

Classification, Duties of *Sakhī* and her representation in Dance and Drama

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research is to understand the significance of *Sakhī* depicted in different literatures. *Sakhī* being an important character in many of the dance/dramas, has its own weight and prominence in many literatures. This work has two main objectives with the first one being to understand different types of classification of the character *Sakhī* and her duties. The second objective is to highlight the character *Sakhī* in *Nāyaka-Nāyikā* relationship by examining different literatures and to emphasise the role of *Sakhī* in dance and dramas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The format of research has primarily been references from the various texts from Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil and Kannada literature. Certain pertinent sections of various *Śṛṅgāra Kāvyaś* (poetry on erotic love) by various poets have been researched where the role of *Sakhī* is prominent. Then, the dance compositions where *Sakhī* character has major significance are researched. The works of various composers have been studied with the help of books - both online and offline, websites and research journals.

SCOPE OF RESEARCH

There are vast number of literatures in different languages which deal with the role of *Sakhī*. It may be Indian literatures or even foreign literatures ranging from different civilizations to present generation. There are abundant compositions in various languages which are used in different dance forms which deals with *Sakhī*.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The various literatures used in this article are taken from Sanskrit, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil languages. There may be lot of other literatures in other languages like Marāṭi, Bengali, Odissi etc which deals with the character *Sakhī*. Also in the languages chosen, all the compositions and poetries present in that language are not taken. All the compositions of the same author are also not studied. Inability to access original sources of work due to time constraints has also served as a limitation. Thus, not being able to get the examples for some of the duties of *Sakhī*. The duties of *Sakhī* which are more prominent in most of the literatures are taken; and the examples in various literatures and dance compositions are elaborated.

1.1 Introduction

According to the definition of *Rasamañjarī*, *Sakhī* is one who follows *Nāyikā* and who creates trust and relaxation (*Viśvāsa Viśrāma kāriṇī pārśvacāriṇī sakhī*).¹ According to *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī*, *Sakhī* is a person who always stay by one's side and is a fit person to confide in.² *Sakhī* will give moral support to *Nāyikā* in all the situations irrespective of whether it is good or bad. It is the *Sakhī* who will teach *Nāyikā* the ethics, the morals and her responsibilities.

Ancestors created mortal *Nāyaka-Nāyikā* concept to explain the immortal *Jīvātma* (soul) and *Paramātmā* (God) relationship. The lovelorn *Jīvātma* (*Nāyikā*) will be always trying to be one

¹ Pappu Venugopala rao, *Rasamañjarī of Bhānūdatta* (Pappus Academics & CulturalTrust, n.d.), 157.

² V Raghavan, *Śṛṅgāra-Mañjarī of Saint Akbar Shah* (Hyderabad: Hyderabad Archaeological Department Publication, 1990), 105.

with the *Paramātmā* (*Nāyaka*) and that is the only ultimate happiness for *Jīvātmā* called as *mokṣa* (Liberation). Without a proper *Guru* (Guide, Teacher), it is impossible for anyone to get *mokṣa*. *Sakhī* in *Nāyaka-Nāyikā* relationship is treated as *Guru* while explaining *Jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā* relationship. There are lot of compositions by *Alvārs*, *Haridāśas* where they considered themselves as female characters, (*Prakṛtī*) longing for the union with *Puruṣha*, the Almighty, with the help of *Guru*. This paper excludes the scope of explaining how the *Sakhī* is treated as *Guru* in the compositions.

The Classifications and duties of *Sakhī* explained in few major books are presented in the following section.

1.2 Classification of *Sakhī*

Based on *Sakhī*'s Character:

There is no explicit classification of *Sakhī* according to *Nāṭya-Śāstra*. There is threefold classification of women in general. *Uttamā* (the superior), *Madhyamā* (the middling) and *Adhamā* (the inferior). ³ *Nāṭya-Śāstra* describes eleven types of *dūtīs* in which one of them is *Sakhī*. ⁴

Three-fold classification of the *Sakhī* according to *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī*.

- ✓ *Uttamā* (if a *Sakhī* wishes most for the *Nāyikā*'s happiness, she is *Uttamā*):
She is more sincere at heart, and very sweet in speech. She never gets annoyed.
- ✓ *Madhyamā* (If she speaks pleasing words, she is *Madhyamā*):
She is sincere at heart, and sweet in speech, but who becomes temporarily indifferent to the intransigent Heroine.
- ✓ *Adhamā* (If she speaks and helps at random, she is *Adhamā*):

³ N. P Unni, *NāṭyaŚāstra*, NBBC Publishers & Distributors (P) LTD. Delhi (India), 2014, 1155.

⁴ Ibid., 1150.

She is not insincere, and who wishes good of the heroine. But she is not able to keep her temper when the Heroine does not listen to her advice.^{5 6}

Based on *Sakhī*'s age/type of relation in comparison with the heroine or based on the type of friendship:

In Bhoja's *Sarasvatī-Kaṇṭhābharaṇa*, three-fold classification of *Sakhī* is given:

- ✓ *Sahajā* (natural)
- ✓ *Pūrvajā* (of old relationship)
- ✓ *Āgantu* (stranger)⁷

Other interpretation is:

- ✓ *Sahajā* (An equal aged friend)
- ✓ *Pūrvajā* (An elder friend)
- ✓ *Āgantu* (An Occasional friend)⁸

Based on *Sakhī*'s Occupation:

According to Rudrabhaṭṭa, the author of *Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka*, there are eight types of *Sakhīs* of heroine. They are,

1. *Dāsī* (a maid servant)
2. *Naṭī* (an actress)
3. *Dhātrī* (a foster-mother)
4. *Prātiveśyā* (a neighbor)
5. *Śilpinī* (a female artist)
6. *Bālā* (a maiden)
7. *Prativrajitā* (a female ascetic)
8. *Kāru* (a working-woman, such as a washerwoman)⁹

⁵ Rakesh Gupta, *Studies in Nāyaka-Nāyikā Bhēda* (Eastern Book Linkers Delhi, 2013), 213.

⁶ Raghavan, *Śṛṅgāra-Maṇjarī of Saint Akbar Shah*, 105.

⁷ Gupta, *Studies in Nāyaka-Nāyikā Bhēda*, 24.

⁸ Raghavan, *Śṛṅgāra-Maṇjarī of Saint Akbar Shah*, 46.

⁹ Gupta, *Studies in Nāyaka-Nāyikā Bhēda*, 23.

Dhanañjaya, the author of *Daśarūpaka*, mentions out of eight *dūtīs*, one of them is *Sakhī*.¹⁰ Something similar to *Nāṭya-Śāstra*. In Pappu Venugopal Rao's book, he mentions that, there are eight associates to *Nāyikā* according to *Daśarūpaka*. He doesn't explicitly call them as *Dūtīs*. He just mentions associates of *Nāyikā*. They are

1. *Dāsī* (a maid servant)
2. *Sakhī* (friend)
3. *Kāru* (a working woman)
4. *Dhātreyī* (daughter of foster-mother)
5. *Pratīśikā* (a neighbor)
6. *Liṅginī* (makeup artist)
7. *Śilpinī* (a female artist)
8. *Dūtī*¹¹ (a messenger)

When *Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka* and *Daśarūpaka* are compared, *Naṭī*, *Dhātrī*, *Bālā* and *Prativrajitā* which are mentioned in *Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka* as *Sakhīs* are not included in *Daśharūpaka*. One of the associates of *Nāyikā* is *Sakhī*, hence excluding *Sakhī*, *Dhātreyī*, *Liṅginī* and *Dūtī* were not considered as *Sakhī* in *Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka*. Only *Dāsī*, *Kāru*, *Pratīśikā* and *Śilpinī* are common among these two classifications.

Bhāvaprakāśa adds few more types to the list given by *Daśarūpaka*.

- ✓ *Parivrājikā* (A woman skilled in story telling)
- ✓ *Raṅgopajivinī* (A professional dancer or actor)
- ✓ *Prekṣaṇka* (A woman who arranges entertainment or show)

Bhāvaprakāśa also prohibits *Nāyikā* keeping women who are too poor or too rich, too clever or too stupid as *Sakhī*.¹²

Classification according to Hindi Literature based on *Sakhī*'s Behavior towards *Nāyikā*:

According to Toṣa in his *Sudhānidhi* explains that, the *Sakhī* can be of four types.

¹⁰ K V Subbanna, *Dhananjayana Daśharūpaka*, Third Edition (Akshara Prakashana Heggodu (Sagara) karnataka State, 2014), 163.

¹¹ rao, *Rasamañjarī of Bhānūdatta*, 12.

¹² Ibid.

1. *Hitakārinī* (One who has always in her mind, the good of the heroine.)
2. *Antabartinī* (One enjoys Heroine's perfect confidence and knows her innermost secrets)
3. *Vidagdā* (shrewd woman who accomplishes her end by the use of suggestive speech).
4. *Sahacārī* (One who keeps company with the heroine)¹³

The author Rasalīna in the work *Rasa-Prabodha* reproduced this classification by substituting the terms as

1. *Bigyāna-vidagdā* (for *Hitakārinī*)
2. *Antaraṅginī* and *bahiraṅginī* (for *Vidagdā*)
3. *Antarbartinī*
4. *Sahacārī*

He has rightly pointed out that the *Bahiraṅginī*, who can know only such facts about the heroine as are known to all others, is inconsistent with the definition of *Sakhī*, who is supposed to be in the perfect confidence of heroine. The fact that it comes as a natural complement to the *Antaraṅginī*.

Śṛṅgāra-Nirṇaya of Dāsa has classified the *Sakhī* into

- ✓ *Sādhāraṇa* (Ordinary)
- ✓ *Nāyikāhita* (Benefactor of the heroine)
- ✓ *Nāyakahita* (Benefactor of the hero)

Chandraśekara Bājapeyī in his work *Rasika-vinoda* mentions two types of the *Sakhī*,

- ✓ *Bahiraṅga*
- ✓ *Antaraṅga*

These are unfeminized forms of *Bahiraṅginī* and *Antarbartinī*.

Bhānu (*Kāvya-prabhākara*), Hariaudha (*Rasa-Kalasa*) and Gulābarāya (*Navarasa*) have all reproduced the four-fold classification of Rasalīna. The only change introduced by them is the substitution of the term *Vyaṅgya-vidagdā* for *Bigyāna-vidagdā* of Rasalīna.¹⁴

1.3 Duties of *Sakhī*

¹³ Gupta, *Studies in Nāyaka-Nāyikā Bhēda*, 72.

¹⁴ Ibid.

According to *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī*, *Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka* and *Rasa-mañjarī*

The author of *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī*, Akbar Shah describes the various activities performed by *Sakhī* (*Sakhī-Kriya*), by considering *Rasamañjarī* and the Āmoda's definitions. They are as follows:

- ✓ Censure (*Upāmbha*)
- ✓ Coaching (*Śikṣā*)
- ✓ Making fun (*Parihāsa*)
- ✓ Eulogy (*Praśamsā*)
- ✓ Diversion (*Vinoda*)
- ✓ Removing Māna (*Mānāpanoda*)
- ✓ Inculcating Māna (*Mānopadeśa*)
- ✓ Adorn (*Maṇḍana*)
- ✓ Enquiry about her mind (*Āśāya-praśna*)
- ✓ Consoling during separation (*Virahāśvāsa*)
- ✓ Sport in forest and water (*Vanavihāra* and *Jalakrīḍā*)
- ✓ Sport on swing (*Dolākelī*)
- ✓ Games with dolls and balls (*Pāñcalakeli* and *Kanduka*)
- ✓ The games of wheeling round (*Bhramaṇa*)
- ✓ Blind-folding and dice (*Nayana-nimīlana* and *Dyūta-keli*)
- ✓ Drinking (*madhupāna*)

The author of *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* adds following extra duties to *Sakhī*. He says all the above duties are taken from *Rasamañjarī* and the Āmoda's definitions. The following four duties are added by him.

- ✓ Deceiving (for fun) (*Vañcanakeli*)
- ✓ Circular dance (*Hallīsaka*)
- ✓ Picking flowers (*Puṣpācaya*)
- ✓ Spring sports (*Vasantakeli*)¹⁵

Many of the duties of *Sakhī* are covered in *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī*.

¹⁵ Raghavan, *Śṛṅgāra-Mañjarī of Saint Akbar Shah*, 115.

According to Rudrabhaṭṭa, the author of *Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka*, *Vinoda*, *Maṇḍana*, *Śikṣā*, *Upālabha*, *Prasādana*, *San̄gama*, *Virahāśvāsa* are the duties of *Sakhī*.¹⁶

Prasādana (to pacify, to appease) and *San̄gama* (to unite) are the two additions which are not there in *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī* but are given in *Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka*.

Duties of *Sakhī* according to Bhānudatta's *Rasa-mañjarī* are: *Maṇḍana*, *Upalambha*, *Śikṣā* and *Parihāsa*. All these four duties are covered in *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī*.

Bhānudatta's four duties of the *Sakhī* are accepted by most of the poets. Kṛpārāma in his *Hita-Taraṅginī*, adds one more type of *Sakhī*, *Nirīkṣhaṇa* (awaiting the heroine while she is in union with her lover).

Keśava in work *Rasika-Priyā*, has extended the list by the addition of

- ✓ *Vinaya* (Making humble requests),
- ✓ *Manānā* (appeasing)
- ✓ *Milānā* (uniting)
- ✓ *Jhukānā* (to make yield)

Here *Manānā* and *Milānā* are similar to Rudrabhaṭṭa's *Prasādana* and *San̄gama*. These classifications are not there in either *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī* or *Rasa-mañjarī*.

Deva in his *Bhāva-Vilāsa* speaks of three additional duties of *Sakhī*.

- ✓ Remaining close by
- ✓ Uniting
- ✓ Consoling at the time of separation

Remaining close by is special addition of his classification. It was not there in previous classifications. Uniting is same as *Milānā* of *Rasika-Priyā* or *San̄gama* of *Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka*. Similarly, consoling at the time of separation is same as *Virahāśvāsa* of *Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka* and *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī*.

In *Rasa-Vilāsa* Dēva mentions five more duties of *Sakhī*,

- ✓ *Guṇa-Kathana* (Speaking of the merits)

¹⁶ Gupta, *Studies in Nāyaka-Nāyikā Bhēda*, 23.

- ✓ *Rasa-upajāibau* (Creating desire for the hero in the heart of the heroine vice versa)
- ✓ *Parasparadikhāvana* (showing one to the other)
- ✓ *Viraha-nivedana* (Describing before the Hero the miserable plight of the separated heroine and vice versa)
- ✓ *Sandesha-kathana* (conveying of messages)

Sandesha-kathana and *Viraha-nivedana* are similar to the duties of *Dūtī* described in other literatures. *Parasparadikhāvana* can be interpreted as, *Sakhī* making hero and heroine to see each other. The second one is like, *San̄gama* or *Milana* explained by previous authors. Other two duties described by Dēva are totally different than that are explained by the earlier authors.

Dāsa, who has included the *Dūtī* in the *Sakhī*, has assigned six duties to the later besides the four conventional duties of *Sakhī* and two of the *Dūtī*. These additional duties are:

- ✓ *Sandarśana* (Showing one to other)
- ✓ *Māna-pravarjana* (Appeasing)
- ✓ *Patrikā-dāna* (delivering of a letter)
- ✓ *Stuti* (to praise)
- ✓ *Vinaya* (Making humble request)
- ✓ *Yadṛcchā* (Acting with self-will).¹⁷
- ✓ *Sandarśana* is similar to *Parasparadikhāvana* explained by Dēva. *Māna-pravarjana* is same as *Prasādana* of Rudrabhaṭṭa. *Patrikā-dāna* will be similar to the duties of *Dūtī*. *Stuti* is same as *Praśamsā* of Akbar Shah, *Vinaya* is also covered by Keśava's *Rasika-Priyā*. Hence *Yadṛcchā* is the only classification which is unique in this work.

1.4 *Dūtī* Vs *Sakhī*

Dūtīs are love messengers between *Nāyikā* and *Nāyaka*. *Sakhī* can play a role of *Dūtī*, but it is not necessary that the *Sakhī* must be a *Dūtī*. Similarly, *Dūtī* can be a *Sakhī*, but that is also not necessary. *Dūtī* is the one who communicates messages between *Nāyikā* and *Nāyaka* and helps

¹⁷ Ibid., 72–73.

them for union. *Sakhī* will always think good for *Nāyikā*, whereas *Dūtī* can be appointed by *Nāyaka* to convey his messages. The *Nāyaka* may be *Śaṭha*, *Adhama*. Hence *Dūtī* will just convey the message sent by such *Nāyaka*. She need not think of good for *Nāyikā*.

1.5 Duties of *Sakhī* presented in Dance and Dramas

The examples for duties of *Sakhī* in different literatures are presented below. The duties explained mainly in *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī* are taken and elaborated.

1.5.1 *Maṇḍana* (to adorn the heroine)

There are very few compositions available which depicts the *Sakhīs* adorning the heroine in dance items. In kanakadāsa's *Mōhanatarangiṇī* there is a dedicated chapter '*Uśādeviya Śṛṅgāra*' which completely deals with how the *Sakhīs* decorated Ushā and her friend Chitralēkha. ¹⁸Right from the head ornaments till anklets are explained in detail. Example for the earrings of Ushā adorned by her friends,

jitakāmarugaḷa jayisuva manmatha

rathacakrayugaḷavembanthe

śatakōti nīla māṇikyadōleya bāṇa

*suteya karṇadoḷu sārcidaru*¹⁹

In the *Kutrāla Kuravanji* written by Tirukūda Rāsappa Kavirāyar, Vasanthavalli has fainted because of the pangs of separation from her Lord. The friends put *candana* to cool her body and they fan her to cool her (*Murugu candhana kuḷambu pūsuvār Viraha ththīyai mūtti mūtti visiri vīsuvār*).

Śakuntalā's friends Priyamvada and Anusūya adorn her before sending her to King Duśyanta in the drama *Abhijñāna Śākuntalā* of Kālidāsa. The conversation will be as follows:

¹⁸ Prof. Sudhākara (last), ed., *Kanaka Dāsara Kāvya Bhāga – 2 Mōhanatarangiṇī (Gadyānuvādadondige)* (kannaḍa mattu Samskr̥ti Ilāḱhe, Kannada Bhavana, J. C road, Bangalore, 2003), 403–18.

¹⁹ Ibid., 412.

Anusūya: My dear, we poor girls never saw such ornaments. How shall we adorn you? But we have seen pictures. Perhaps we can arrange them right.

Śakuntalā: I know how clever you are. (The two friends adorn her.)

The two friends: There Śakuntalā, we have arranged your ornaments. Now put on this beautiful silk dress.²⁰

Here the depth of their friendship is showcased. Śakuntalā's friends will try to decorate her even though they do not know how to use the ornaments.

1.5.2 *Upāmbha* (Criticism)

Upāmbha along with *Śikṣā* has been explained beautifully by Kṣētrayya in the following *Padams*. In *Ēla Vaccitivē*,²¹ *Sakhī* asks *Nāyikā*, “Why have you come away forsaking such a genial Lord, how did your feet move at all O damsel! Young lady, Muvvagōpāla would be pining for you, talking aloud about you even in his dreams! He would weep unceasingly and look around for you with reddened eyes, O damsel!”²² *Sakhī* asks how could you even feel like going away from such a good *Nāyaka*. *Sakhī* is indirectly instructing her not to leave Muvvagōpāla. Here *Sakhī* is also playing the role *Rasa-upajāibau*²³.

In Śrī Mutu Tandavar's *padam Ittane Tulāmbaramai*²⁴, *Sakhī* scolds *Parakīya Nāyikā* who is careless about the people around. *Sakhī* asks, is it correct when you are surrounded by all your relatives, you go to have union with Muttayya? Later *Sakhī* adds, if any one eats goat, will they make garland of its bones and tie around their neck? (The inner meaning is, you can secretly have relation with Muttayya, but not to make it public). Being born in such an orthodox family, is it right to be so adamant? Criticism and *Śikṣā* are expressed in this *padam*.

²⁰ Arthur W. Ryder, *Kalidasa Shakuntala Translated by Arthur W. Ryder* (In parentheses Publications Sanskrit series, Cambridge, Ontario 1999, n.d.), 43–44, http://www.yorku.ca/inpar/shakuntala_ryder.pdf.

²¹ *Navarōju (Rāga)*, Kṣētrayya

²² Rajanikanta B. Rao, *Muvvagopala Padavali* (Rajani Publications, n.d.), 25.

²³ One of the duty of *Sakhī*, Creating desire for the hero in the heart of heroine vice versa according to *Rasa-Vilāsa* of Dēva

²⁴ Dr. Gowri Kuppuswamy and Dr. M. Hariharan, *Tamil Padangal*, n.d.

1.5.3 Śikṣā (Instructing)

In *Aṣṭapadi*²⁵ *Mugdhē Madhumathana manugatamanusara Rādhikē*, *Sakhī* teaches *Nāyikā* how to win over Kṛṣṇa. She tells, “O, thick-thighed girl, the tender leaves look like hands of climber plants and the wind which is waving, showcasing picture, it looks like those leaves are waving at you. Hence Don’t make delay going to him. Your body is ready for the battle of love, being like a wild cat, make a move towards him to the rhythm of the belling sound of your waist. Be unembarrassed but be romantic²⁶”. Along with *Śikṣā*, *Praśamsā* and *Vinōdā* are also depicted here.

Here is a different kind of *Padam Davvula virahamopa*, where the *Nāyikā* requests her friends to teach her how to control her feelings during separation from *Nāyaka*.²⁷ She says, “I cannot take the pain of being distant, nor do I understand the secrets to getting near. My heart is tender like a flower, do advise me now. When I seek to entwine with him longingly, I lack proper expression. If shyness overtakes me in pairs (Doubly) then there is no joy. If there is continuous flirtation; then matters are not resolved. I am so filled with confusion, what can I say to my husband”.²⁸ *Nāyikā* asks for *Śikṣā* herself.

There is a *Jāvaḷi*, *Vaddani nēnanṭinigā*, where *Sakhī* warns *Nāyikā* about the deceitful nature of *Nāyaka*.²⁹ She says, “O friend! I told you not to have association with him. When he came this side, then itself I said he is a cheat (*Taddayu mōsagāḍani vaḍiddesa jērina nāḍē*). The friendship with that fraud who plays tricks, speaking very much emphatically, as if he is the absolute Lord.”³⁰ *Sakhī*’s concern towards the heroine is evident. The *Sakhī* may be *Pūrvaja* who is elder to the heroine, hence knowing the tactics of men better.

²⁵ *Sānanda Dāmodara*, 11th chapter

²⁶ “Jayadēva Gītā Gōvindam,
http://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/giirvaani/giirvaani/gg/sarga11/gg_11_frame.htm,” n.d.,
http://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/giirvaani/giirvaani/gg/sarga11/gg_11_frame.htm.

²⁷ *Davvula virahamopa of Annamācārya*

²⁸ Anupama Kylash, *The Nāyikās of Annamācārya An Interpretation for Dance*, n.d., 226.

²⁹ *Vaddani nēnanṭinigā, Hindustāni Kāpi, Rūpaka Tāla*, Authour is unknown.

³⁰ Pappu Venugopala rao, *Bunch of Jāvaḷis*, n.d., 190.

1.5.4 *Praśamsā* (Eulogy)

The *Sakhīs* praise Alamelamanga's beauty indirectly as it is proportionate to the love expressed by Lord Venkatapati³¹. "What extreme attachment the Lord has for you lady! In an instance, he enthroned you in his heart (*Eṭuvanti mohomo yenti nēpai nataniki taṭukana nuramuna dhariyince ninnunu*). Knowing that your gait is royal, graceful, like that of an elephant, your husband out of desire for you, came to the rescue of the mighty elephant!³² Knowing that your delicate hips are round in shape, your lord held the circular disk in his hand! Knowing that your abode is the lotus, he took the form of '*jalajanābha*'. Seeing your delicate shell shaped neck, he held the *Pāñcājanya* conch in his hand! Knowing your breasts resembled high mountains, he embraced you and became Venkatāpati, the lord of the hill".³³ This beautiful *Padam*, is self-explanatory. The explanation for Viṣṇu's deeds because of Lakṣmi's beauty is marvelous.

1.5.5 *Vinoda/Parihāsa* (make humor)

Nāyikā says to *Bālā* (Young woman) friend how her friends cheated her. *Nāyikā* says, she asked her friends, "Are you so small-minded O my dear friends! (*Koncegattelā? Mīrō celiyarō*) Knowing my nature, you make fun of me and join him in boisterous laughter! Having brought him here and kept him at the threshold; you said he joined her and refused to come here to me;³⁴ When with broken heart I shed tears did you not bring him in?" Then she continues, "O young woman, my maid's attire was given to Muvvagōpāla, like a woman he was made up and brought and left with me here, to sleep with me, since my lord wouldn't be coming; (*San̄gama*) when all of you left us together, my lord revealed himself to me amidst laughter!"³⁵

Even though it is *Vañcanā* as explained in *Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī*, it was made just for fun. Later *Sakhīs* helped for *San̄gama*. Hence, these pranks are totally accepted as *Vinoda* by *Sakhīs*.

³¹ *Eṭuvanti Mohomo* by Annamācārya

³² Here Poet is talking about *Gajendra Mōkṣa* story

³³ Kylash, *The Nāyikās of Annamācārya An Interpretation for Dance*, 285.

³⁴ This situation of *Nāyikā* is explained in *Śṛṅgāramañjarī*, this is also one type of *Vañcanā*.

³⁵ Rajanikanta B. Rao, *Muvvagopala Padavali*, 108.

One of the *Antahpura gīte* written by the Kannada poet D.V.G³⁶ *Yaduvamśa Tilakana Vēṣavidēne*³⁷, exhibits *Parihāsa* along with *Āśāyaprasna*. Lovelorn *Nāyikā* dresses herself like her beloved Kṛṣṇa and forgets herself. When her friends see her with such attire, they tease her. What is this attire! Oh *Madirākṣi*, what is this flute music? Are you remembering the rejoice of love battle (*Smara sambhramānanda*).³⁸

In Purandara Dāsa's *Kīrtanam*, *Kṣīrābdhi Kaanike Śrī Mahālakṣmi*, *Sakhīs* will make fun of goddess Lakṣmi (who is born in milky ocean), whom you want to marry. Do you want to marry Śrī Rāma or Padumanābha? Oh you want Mādhavarāya? Is that Udupi Kṛṣṇa? Or do you want the thousand named Purandara Viṭhala? This way *Sakhīs* will utter many names of the same hero and makes fun of *Nāyikā*.

1.5.6 *Mānāpanoda* (Removing Pride/Removing anger, *Māna-apanōda*)

Sakhī shouts at her friend who scolded Muvvagōpāla. She also tries to remove the pride from *Nāyikā*'s mind. *Sakhī* says, "How dare you scold your Lord Muvvagōpāla!³⁹ Blasted be your anger O proud woman! Even without looking face to face with your lover (*Nīkopamu kollapōvaddā? Mōmu jūḍaka yiṭlu Muvva Gōpāluni*)! Would he come without an invite, would he talk with pride? Does he deny attachment? Is he known to be a minister? Is he capable of anger? So many times when all around without containing youthful pride, How dare you scold your Lord Muvvagōpāla!"⁴⁰

1.5.7 *Mānopadeśa* (To advocate self-respect, *Māna-Upadēśa*)

Sakhī advices *Nāyikā* whose *Nāyaka* has many affairs: "Why are you letting other ladies to enjoy your husband? You should only control him by either harsh words or by love."⁴¹

³⁶ Devanahalli Venkataramanaiah Gundappa

³⁷ Devanahalli Venkataramanaiah Gundappa, *Antahpura Gīte* (Kavyalaya, Jayanagar, Mysore 570014, n.d.), 60.

³⁸ The sculpture is called as *Muralīdhare*. This song is in *Yadukula Kāmbhoji Rāga*.

³⁹ *Ēmani Dūritivē*, Tōḍi (Rāga)

⁴⁰ Rajanikanta B. Rao, *Muvvagopala Padavali*, 268.

⁴¹ B.R Suhas, *Amaruka Kaviya Amaruka Shataka*, First Edition, Sringerakavya malike - 2 2 (Sadhana Prakashana, 2011), 6.

Sakhī teaching *Mugdhā Nāyikā* how to get angry: “Oh innocent girl. Why are you decided to spend your entire life with this innocence? Do get angry sometimes. *Nāyikā* says, speak slowly. My hero residing in my heart might hear.”⁴²

A very good example for the combination of *Śikṣā* and *Mānopadeśa* found in the epic *Rāmāyana*. The *Śikṣā* what *Mantarā* gave to *kaikeyī* is the root cause for the entire *Rāmāyana*. Being *Dāsī*, a maid servant of *Kaikeyī*, she reminds *Kaikeyī* the boons *Daśaratha* had promised. Then she advocates her the importance of sending *Śrī Rāma* to forest and give the kingdom to *Bharata*. Also, she teaches *Kaikeyī* the sequences she need to carry in order to make *Daśaratha* obey her, going to *Kōpāgrha*, reminding about the boons, then asking for the two boons.

Mantarā is *Pūrvajā*^{43 44 45} an elder friend, *Antabartinī* (One enjoys Heroine’s confidence and knows her innermost secrets), *Vidagdā* (shrewd woman who accomplishes her end by the use of suggestive speech), *Hitakārinī* (One who has always in her mind, the good of the heroine)⁴⁶, *Nāyikāhita*⁴⁷ (Benefactor of the heroine),. Hence, there are many types of *Sakhīs* in a single character *Mantarā*.

Since *Rāmāyana* is also presented in most of the dance dramas, example of *Mantarā* is presented here.

1.5.8 *Āśāya-praśna* (Listening to and questioning her feelings)

Nāyikā asks *Sakhī* about the various feelings that arise in her heart about the *Nāyaka*. Sometimes she will be praising good qualities of *Nāyaka*, sharing the innermost secrets about their *Sambhōga*.

⁴² Ibid., 53.

⁴³ In Bhoja’s *Sarasvatī-Kaṇṭhābharaṇa*, three fold classification of *Sakhī* is given: *Sahajā* (natural / an equal aged friend), *Pūrvajā* (of old relationship / an elder friend) , *Āgantu* (stranger / an Occasional friend)

⁴⁴ Gupta, *Studies in Nāyaka-Nāyikā Bhēda*.

⁴⁵ Raghavan, *Śṛṅgāra-Mañjarī of Saint Akbar Shah*.

⁴⁶ These 3 definitions from Toṣa in his *Sudhānidhi*

⁴⁷ As given in *Śṛṅgāra-Nirṇaya* of Dāsa

Annamācārya's *Padam Tānenta nēnenta* showcases *Svīya Uttamā Nāyikā* beautifully. The *Nāyikā* says, "What is his caliber, what am I in comparison dear friends! Listen carefully to all that he does, to make me feel special. He is a man of great beauty and gentle speech. With great affection, he honors me. He is always so conducive to me, am I really such a righteous person?"⁴⁸ *Nāyikā* is very happy for the love shown by her beloved and shares it with her friends.

Nāyikā will also explain *Sakhī* about her *Sambhōga* with *Nāyaka* as⁴⁹, "O my dear maid! Idly have I been lying down! I do not know which lucky woman has poisoned his mind; but, Muvvagōpāla does not deign to talk, he being there and I here; so near, so far! Out of habit however, my beloved though in anger for a while has after all turned towards me, perhaps having been absent-minded in sleep, has uttered something sweet and embraced me; then myself with grace, took my chance and united myself with the lord of Muvvapuri, then we both laughed away to hearts content loving each other."⁵⁰

Nāyikā asks her *Sakhī*,⁵¹ "Alas! Oh my dear friend! What shall I do? Has he forgotten the time we spent on the beautiful coach? Has he forgotten how he decorated my tresses with fragrant jasmine flowers? Oh *Naḷinākṣi*! Please tell him about my unabated pining for him. Oh *ḷataḷiroḷigātri* – having a body like tender leaf, do not take my words lightly and delay any more".⁵² Here *Nāyikā* remembers the good time spent with *Nāyaka* and shares her extreme pain with her friend.

There are few *Varnams* such as *Kāntana Kānade Nānati Brāntaḷāgihe*^{53 54}, *Moga Māginen*^{55 56}, where *Sakhī* will be sharing her agony without seeing *Nāyaka*. It is not elaborated since the context of the *Varnam* is already covered in the above examples.

1.5.9 *Virahāśvāsa* (Consoling)

⁴⁸ Kylash, *The Nāyikās of Annamāchārya An Interpretation for Dance*, 126.

⁴⁹ *Lēmārō!*, *Kēdāragauḷa (Rāga)*, Kṣetraraya

⁵⁰ Rajanikanta B. Rao, *Muvvagopala Padavali*, 53.

⁵¹ *Ayyayyō! Kintu Ceyyāvū? Padam, Maṇipravāḷa (Language)*, *Nāthanāmakriya (Rāga)*, Śrī Swāti Tirunāl

⁵² T. K Govinda Rao, *Compositions of Maharaja Sri Swathi Tirunal*, First Edition, Music Series VI, VI (Ganamandir Publications Indiranagar, Chennai - 600 020, n.d.), 76.

⁵³ It is Kannada *Varnam* composed by Mysore N Chennakēśavayya, *Mukāri (Rāga)*, *Caturaśra Triputa (Tāla)*

⁵⁴ Goruru R. Shrimati, *Nruthya Sangeeta Deepika*, First Edition (Bharati Prakashana Mysore, 2008), 103.

⁵⁵ It is Tamizh *Varnam* composed by Dandāyudha Pāni Pillai, *Karahara Priya (Rāga)*, *Ādi (Tāla)*,

⁵⁶ Shrimati, *Nruthya Sangeeta Deepika*, 190.

Sakhī tries to console *Nāyikā* ⁵⁷, “As many times as he is angered, does all that not mean love for you Oh frail one (*Nelatā ataḍu aligēdella nenarugāda ṭāvē? Vela vela bōnēla mōmu, celuvunitōḍi teccedanē*)? Why should you lose your hope, I shall bring your beloved here, Tears rolling down your eyes tinted with collyrium, spread through the deep blue canopy of your hair. Strengthen your mind O woman and lay your faith in my word; Don’t be angry, have patience, Oh frail one, be on the winning side”! ⁵⁸

Sakhī consoles *Nāyikā* ⁵⁹, “Oh *Sumukhi*! You are in such a situation that your longing has made you to be in the dark even though the sun has risen! Your beloved was far away for a long time, since he has come home brimming with joy, Aho! Since you are affected by the arrow of Cupid and your beautiful sandal smeared bosom is held in tight embrace by your husband. The youthful enchanting speech of your husband, excels all the sweetest talks that filled the ears earlier. Oh *Varatanu* – having a charming form! You are suffering from the desirous emotion! Śrī padmanābha will come soon to fulfil it”. ⁶⁰ *Sakhī* also explains the distressed state of *Nāyikā* and tells the hero will come soon.

1.5.10 *Kandukakeli* (Games with ball)

There is a *Tirukkurrālak Kuravañji* by Tirukkūḍarāsappak Kavirāyar, where *Nāyikā* is playing ball with her friends. The poet says Vasanta sundari is playing with ball with her friends which is amazing (*Pandaḍittanaḷe Vasanta Sundari Vindiyāgavē*). He says she is singing and dancing with her friends (*Sonnayattinai nāḍi nādit, tōḷiya ruḍan kūdi kūdi, nannagartini kūḍam pādi, Nakurtat dikurtat takurtat tommenap*)⁶¹.

1.5.11 *Jalakrīḍā* (Sports with water)

⁵⁷ *Nelatā! Ataḍu*, Toḍi(Rāga), Kṣetraraya

⁵⁸ Rajanikanta B. Rao, *Muvvagopala Padavali*, 261.

⁵⁹ *Sumukhi Ninnuḷt Tāpam, Padam, Maṇipravāḷa* (Language), *Saindhavi (Rāga)*

⁶⁰ Rao, *Compositions of Maharaja Sri Swathi Tirunal*, 199.

⁶¹ Puliyūrk Kēsikan, ed., *Tirukkurrālak Kuravañji* (Pāri Nilaiyam Chennai, 2005), 47–48.

There is a beautiful explanation of *Jalakrīḍa* (sports in water) in Kanaka Dāsa's work *Mōhanataranginī*⁶². Kṛṣṇa will play *Jalakrīḍa* with Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāma and beautiful *Gōpikā* women.

Gōpikās who came to play *Jalakrīḍa* can also be imagined that, they were *Sakhīs* of Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāma. In one stanza, Krishna says, "Oh Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāma! please wait" and he takes the golden pots from the beautiful maids and pour it on Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāma's head so that their breasts will be drenched⁶³. Here the *Sakhī* looks like more of *Dāsi* type.

Later, Kṛṣṇa suggests Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāma to share the charming women among their selves and start playing (*Hancikonḍu irvarū ōkuḷi āḍirendu prapancisi pēḷda Kamalākṣa*). Then Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāma will choose the ones whom they feel comfortable and fit to be in their team. Thus, the game will continue between these two teams.

1.5.12 *Sakhī* as *Dūtī* (The Messenger)

Nāyikā speaking to *Dūtī*:

Nāyikā who fought with hero by listening to others, regrets for it and requests to *Dūtī*⁶⁴ to get back him, "My anger has brought upon me all this misery, O bright-faced-one, since the women around me have been carrying tales against him! Young woman, whatever pranks, Venkaṭeśa who is Muvvagōpāla performed during the sports of love with me haunt my memory now and boil my body; fate has wreaked vengeance upon me; the languor is uncomfortable; Why don't you bring him home?"⁶⁵

⁶² Prof. Sudhākara (last), *Kanaka Dāsara Kāvya Bhāga – 2 Mōhanataranginī (Gadyānuvādadondige)*, 223.

⁶³ *Ele Rukmiṇī Satyabhāme nillenuṭa kō
maleyara kaiyya hongoḍana
gilubikonḍure mastakadalli suridanu
mole muḍigaḷu toyva teradi*

⁶⁴ *Nākōpamē nanninta, Saindhavi (Rāga)*

⁶⁵ Rajanikanta B. Rao, *Muvvagopala Padavali*, 115.

Nāyikā who was eagerly waiting for *Dūtī*'s arrival, when she returns from the hero asks her⁶⁶, “What did he say, O golden doll, what nice things did he say? What did he say? Why this secrecy? Don't conceal dear! Fair one, what did the chief of *Tupakula* family say to you? O proud one, did you take the first chance to broach my topic during your talk; or did he raise it himself, being very kind to me; did he hold in his hand, any gift to be passed to me; please tell me friend I swear by my word!”⁶⁷

***Dūtī* to *Nāyaka*:**

Dūtī will tell the *Nāyikā* who was irritated by *Nāyikā*, since *Nāyikā* will be always fighting with him. *Dūtī* says, “She will not knowingly argue with you anymore! Enough! Enough! There is no doubt (*Manasāpi bata kayatttīdumō ninnil mati mati killēvam*). Oh *Pankajanābha*! The charming form that equals the lotus! Your beloved is affected by the arrow of Cupid and is in misery. Can the bee which has always delighted having abundant sweet nectar, ever lose its affinity to the lotus? Unite with the radiating golden creeper and make her happy who has pledged herself to you”.^{68 69}

Conclusion

In dance, *Sakhī* is a very important character as far as the *Abhinaya* items are considered. She plays the role of a *Guru* in the *Nāyaka-Nāyikā* relationship. There are many dance items such as *Padams*, *Varṇams*, *Jāvaḷis* where *Sakhī* is the one who is talking. She will be speaking to the hero or the heroine most of the times. There are quite a huge number of compositions where *Sakhī* is in passive voice, the hero or the heroine are expressing their feelings to *Sakhī*. Even though *Sakhī* can be a *Dūtī*, *Sakhī* and *Dūtī* are two different personalities which are often misinterpreted and considered as same.

⁶⁶ *Ēmanenē Suddulēmē? Nādanāmakriya (Rāga)*

⁶⁷ Rajanikanta B. Rao, *Muvvagopala Padavali*, 146.

⁶⁸ Rao, *Compositions of Maharaja Sri Swathi Tirunal*, 182.

⁶⁹ *Manasāpi Bata, Padam, Maṇipravāḷa (Language), Māḷavaśrī (Rāga)*

While presenting any dance compositions, it is normal tendency to focus on the type of *Nāyikā* and *Nāyaka*. The categorization of *Sakhī* and the duties performed by her are often not noticed. A detailed study on *Sakhī* might help in choreographing the dance items better way. For example, in the *Saṅcāri Bhāva* of *Vāsakasajjitā Nāyikā*, it is more common that the heroine will be wearing ornaments, decorating the bed etc. If there is an addition of a *Sakhī*, who will be teasing *Nāyikā*, who will be suggesting the ornaments which will look good on *Nāyikā*, it can add colours to the choreography. If the *Nāyikā* is *Mugdhā*, she can ask her *Sakhī* who is *Pūrvajā* to adorn her. This also might improve the beauty of choreography.

There are huge number of compositions where *Virahōtkanṭita/Kalahāntarika Nāyikā* will be expressing her extreme sorrow with the *Sakhī*. Instead of only heroine expressing the feelings throughout the dance; In *Saṅcāri Bhāva*, the *Sakhī* performing *Virahāśvāsa* (Consoling during separation) can be presented. This also might add the different flavour to the choreography.

Thus, it can be concluded that understanding a *Sakhī* and her duties is essential for every dancer especially the choreographers.

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Appendix

Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka Vs Daśarūpaka

Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka
Dāsī (a maid servant)
Natī (an actress)
Dhātrī (a foster-mother)
Prātiveśyā (a neighbor)
Śilpinī (a female artist)
Bālā (a maiden)
Prativrajitā (a female ascetic)
Kāru (a working-woman)

Daśarūpaka
Dāsī (a maid servant)
Dhātreyī (foster mother's daughter)
Pratīveśikā (a neighbor)
Śilpinī (a female artist)
Dūtī (a messenger)
Kāru (a working woman)
Sakhī (a friend)
Liṅginī (makeup artist)

Śṛṅgāra-mañjarī

By considering *Rasamañjarī* and the Āmoda's definitions

Adorn (*Maṇḍana*)

Censure (*Upā lambha*)

Coaching (*Śikṣā*)

Making fun (*Parihāsa*)

Eulogy (*Praśamsā*)

Diversion (*Vinoda*)

Removing Māna (*Mānāpanoda*)

Inculcating Māna (*Manopadeśa*)

Enquiry about her mind (*Āśayapraśna*)

Consoling during separation (*Virahāśvāsa*)

Sport in forest and water (*Vanavihāra* and *Jalakrīdā*)

Sport on swing (*Dolākelī*)

Games with dolls and balls (*Pāñcalakeli* and *Kanduka*)

The games of wheeling round (*Bhramaṇa*)

Blind-folding and dice (*Nayana-nimīlana* and *Dyūta-keli*)

Drinking (*madhupāna*)

The author of Śṛṅgāramañjarī adds following extra duties to *Sakhī*

Deceiving (for fun) (*Vañcanakelī*)

Circular dance (*Hallīsaka*)

Picking flowers (*Puṣpācaya*)

Spring sports (*Vasantakelī*)

Duties of Sakhī

Śṛṅgāra-Tilaka

Maṇḍana

Upā lambha

Śikṣā

Vinoda

Virahāśvāsa

Prasādana (to pacify, to appease)

Saṅgama (to unite)

Bhānudatta's *Rasa-mañjarī*

Maṇḍana

***Rasa-Vilāsa* of Dēva**

Guṇa-Kathana

Rasa-upajāibau

Parasparadikhāvana

Viraha-nivedana

Sandesha-kathana

Dūtī