Lexicography is defined as the art of writing dictionary or the science of compiling a dictionary. Lexicology and lexicography are derived from the Greek word Lexico (Adjective from Lexis meaning ‘speech’ or ‘way of speaking’ or ‘word’). Lexicology is derived from Lexico ‘word’ and logos ‘learning or science’ i.e. the science of word. Lexicography is derived from lexico ‘word’ and graph ‘writing’ i.e. writing of words. The etymological meaning of these words speaks for itself the scope of these branches of linguistics. Lexicography is the writing of the word in concrete form i.e. in the dictionary.¹

Indian languages have a long and glorious tradition of lexicographic works. The lexicographic tradition in India closely follows that of Vedic and classical Sanskrit tradition. Thus in India, in so far as vedic literature is concerned, the Nighanti-s were compiled as an ancillary branch of vedic tradition. The later lexicons in India are all set in verse form. In no language, but for Sanskrit the versified vocabulary has been successfully accomplished. The importance of lexicographical study can be understood from the educational system of olden days. They initiated the study with Panini’s grammar and Amarasimha’s Namalinganuasana, one of the most celebrated Sanskrit lexicon.

An altogether different style of dictionary preparation flourished in ancient India. It started with the collection of obscure words as exemplified in the Nighantus, continued with formation of the bases of Nirukta and padapatha during the first fifteen millennium BC, and ended with a large group of Kosa composed during the past fifteen to seventeen hundred years after the Christian era began. Thus, a continuous activity of dictionary making in ancient India provided models for later lexicographical works in the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages in India.²

Both Nighantu and Nirukta are monumental examples of early Indian efforts in dictionary making. Since then a large number of dictionaries and glossaries are prepared in Sanskrit as well as in Pali, Prakrit, and Apabhramsa. Some of them are general purpose dictionaries like amarakosa, while some others are partial ones like Deshi Namamala, and still others like Datupatha and Ganapatha fall under the category of technical glossaries. These dictionaries and glossaries follow different criteria and bases- semantic as well as alphabetic in their structure and text representation.

Amarakosa has been considered to be the oldest and most popular compilation. It is also known as Namalinganusana. In later period, Halayudhayakosa, Vaijayantikosa, Mankhakosa, namamala and Anekartha samgraha etc names are worth mentioning while tracking the development. Two voluminous dictionaries
compiled in the 19th century are Vacaspatyam and Sabdakalpadruma, which stand apart their modern style and technique. Both the volumes are replete with the quotes from the contemporary literature to explain the words convincingly. Bhandarkar who has given quite an exhaustive list of Sanskrit lexicons in his introduction to Amarakosa, there were nearly more than 80 works written by various lexicographers.

Indian dictionaries may be Synonymic or homonymic. The synonymic dictionaries are systematic catalogues of words with one and the same meaning (ekartha, samanartha); they are commonly grouped subject wise and often have the character of encyclopedias. The homonymic dictionaries register words with more than one meaning (anekartha, nanartha). A neat and proper discrimination of both categories is not always practicable since many synonymic lexica include a homonymic section or chapter as well.

**Amarakosa or Namalinganusasana**

Amarakosa is on majority a synonymous dictionary authored by Amarasimha of the 6th C.A.D or earlier. The dictionary is divided into three sections called Trikanda. The first section (svargadikanda) deals in ten chapters with words relative to heaven, the sky, its quarters, time, thought, sound etc. The second and longest section (bhumiadikanda) treats in another ten chapters of words pertinent to the earth, towns, moutains, woods and herbs, animals, mans, and the four castes. The third section (samanyakanda), which has five chapters, is about adjectives, miscellaneous words, homonyms and indeclinable.

**Abhidhanaratnamala**

Abhidhanaratnamala is a lexicon of 900 verses authored by Halayudha of the 10th C.A.D. The lexicon is divided into sections called kandas. The first four kandas deal with synonyms and fifth one with homonyms and indeclinables. Regarding the treatment of genders, the lexicons has followed Amarakosa. The genders are indicated by giving the declensional forms. The lexicon is composed in different metres. Halayudha mentions various authorities like Bhaguri, Vararuchi and others.

**Vaijayantikosa**

Vaijayantikosa is a voluminous lexicon by Yadavapakasa. The lexicon has two broad divisions, viz. synonyms, and homonyms. The division on synonyms has five sections. The division on homonyms has tree section. All these kandas are further sub divided into several sub sections. A special feature of the lexicon, which makes it voluminous in nature, is the inclusion of vedic terms. Thus, the lexicons often referred to as an authority on ancient lexicography.

**Trikandasesa**

Trikandasesa by Puruṣottamadeva (between 1050 and 1200A.D.), compiled as a supplement to Amarakosa, gives those words which are left out in the Amarakosa. The lexicon is divided into the equal number of vargas as found in the Amarakosa, corresponding to the three kandas.

**Haravali**

The haravali is similar to the Trikandasesa in scope and content but differs from it in the mode of presentation, turning back to the old custom of serializing the entries after their length. Thus the synonymic section divides into rows of words extending over a whole, a half, and a quarter stanza, the homonymic section into items embracing a hemistich and single line. Though it does not comprise more than 280 verses, 15 of which are reserved for the introduction and the colophon.

**Abhidhanacintamani**

It is a major lexicon compiled by Hemacandra(1088-1175 A.D.), having 1542 verses in different metres. The first part of the lexicon deals with the synonyms and the second with the homonyms. The synonyms section is divided in to six sub sections. The homonyms part is arranged according to the number of syllables in each word, and also according to the final syllables.

**Viśvaprakaśa**

Visvaparaksasa is a dictionary of homonyms arranged according to the final consonants. Based on the number of syllables the words are further classified into sub groups. There is no alphabetical order of arrangement. Hence ready reference to words is difficult. Mahesvara of the 12th C.A.D. is the author of this lexicon which has been quoted by Sarvananda, Hemacandra, Rayamukuta and others, which testifies to the popularity of the lexicons.

**Anekarthakośa**

Anekarthakośa is a small lexicon also known
generally as Nanarthasamgraha. The author of this lexicon is Ajayapala who lived earlier than the 12th C.A.D. There are about 1730 words in the lexicon, arranged according to the initial letters irrespective of the number of syllables.

Medinikosa or Nanarthaśabdakośa

A dictionary available to scholars since the pioneer days of Indian studies and now attributable with confidence to the 13th century is Medinikara’s Nanarthaśabdakośa or Medinikośa. In this lexicon the arrangement of words is according to the final letter and also the number of syllables in each word. As in some other lexicons, the indeclinable are given at the end of the lexicon. Later lexicographers and commentators have quoted this lexicon in their work, which may testify to the merit of the lexicon.

Kosakalpataru

Kosakalpataru is an important lexicon having more than 5000 verses ascribed to Viswanatha of the 17th C.A.D. The lexicons has divisions on synonyms and homonyms, the former imitates the Amarakosa and divided into sections and sub sections kandas and vargas

CONCLUSION

Dictionaries in Sanskrit language and literature are the rich resources found to be in constant use. Sanskrit dictionaries initiated as classical Sanskrit lexicons before AD 500. The initiation was from Dwirupakosa of Panini. Later the progress was made in developing Amarakosa in before 6th C.A.D. Since then classical lexicon development was in progress and this was the base for the development of dictionaries in other languages including English. Sanskrit dictionaries always reflect the profile scholarship and intensive research. The reference value of the Sanskrit dictionaries is very high. And as classics and epics are quoted to justify and interpret the concept or the term to the context. Amarakosa of Amarasimha laid the strong foundation for the dictionaries in the Sanskrit language. It is seen that more than 37 commentaries are available for Amarakosa. Sanskrit dictionaries are broadly grouped as traditional or classical Sanskrit lexicons and modern Sanskrit dictionaries. In this study taken to present briefly the salient features of dictionaries along with the historical perspective. An overview of the growth and development of Sanskrit dictionaries is also presented.

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