

## **Airāvata in Sanskrit Literature – Religious and Socio-Cultural Perspective**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Literature of any language is closely connected with nature as well as social culture of the established society. Elephant, a common, popular and powerful animal is widely taken care of in Sanskrit literature. It has been given different epithets, viz. Gaja, Mātāṅga, Kunjar, Airāvata etc. Most of these epithets are either attributed to it due to its functional or physical characteristics.

Airāvata in Sanskrit literature is a Mythological figure. It also has religious and socio-cultural aspects. It was a son of the Irāvati and was mount of Lord Indra. It was having four or five tusks and was symbolic in nature. It was regarded as the guardian of the directions. Airāvata was always very powerful and prominent in nature and conferred upon the title of the King of elephants.

### **Data sources and analytical approaches**

This presentation is based upon different literary sources like Mahabhārata, different Paurānic texts and other Sanskrit Classical Literature.

### **Aim of the Presentation**

In this paper the attempt will be made to show the early occurrences of Airāvata elephant and its connection to mythology, symbolism, culture and the society.

**Keywords-** *Airāvata, One of the epithets of elephant, Mythological figure, Powerful and King of elephants, Mount of Lord Indra,*

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