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## Epic Heritage - In 'Kodava'

Dr. M. P. Rekha  
Associate Professor  
Department of Kannada  
Cauvery Degree College  
Gonikoppal  
Kodagu District

**Abstract :** Kodagu is the home of Kaveri, small district of Karnataka. It has acquired a distinct uniqueness on linguistic and cultural grounds. Kodagu's geographical environment, unique way of life and its own natural beauty have led to the recognition of this land as 'South Kashmir'. Even in the 21st century, Kodagu, which is experiencing lack of connectivity, is popularly known as the abode of tribals, the birthplace of warriors, and the land of beauty. Above all, Kodagu is the origin of Kaveri, which is famous as 'Dakshina Ganga'.

Kodava language is the mother tongue of 19 communities here. A language written using the Kannada script. The culture followed by all of them is 'Kodava culture'. Oral literature is also special among Kodava communities with a history of nearly two thousand long years. Mythology, legend, fairs, literature, dams and waterfalls can be found in connection with the 'Kaveri' river, which is the lifeblood of Kodagu. The people here, who have to live among the hills and thick forests, have the spirit of activity, physical fitness, bravery, prowess, adaptability. This mentality can also be seen in the literature produced here. Due to good nutrition and courage, it has been able to give the country a large number of soldiers, defenders and athletes.

**Key Facts :** Records of Kodagu's existence can be traced to mythological and historical sources. Mythologically, there is a reference to Kaveri, Kodagu, Kodava's in 'Kaveri Mahatme', a part of Skandapurana. Kittel identifies the reference to Kodagu as 'Kongar' in the Shilappadigaram. Prof. S. Shettar says that, the hero 'Nannan' has been mentioned more than twenty times in 'Sangankavya' with Kodagu region. Thus mythologically, historically In Kodagu, whose existence has been marked since the second century, literature was spread orally till the last decades of the 19th century. Later Kodava literature was written using Kannada script. Originally worshipers of nature, the Kodava communities belong to an agrarian heritage and much of their cultural and literary ideas are centered around the Kaveri and nature.

**Introduction :** Kodava literary history begins with the writing of four mythological dramas by the poet Haradasa Appaneravanda Appachcha Kavi around 1906. Later, literature in the form of poetry, story, harikatha and other forms started. Kannada, which was the administrative language, and the surrounding languages Kannada, Malayalam, and Tulu had a great influence on the Kodava language. Marriage songs of Kodava tradition, songs of festivals, songs on occasions of birth and death, composed at the level of ‘Balopat’, most of the Kodava folk literature introducing the cultural insights of Kodagu were collected and published in 1924 by Nadikeryanda Chinnappa under the name ‘Pattole palame’. It is also credited with being the first folklore collection of South India. Later, in 1928, Nadikeryanda Chinnappa compiled the Bhagavad Gita in the Kodava folk tune ‘Balopat’, and the poetic tradition in the Kodava language began. Simply translating eighteen chapters into Kodava stands above all other translations.

For example: In the first chapter, the part where Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya about the Kurukshetra war is as follows-

(Kodava) Kelo, Kelo, Sanjaya,  
Kurukshetra Paramb  
Dharmakshetra bhumiyo,  
Alli naada makkalu  
Pandavalu kuditu  
Poppak Poratavu

(English ) Listen, Listen, Sanjaya,  
In Kurukshetra land,  
Shrine land,  
With my children  
Pandavas also joined  
Decided to fight  
What did they do?

Poet Nagesh Kalur composed the Bhagavad Gita at Chowpadi in Kodava and published it under the title ‘Sri Bhagavad Gita Darshan’ in 2008. Composed in vernacular prose, this work has 2019 stanzas. This Khandakvya, which has been created to be adapted to the point of singing, is an adapted version of the Bhagavad Gita using the life, beliefs and customs of Kodava instead of a direct translation. The present work is composed in a very simple, easy and mature language style and is a good work in the Kodava poetry category. Its audio is also available.

Here are the reasons why Bhagavad Gita should be read today:

- (Kodava) Yelli Notnakalli Shantik  
 Bhanga bandit ind kalat  
 Manak Shantina tappa paatid  
 Odi Bhagavad Geetena
- (English) (Wherever we search for peace  
 Disturbance has come today  
 A song that gives us peace  
 Read Bhagavad Gita)

Most of the literary works created throughout the century have given a lot of emphasis on historical, natural and social ideas, but mythological and spiritual ideas have also found a place here and there. An example of this is 'Kodava Jayabharata' Mahabharata epic written and published by Mandira Jaya Appanna in 2011. Kodavizing the eighteen Parvas of Mahabharata and making the entire Mahabharata take place in Kodagu, 783 pages long, this work made the Mahabharata unique in the Kodava cultural world and clearly made a small step in the world of Indian epics. In a period of about 12 years, she has created a work with the help and co-operation of scholars so as not to be confused with the original Mahabharata.

**Findings :** Ramayana, Mahabharata epics in one form or the other in all the regional languages across the country have a place in the Kodava cultural world as well. The dark green 'V' shaped mark on the rice leaf, the symbol of the mucus thrown by Sita while crying, the wild orchid (Sita flower) seen on trees when Ravana abducted Sita in the pushpak vimaana, the belief is that each flower that fell when Ravana was carrying Sita away in the pushpak vimaana, was a flower plant that was thrown by Sita to mark the way for Rama. When Hanuman who went to bring Shivlinga for Rama's puja came back late, Rama made Shivalinga in the sand and worshiped it. Annoyed by this, Hanuman wrapped the mountain in his tail and started to roll it down. As a symbol of this, Hanuman's tail wrapped around the mark is still recognized by people on the hill ranges of Dakshina Kodagu (Western ghats).

Similarly, legends have created a closer relationship between Mahabharata and Kodagu. The Kodavas identify themselves as descendants of the Pandavas. It is said that the Pandavas hide all their weapons here in the Banyan tree when they were in hiding. Here is a place called 'Pandavapare'. Here is a stone known as 'Bhima's Stone' as it is the stone that Bhima got in his meal. Thus, 'Jayabharata' has succeeded in securing a very affectionate place among the Kodava speaking communities who see parts of Ramayana and Mahabharata as events of their hometown.

As stated by the poet herself, the whole poetry has been made a pro-women poem with Draupadi as the heroine in every case. For instance - the incident where 12 year old Kunti got Karna by chanting Surya Mantra, Durvasa Muni spoiled Kunti. How can the sun give birth to a child that sparkles in the evening? This was the beginning of a situation where Kunti was shaken by her mother's heart for the rest of her life. They tolerate the idea of exploitation of women. (p. 736)

In the middle of the epic poem, when sensitive events occur, they are depicted very delicately, and the magnificence of the human heart is depicted. For instance- the case of Shishupala slaughter. When Shishupala, who was arrogant and used to antagonize Lord Krishna, died, Lord Krishna's eyes trembled. Even though Shishupala is killed for his wickedness, Lord Krishna, the valiant hero remembers his mother's pain and weeps. Because Dhirodatta is harsh to the wicked, but tender to the afflicted. This is clarified by the poetess in Srikrishna.

When the Pandavas were in exile, Dharmaraya and the Bhimarjunadis were hunting in the forest and seeing the beautiful Draupadi leaning on a palm tree, Jayadratha (King of Indus, Pandava-Kaurava Brother-in-law, Dushyala's husband, Saindhava) who was enamored with her beautiful form, took her by the hand and carried her away in his chariot. On hearing the news, the Pandavas followed Saindhav. Scared, Saindhava left the chariot and started running in the forest. Nakula-Sahadeva left with Draupadi, while Bhimarjuna caught Jayadratha, beheaded him and brought him before Dharmaraya. After that, they shake him, drag him, shave his head, wrap a white cloth around his body and knock him down at Dharmaraya's feet and humiliate him in front of Draupadi.

**Conclusion :** With all 'Navarasa' is a true Kodava Mahabharata, which is a work of traditional Kodava wedding ceremony, cooking, dress-dressing and Kodava as per the regional and cultural situation of Kodagu. Goswami Tulsidas wrote 'Ramcharitamanasa' and 'Avadhi' language became popular among the people whose dialect is 'Avadhi' of 'Avadha' region. 'Kavyapryojana' is timeless. It is not limited by language. In today's world where human relations are being commercialized and humanity is disappearing, such poetry always does and needs to bring peace and happiness to the minds.