

Abstract

While researching about Vaishnava religion at first one must take the name of eminent linguist Sukumar Sen, his work was advanced in the field by another scholar, Ramakanta Chakraborty. Following their footsteps, I have chosen my area of research. Before the advent of Chaitanyadev Vaishnavism did not expand nor did it achieve status of a revolution. For that reason, in my thesis, I kept Chaitanyadev and Vaishnavism in the same ground and analyzed it. I have mentioned the condition of the Bengali Hindus in pre Chaitanya time as well as their social and religious discriminations while describing the cause of Chaitanyadev's arrival and his works. In that time how religious narrowness created social distance from man to man has been mentioned in my research. While describing the cause of Chaitanyadev's arrival in the light of Vaishnava books it is said that he primarily came to earth to enjoy three types of *rasa*. The thesis has looked into a detail analysis of three types of *rasa*. Though, without enjoying *rasa*, spreading of 'Harinam' is another main reason of his arrival the first important work he did in this country after his arrival is the creation of a democratic atmosphere in religious and social sphere. His main aim was to bring all the lowcaste people to the same scale which has been described as 'Spiritual Democracy' by Kamil V. Zvlebil (The smile of Murugan) which has also been mentioned by scholar Ramakanta Chakraborty in his essay, *Madhya Kalin Bharate Bhakti O Santamat: Akti Samikha* which was published in 'ItihasAnusandhan, Volume 5'. Karl Marx in his writing said that Chaitanyadev was a true social reformer. Lawrence Crader's book *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx* has detailed description about it. Besides, the book *Ami Vivakananda Bolchi* by Shankar, claims that many words of Chaitanyadev has been followed by Vivekananda. How the works of Chaitanyadeva and moreover thoughts of Vaishnavism has influenced the social life of nineteenth century Bengal is the key theme of this thesis.

My thesis has tried to show how thoughts of Vaishnavism has influenced the writings of Rabindranath Tagore. Along with it a comparative discussion of the thoughts and advices of the fifteenth century eminent personality, Sri Chaitanyadev, and the nineteenth century eminent personality of Bengal, Sri Ramakrishnadev has been made. Influence of Vaishnavism on the nineteenth century education, especially on the education of women and music study, has been discussed. During the time when women of the family had seldom any chance to get out of the house, at that time how Vaishnava tried to educate them inside the house also has been described. The influence of Vaishnavism in the world of music education and the lack of 'Bhakti' of the *kirtan* singers and listeners of today's time has been analyzed. Along with it the *baul* community, their prayers and the relation between the *bauls* and Vaishnavas has been thoroughly searched here. The influence of Vaishnavism on folk literature, poetry, and the style of recitation has been shown. Besides, it also exposes the entry of Vaishnava thoughts in *jhumur* songs and its relationship with 'Rasik' and 'Nachni'. Some *jhumur* songs are so similar with *Vaishnava Padabali* that it is difficult to find any difference between them. Moreover, the present thoughts of *baul* and *kirtan* singers, reasons for entitling themselves as 'Das'; reason for mentioning the term 'Hari' in official documents and in temple curving has been discussed in this research along with the influence and relevance of Vaishnavism in the present time. This thesis includes the source of the use of *kirtan* in Hindu *raddha* ceremony and after anyone's death, the composition of Brahmasongs in imitation of *kirtan* and a few aspects of the composition of Shyama songs. Krishna-kali *puja* or Durgapuja of Goswami tradition of Hindu society is the result of Vaishnava influence and through such subjects the relevance of Vaishnava religion has been analysed.