

variety of problems of identification. Following are some of the problems associated with an attempt of the correct identification:

Names of certain animals could be easily identified such as *Hasti*, *Simha* and *Aśva* because the name in the same form or similar form continues to denote a particular animal in Sanskrit or modern languages of the Indo-European family in India. Thus there is no problem of identification assuming that the meaning of the words has not completely changed over time.

It is possible to identify a name with an animal, but it means one animal in one context and another in some other context. e.g. *Kukkūṭa* denotes 'cock' in Purāṇic literature, but sometimes it means only a 'jungle fowl', since the word '*grāmakukkūṭa*' has been used to denote the domestic (village cock) fowl. Similarly, pigs have been denoted by word-'*grāmaśukara*', thus making the identification of '*śūkara*' as wild boar by induction.

Although in a number of cases, a clear distinction has been made in case of different sexes, it is not necessarily true in all contexts. For example, in the *Ṛgveda*, male and female of cattle have been clearly mentioned separately such as '*Go*' meaning cow and '*Vṛṣa*' meaning an ox or a bull (Prakash 1987). But in the literature of later period often there is no mention of sex and it is implied that *go* means cows only. Also for wild animal like spotted deer, female is clearly mentioned apart from male counterpart.

A good number of animals have been referred by more than one name such as cow and elephant (*Hasti* and *Gaja*). For instance, there are atleast three words for a cow. *Go*, '*Dhenu*' and '*Anaduh*' all denote a cow. However, the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* allows *Dhenu* and *Anaduha* to be killed, but prohibits '*go*' (Benerjee, 1962). This leads to the obvious conclusion that *Dhenu*, *Anaduha* and *go* are names for cow (possibly *Dhenu* indicates a 'milch' cow), but the distinctions are not absolutely clear among these three terms, because they may not be exclusive terms at all. In such case, the identification given by authors has been used for drawing inferences.

An interesting example of rhinoceros in ancient texts demonstrates how the reference to this animal has changed over time. Subsequently, for later textual data, like those of Purāṇas, one has to assume that both words mean the same thing. For instance, rhinoceros—the massive animal of unmistakable identity was called as '*parasvat*' in the *Ṛgveda*

(X. 86.18) according to Luders (1973). Rhinoceros has also been mentioned by other names, viz. *Khadga* in the *Yajurveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. But in the *Yajurveda* *sāṁhitā* *Parasvat* is also mentioned along with *Khadga* (Bautze, 1985). It has been suggested that the word *Khadga* itself may not be of Sanskrit origin (Mayrhofer, 1953 quoted by Bautze, 1985), but this hardly throws any light on the usage of the term. The rhinoceros is mentioned in Epics and Purāṇas as *Khadga*, but the term also means a sword and so at several places, the Purāṇas mention the word *Gangda* to explicitly denote a rhinoceros. However, it is necessary to note that the word *parasvat* (as *palasata*) was being used commonly in Buddhist and Jaina literature in pre-Gupta age. Interestingly, Hemachandra-the Jain author mentions four names used for rhinoceros, i.e. *Khadgi*, *Vadhrtinasah*, *Khadgo* and *Gandko* in his *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* (Bautze, 1985). This example illustrates the various problems associated with identification of an animal based on textual data, if the usage of certain words has undergone changes over time.

In some cases, one term has denoted more than one animals or a group of animals. For example, the word '*Raktatunda*' (which literary means—red beak) may be referring to a group of birds with red beaks rather than one particular bird. Also, a term *Mrga* has been used very often to denote forest animals rather than just meaning a deer. But, *mrga* has also been freely used to denote deer and more particularly a spotted deer.

Some of the names mentioned in the ancient texts are not decipherable, or they could not be identified with certainty. A variety of fish and birds could not be identified. It is possible that they have ceased to exist (became extinct) from India over the centuries and so one does not find their forms in modern Indian languages. Also it is possible that over the long period of time, the terms themselves were discontinued from use and instead replaced by some other term to indicate the animal (which now is not possible to identify anymore). In case of birds, there is likelihood that some birds were migratory in India and those being unique have not been commonly known in modern Indian languages.

A special problem associated with an animal (?) called '*Puruṣa*' needs further explanation. *Puruṣa* literary means 'man' and this word occurs in the context of *Puruṣamedha* and in the list of animals found in forest. Some scholars have tried to hold the former meaning and have demonstrated that it was a practice of human sacrifice (*medha* meaning sacrificial killing). If this view is accepted, then *Puruṣa* has to be omitted from the discussion of animals. However, several other scholars like Kane (1974) did not treat this name indicative of a human being, but as wild