

SKEPTICISM OF NĀGĀRJUNA: REVISITED

**ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
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Skepticism generally refers to a position that casts doubt on some beliefs, systems or authenticity of knowledge claims. There is a long history of skepticism in both Western and Indian tradition. In Indian context though we do not directly get the terms skeptic or skepticism we come across the *vaitaṇḍikas* who resemble to some extent the skeptic of the west. Prof. B.K.Matilal termed the *Vaitaṇḍikas* as Indian Skeptics. In this particular work, Skepticism is taken in the sense of a position that questions all knowledge claims and withholds or suspends judgements concerning ultimate reality.

There is a debate in considering Nāgārjuna as a Skeptic but the Researcher has claimed in the Introduction of the work that Nāgārjuna is a Skeptic. Apart from Introduction and Conclusion, the thesis consists of five chapters. This research work is a humble attempt to revisit Skepticism of Nāgārjuna through interpretation of his works and thereby unveiling its nature. The researcher has also tried to reveal that Nāgārjuna's skepticism can be viewed as an alternative methodology in attaining Well-being. In this work, attempt has been made to find answers to these questions:

- How far is it justified to call Nāgārjuna a skeptic?
- What is the nature of Nāgārjuna's Skepticism?
- Was it possible for Nāgārjuna to uphold moral standpoints and pay homage to Buddha keeping his skeptical attitude intact?
- What is the goal of Nāgārjuna's skepticism? Is Nāgārjuna's Skepticism directed to well-being?
- Is there any similarity in Nāgārjuna's attitude and thought with other philosophers and thinkers?

Major works of Nāgārjuna like *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Pratītyasamutpādayakārikā*, *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa*,

Ratnāvalī, Suḥṛllekha, Dharmadhātustava, Lokātītastava and Paramārthastava have been studied in this context. The methodology followed in this work is mainly analytic and expository in nature. Here various issues related to Nāgārjuna's skeptical philosophy have been brought under a single umbrella.