



ISJS NEWSLETTER

Vol#07 | Issue#11 | No.02 | November 2024

Speak Up

BAHULAM AND SYĀDVĀDA - SOME SIMILARITIES

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Ācārya Hemacandra (1088-1172 CE) was a great *ācārya* in Jain tradition. His contribution to grammar is very significant. His work *Siddha-hema-śabdānuśāsana*, consisting of eight chapters deals with grammar of Sanskrit, Prakrit as well as Apabhramsa. He has written an auto-commentary also on this text. Its first seven chapters are devoted to Sanskrit grammar while eighth chapter is devoted to Prakrit and Apabhramsa. He discusses the concept of *bahulam* in the second sūtra of the first section of the eighth chapter (8.1.2) and its commentary. This sutra is an *adhikāra-sūtra* (authority rule), which applies to the whole text i.e. from 8.1.2 to 8.4.447.

The meaning of the word *bahulam* in the sūtra is the tendency of 'irregularity'. In the commentary of the same sūtra, the following points are discussed:

- Meaning of the word *bahulam*
- Concept of *pravṛtti*, (application), *apravṛtti* (non-application) *vibhāsā* (optional) and *anyat eva* (becoming something else)
- Besides these four tendencies of a sutra, the text mentions *yathāsthānam* (usage) which supersedes all the four
- *Ārṣa* (speech of sages) has tendency of *bahulam*.

Thus, grammatical rules may be viewed from five angles. On the other hand, in Jain epistemology *syādvāda* (doctrine of relativism) occupies a prominent place. According to this, following points are to be understood:

- *syād asti* i.e. in some ways 'it is'
- *syād nāsti* i.e. in some ways 'it is not'



- *syād asti - nāsti* i.e. in some ways ‘it is and it is not’
- *syād-avaktavya* i.e. in some ways ‘it is indescribable’
- *syād asti avaktavya* i.e. in some ways ‘it is and it is indescribable’
- *syād nāsti avaktavya* i.e. in some ways ‘it is not and it is indescribable’
- *syād asti - nāsti avaktavya* i.e. in some ways ‘it is, it is not and it is indescribable’.

Through the interpretation of the word *bahulam*, one knows that ‘irregularities’ will be taking place in the above-mentioned text. Ācārya Hemacandra mentions in his work, "all the rules, discussions on consonants, vowels, conjuncts, declensions, etc discussed in various chapters and with the help of different sūtras, he introduced the tendencies. These tendencies begin with the 8.1.2 sūtra till the end of the text.

Tendencies of ‘irregularity’ are expressed through:

- (a) *pravṛtti* - rules being applied
- (b) *apravṛtti* - rules not being applied
- (a) *vibhāṣā* - rules applied optionally present optionally applied i.e. rules are optionally present and as used in the literature.
- (b) *anyat eva* i.e. it becomes something else (not prescribed by rules).

In short, four tendencies are:

1. Rules are applied
2. Rules are not applied
3. Rules are applied optionally
4. Rules wherein the words become something else.
5. Mention of *yathādarśannam* means as the word is being used by the common people as per their convenience, source being available literature.

In the above background, one may observe the similarities between the concept of *bahulam* and *syādvāda*. These may be shown in the following table:



	Bahulam	Syādvāda
1	Rules are applied (<i>pravṛtti</i>)	<i>syād asti</i>
2	Rules are not applied (<i>apravṛtti</i>)	<i>syād nāsti</i>
3	Rules are applied "optionally" (<i>vibhāsā</i>)	<i>syād asti-nāsti</i>
4	<i>Anyat eva</i> where the operation results in other than the above three word becomes "something else"	<i>syād avaktavya</i>
5	<i>Yathadarśanam</i> (usages) and <i>bahulam</i> (irregular tendencies)	combined - may be understood <i>syād asti avaktavya</i> , <i>syād nāsti avaktavya</i> & <i>syād asti-nāsti avaktavya</i>

In the end, one may find the following argument in favour of the similarities between *syādvāda* and *bahulam*:

- If there are irregular tendencies in the text *Siddha-hema-śabdānuśāsana*, then there are similarities between the concept of *bahulam* and *syādvāda*.
- There are irregular tendencies introduced by Ācārya Hemacandra via the introduction of the concept *bahulam*.
- Therefore, one may find that there are similarities between the concept of *bahulam* and *syādvāda*.

Consequently, one may ponder upon and investigate further on the topic through more serious research and study. This will really help in the following research areas –

- Philosophy of Language in Jainism with reference to text *Siddha-hema-śabdānuśāsana*.
- Appropriate epistemological study in the context of both concepts *bahulam* and *syādvāda*.
