ to a systematic treatment of Alāṅkāras,
though he was second to none in his regard for Dhvani theory.

Jagannātha wants to justify the beauty of Alaṅkāras like Samāsokti. So instead of dividing poetry into three classes he divides into four categories. He calls Ānandavardhana’s Guṇībhūtavyaṅgya-kāvyā as Uttama-kāvyā, thus raising the status of Alaṅkāra. He further remarks that, because of its bad luck, it gets a second rank though it is beautiful on account of the strikingness of Alaṅkāra in expression.  

Some beautiful types of Citrakāvyas, where Arthālaṅkāras are beautifying the primary sense, are classified as Madhyama-kāvyā by Jagannātha, thus justifying the striking Arthālaṅkāras. All Alaṅkāras are striking and this strikingness (Camatkāra) in poetry, due to embellishments is very important according Jagannātha. Beautiful ideas devoid of Guṇas and Alaṅkāras are not poetry according him. So he criticises Visvanātha’s definition of poetry (Vākyam rasātmakaṁ kāvyam). The word must convey beautiful sense, and the word conveying beautiful meaning must equally be striking and beautiful. Hence, the necessity of Guṇālaṅkāras.
THE PLACE OF ALAṆKĀRA IN POETRY

Alaṅkāra is strikingness (vaicitrya). If it is found in Sabda, it is a Šabdalaṅkāra; and if it is found in Artha it is an Arthālaṅkāra. Alaṅkāra is not outside Šabda and Artha but exists within Šabda and Artha. Ornaments like Kaṭaka and Kuṇḍala can exist without the hand or the ear; but poetic embellishments cannot have a separate existence apart from Šabda and Artha. If there is an Alaṅkāra in both Šabda and Artha simultaneously, it is a case of Ubhayalaṅkāra.

The function of an Alaṅkāra is to give a brilliant touch (Camatkāra) to the object of decoration (description).

'Camatkṛtiralaṅkāraḥ'

Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin held that Alaṅkāras are very essential in a piece of poetry. Bhāmaha opined that an unornamented poem, though full of poetic sentiments, does not attract like a beautiful but unornamented face of a lady. He says:

'Na kāntamāpi nirbhūṣaṁ vibhāti vanitāmukham'
Danḍin also felt the importance of Alaṅkāras, as means of adding charm to poetry:

'Kāvyasobhākaraṇa dharmāṇnalaṅkāraṇa pracākṣate' 25

The Agnipurāṇa also ascribed the same importance to Alaṅkāras and added that a poem devoid of Alaṅkāras is like a widow:

'Alaṅkārarahitā vidhaveva sarasvatī' 26

Vāmana laid more emphasis on Rīti, still he accepted the importance of Alaṅkāras. He said that beauty is Alaṅkāra and a poem appeals to the mind of a reader, if it has Alaṅkāra:

'Kāvyam grahyamalaṅkārāt' 27

'Saundaryamalaṅkāraḥ' 27

He further opined that although Guṇas make a poem charming, Alaṅkāras add to the poetic charm:

'Kāvyasobhayāḥ kartāro dharmāḥ guṇāḥ tadatiṣayabetaṃ vastvalaṅkāraḥ' 28

In the pre-dhūvani period Alaṅkāras were regarded as very important in a Kāvyā. With the steady rise of the
Dhvani theory, the concept of Rasa was developed as the principally suggested element and it occupied the position of the very soul of poetry, with the result that both poetic figures and excellences came to be subordinated to it. Of these, the excellences (Guṇas), being conceived as intimately related to the soul, enjoyed a better position, while the figures were regarded merely as extraneous means of beauty and remained linked, as ornaments, with the body of poetry:

Tamarthamavalambante yeṅginām te guṇāḥ smṛtāḥ ।

Aṅgāśritāstvalaṅkārāh mantavyāḥ kaṭakādīvat H\(^2\)\(^9\)

Ānandavardhana was the first rhetorician, who strongly opposed the importance, ascribed to them. He asserted that Alaṅkāras should not pre-dominate in a Kāvyā:

'Vivaksatatparatvena nāṅgitvena kadācana I'\(^{30}\)

They should be used only if they are suitable in the culmination of Rasa. Otherwise they should be avoided. He says:

'Kāle ca gahantiyāgau nātinirvahanaiśita I'\(^{31}\)
Unlike Ānandavardhana, Kuntaka gives a higher place to Alāṅkāras in poetry, so much as to say that, there is no poetry without Alāṅkāra:

'Sālaṅkārasya kāvyatā'

Only Śabda and Artha do not constitute poetry; but Śabda and Artha, embellished by Alāṅkāras, constitute poetry. Hence the Alāṅkāras are not appendages to poetry; rather they are its essential elements according to Kuntaka.

Later rhetoricians Ruyyaka, Mammaṭa and Viśvanātha also accepted Alāṅkāras as means of adding charm to poetry. Later on,

Jayadeva again tried to ascribe supreme importance to Alāṅkāras but in vain. The rhetoricians continued to regard Alāṅkāras as means of additional charm to poetry.

Poetry being the deviation from normal expression is termed in this sense that poetry cannot be devoid of Alāṅkāra. Whether Alāṅkāra is an added ornament to good poetry or is it an integral part of it? This question has shaped the critical thought in the history of Indian Literary Criticism. If we say that Alāṅkāra is not an
integral part of good poetry, it means that there can be good poetry without Alaṅkāra. Then Alaṅkāra will not have any place in good poetry. But according to Indian rhetoricians there cannot be good poetry without Alaṅkāra. Good poetry is one which gives pleasure to the connoisseur.

Here, Mammaṭa’s opinion about the place of Alaṅkāras in poetry is worth considering. While giving the definition of poetry he says -

‘Adoṣau śabdārthau saguṇau analaṅkṛtī punaḥ kvāpi’.

Here, ‘analaṅkṛtī punch kvāpi’ means- ”Kāvya should always be full of rhetorical excellences or Alaṅkāras and rarely the Alaṅkāra therein may be Asphuṭa (not manifest). And it goes without saying that Alaṅkārayukta Šabda and Artha promote to the excellence of a Kāvya and do not show its true definition.” This opinion of Viśvanātha shows that it is very nearer to Mammaṭa’s opinion. Because Mammaṭa says - “The words ‘kvāpi’ are used to convey the idea that everywhere the word and sense are possessed of figures; but even if in some cases there are no obvious figures, it does not detract from the poetic nature of the composition.”
This opinion expressed by Mammaṭa regarding the place of Alaṅkāra in poetry seems to be accepted by all other rhetoricians, whether they belong to one or the other school of Sanskrit Poetics.

(E)

THE NUMBER OF ALAÑKĀRAS AND THEIR CLASSIFICATION

The number of Alaṅkāras has varied from time to time. Bharata mentioned only four Alaṅkāras. Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin, Udbhata and Vāmana speak of between 30 to 40 Alaṅkāras. Mammaṭa defines 61, Ruuyaka about 75, The 'Candrāloka' 100 and the 'Kuvalayānanda' 115. The number of Alaṅkāras separately named by various writers exceeds two hundred. Therefore, Dyanyabhāvavadin is made to say in the 'Dvanyāloka' -

'Sahasraśo hi mahātmabiranyaiḥ aṅkāraprakārāḥ prakāśitāḥ prakāśyante ca '  

Kuntaka stood against the tendency of multiplying the number of Alaṅkāras which was the usual trend among the rhetoricians. He has minimised the number in the light of the underlying principle of each Alaṅkāra.
No clear attempt seems to have been made by Bharata or Bhāmaha at classifying the Alāṅkāras. None the less, it can be said that Bhāmaha had in his mind a two fold division of the poetic figures, namely, 'śabdālaṅkāra', or those connected with words and 'arthālaṅkāra' or those connected with meaning. Danḍin has followed a similar system of classification. Udbhaṭa no were clearly treating of the distinction, seems subscribing to such a pattern of dividing the Alāṅkāras.

It is Rudrata then to whom we can turn for an explicit classification of the poetic figure into two classes of śabdālaṅkāras and arthālaṅkāras according to the relative prominence, attaching to the word or meaning (sense). A basis is also provided by him for the first time of arranging the figures in accordance with their nature or characteristics. The verbal figures have been subdivided into five broad heads viz., vakrokti śleṣa, citra, anuprāsa and yamaka. As for the semantic figures, they have been arranged under four heads such as, vāstava, aupamya, atīṣaya and śleṣa. Thus Rudrata was the first to attempt a scientific classification of figures as based upon certain definite principles.

Among the later rhetoricians Bhoja has classified the Alāṅkāras into three fold categories: śabdālaṅkāra,
Arthaṅkāra and Ubhayāṅkāra. Interestingly enough, an equal number of figures that is twenty four has been enumerated in each of these categories. The number of Arthaṅkāras is thus quite limited. Semantic figures, such as, Upamā, Rūpaka, Utprekaśa, Dīpaka are other well-recognized Arthaṅkāras are enumerated in the category of the Ubhayāṅkāras (that is, those partaking the character of both verbal and semantic figures). This three fold division has been accepted later on by Mammaṭa who, unlike Bhoja, however, admits a very small number in the mixed category.

Among the post Mammaṭa canonists Ruuyaka occupies a position of supremacy and his treatise, the 'Alankaṛasarvasva', can claim the credit of defining the scope and nature of the different poetic figures in a convincing manner such as was accepted by nearly all the posterior teachers of poetics. Ruuyaka has evolved seven categories of Alankaṛas, e.g., Sādṛśya, Virodha, Śīhkalā-bandha, Tarka-nyāya, Kāvya-nyāya, Loka-nyāya and Gūḍārtha-pratīti and has dealt with nearly eighty independent kinds of the poetic figures. As has been just suggested, his enumeration of the different individual figures has been accepted by such major succeeding authors as Viśvanātha, Appayya Dīxita and Jagannātha.
Along the lines of *Udbhaya-lāṅkāra* two other similar classes of poetic figures are also found enumerated by canonists like Visvanātha etc., known as Saṅkara and Saṁsṛiṣṭi, which signify admixture of figures, not necessarily of the varieties of *śabdā-laṅkāra* and *Arthā-laṅkāra*. Saṅkara materialises where the figures are mixed together like milk and water while Saṁsṛiṣṭi takes place where they are mingled together like *Tila* and *Tandula*. These are alternately known as *Misrā-laṅkāras* as well.

It is mentionable in this context that there has been a marked predilection among teachers of the *Alaṅkāra* school to divide and sub-divide the poetic figures pressing into service subtle or pedantic arguments. That from Bharata’s four *Alaṅkāras*, the number has mounted to 191, indicates how the exponents of this school exercised their scholastic ingenuity in the minute enumeration and classification of the poetic figures.

Regarding this S.K.De observes:

"Here was given to Indian scholars rich material for subtle distinction and endless classification; and with a hair-splitting care, befitting scholastic minds, all kinds of metaphors, similes, alliterations and other
figures were minutely analysed and defined. Indeed, the multiplication of limitless varieties of poetic figures, based on minute differences, as well as the making of a large number of sub-varieties of each figure, went on through the whole course of the history of the discipline; and down to the latest times, we find traces of new and ever new poetic figures."