



The Poetical Analysis of Jayadeva's *Gīta Govinda*

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Abstract:

This research paper provides a comprehensive analysis of Jayadeva's *Gīta Govinda*, a lyrical composition in Sanskrit that describes the love between *Rādhā* and *Kṛṣṇa*. The paper explores the structure and themes of the poem, focusing on the use of various poetic devices and their effect on the reader. The research also delves into the historical and cultural context of the poem, highlighting its importance in the tradition of Indian classical poetry. Through close reading and critical analysis, the paper sheds light on the complex and multi-layered nature of the poem, and its significance in the study of Indian literature and culture. Ultimately, this paper aims to deepen our understanding of the *Gīta Govinda*, and its place in the rich and diverse landscape of Indian poetry. The Poetical Analysis of Jayadeva's *Gīta Govinda* examines the literary and poetic qualities of the renowned Indian poet Jayadeva's work, *Gīta Govinda*. The paper delves into the intricate metaphors, allusions, and symbolisms employed by Jayadeva in his compositions, highlighting their beauty and significance. The research also sheds light on the historical and cultural context in which Jayadeva wrote his poetry, providing a deeper understanding of his literary contributions. Through a thorough examination of Jayadeva's work, the paper provides valuable insights into the nature of Indian poetry and its rich cultural heritage.

Key words:

Jayadeva, Śrī Gītagovinda, poetic analysis, poetry, Sanskrit, Indian literature, devotional poetry, Hinduism, Vaishnavism, Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, love, emotions, imagery, symbolism.

Introduction:

The *Gīta Govinda* is a coherent Sanskrit *Kāvya* composed by Jayadeva in the 12th century in Orissa.¹ Poetry is the highest form of all arts.² In *Gīta Govinda* we not only come across refined poetry but also excellent musical compositions in different tunes (ragas) and *tālas* (beating in terms of time units). Regarding the poetic style of *Gīta Govinda* critics and historians of literature are found confused. As such Hassen considered the poem as a lyrical drama and Jones called it a pastoral drama. Levi regarded it as an opera and Pischel placed it in the category between song and drama. Schroder regarded it as a refined *yātrā*. Keith equates it with the festival plays in Bengal³ which resembles the rasa of Mathura, where the short story of *Kṛṣṇa līlā* is shown accompanied by song and music.⁴

Further, due to the division of *Gīta Govinda* in to cantos (*Sarga*), Keith pointed out that it has belonging to the generic type of *kāvya*.⁵ S.K. De observes that "as a creative work of art, it has a form of its own and it defined conventional classifications."⁶

The Present Observation:

Undoubtedly, the *Gīta Govinda* is an original piece of small Sanskrit poem of unique character which defies the traditional settings of *Khaṇḍakāvya* or *Laghukāvya* of the genre of *Meghaduta*. It does not confirm to *muktuka* type, since it has got a connected subject matter throughout. The poet Jayadeva, himself calls it a *prabandha*. (*etam karoti jayadeva kavi prabandham*).⁷ So far as the divisions of *sarga*'s or cantos are concerned, the design of a *mahākāvya* is found in it.

Some commentators and critics have also not hesitated to call it a mahakavya.⁸ It is divided into 12 cantos in which traditional verses in traditional metres are found intermingled with songs having different popular ragas or tunes to be sung by specific *tālas*, etc. The general description are found in metres like *vasantatilakā*, *Śragdhara*, *Śikharinī*, etc; whereas the portions depicting emotional and subtle feelings of human heart are mostly presented in popular ragas or tunes like *Malavagauda*, *Gujjarī*, *Rāmakeri*, *Vasanta* and so on.⁹

The Popularity of the *Gīta Govinda*:

Due to the popularity of the *Gīta Govinda* more than ninety commentaries and 132 imitations on this *Kāvya* have been recorded.¹⁰ Moreover, the songs of *Gīta Govinda* are enacted in many classical dance forms like the *oḍiśī*, the Manipuri, the *Bhāratanaṭyam* and so on.

In the worship of Lord Jagannātha a specially hand-coven silken cloth named *Gāta Govinda Khaṇḍuā* is offered to the deities in the great temple at Puri. The prayer songs of *Gīta Govinda* are chanted every night of ritual just before the deities go for asleep and attired in *baḍasimhāra veśa*. Regarding the chanting of the songs of the *Gīta Govinda* in the daily service of the deities, there is a definite proclamation of king Pratāparudradeva in the form of an inscription on the left side of the Jaya Vijaya door-way, written in Oriya language and script in A.D. 1499.¹¹

Rīti in *Gīta Govinda*:

Rītis are usually of four kinds in Sanskrit literature, they are *Vaidarbhī Gauḍī Pāñcālī* and *Lāṭī*. In *Gīta Govinda* Jayadeva makes use of *Vaidarbhī* and the *Gauḍī* styles. Verses like “*ganayati guna-gramam bhamam bhramadapi nehate*” or “*recaya kucayo patram citram kurusva kapolayor*” can be cited as examples of *Vaidarbhī* style, whereas “*unmilanmadhugundha lubdhamadhupavyadhutacutan kura*” etc. can be put forth as example of *Gauḍī*. But one thing more regarding style of Jayadeva is striking that besides these verses in traditional metres he has added twenty-four

But one thing more regarding style of Jayadeva is striking that besides these verses in traditional metres he has added twenty-four beautiful and melodious songs in different tunes or *rāgas* which can be cast in classical *oḍiśī* music. These ragas are *Mālava*, *Gursijari*, *Vasanta*, *Karnata* and so on keeping in view the sonorous and sweet dictions, the poet himself call his composition as “*madhura komala kāntapadāvati*”. For example –

“*candanacarcita-nilakalevara-pitavasana vanamāli /*

kelicalanmanikundalamanditaganda yugasmita sali /

haririha mugdhabadhunikare vilasini vilastic kelipare”¹²

Rīti depends on the qualities of words or *Guṇa* (both *śabda guṇa* and *Arthaguṇa*). Hence obviously for generating *Vaidarbhī* style all the *Guṇas* required to be present according to the ancient rhetoricians believe only *Mādhurya* type of *Guṇa* along with softer use of words give rise to the *Vaidarbhī* style. From the beginning to the end Jayadeva stands faithful to his declaration of composing the “*madhura-komata-kāntapadāvali*”....

The Alaṅkāras in Gīta Govinda:

As regards the use of *alaṅkāras* Jayadeva is a superb artist. There is almost in every verse and song the dancing effect of *Anuprāsa* touches the sense of the ears. May it be “ca” *kāra* in “*vagdevata caritaciritacittasadma*” or “Ma” *kāra* and “dha” *kāra* in “*unmilanmadhugandalubdha*” etc.¹⁵

Among the *Arthālaṅkāras Upamā, Rūpaka, Utpreksā, Kāvyaṅga, Viśeṣokti, Vyatireka, Dīpaka, Arthāntaranyāsa, Samuccaya, Anumāna, Bhrāntimān*, etc. are introduced. To cite just one example of *Bhrāntiman* shall be quite heartening to test one for the relish of the connoisseurs:

“*hr̥dibisalataharo nayam bhusangamanyakal
kuvalayadala'sreni kanthe na sa garaladyutih /
malayajarojao nedam bhasma priyarahite mayi
prahara na harabhrantyananga krdha kimudhavasi //*¹⁶

Musical Niceties in Gīta Govinda:

Jayadeva at the introduction of his *kāvya Gīta Govinda* informs his readers that he was going to compose a *prabandha kāvya*, *etam karoti jayadeva kaviḥ prabandham*).¹⁷

Prabandha is a variety of *Khaṇḍakāvya* at the same time *prabandha* is also a variety of musical piece. Since Jayadeva's *Gīta Govinda* abounds in a large number of songs and every song is titled as *Prabandhas*, viz -*Prabandha-I, Prabandha-II* etc. it is nearer to the *prabandha* song type of *kāvya*, rather than a *prabandha* in contrast to the *muktaka* variety. *Prabandha* has been defined in *Saṅgīta cuḍāmaṇi* as:

*caturbhidhatubhiḥ sadbhi'scangair yasmat prabadhyate /
tasmat prabandhah kathito//*¹⁸

The *prabandha* songs have several details and due to its importance *sārṅgadeva* has devoted a full chapter on the *prabandha* songs in his *saṅgīta-ratnākara*, an ex-haustive treatise on musicology. The musicological texts written in Orissa like the *Saṅgītakalpalatā, Saṅgītārṇavaçandrikā, Gītaprakāśa* etc. – all of them have cited examples from the *Gīta Govinda* in appreciation of its musical value.

Gīta Govinda influence on the regional Sanskrit and Oriya Literature:

Gīta Govinda, has widely exercised its influence on the later literature to such an extent that it can be felt from the Sanskrit authors like *Puruṣottama Deva, Divākara Miśra, Rāya Rāmānanda, Sitikānthakavi* and Oriya writers like *Abhimanyu Sāmanta Singhāra, Upendra Bhañja, Dīnakṛṣṇa Dās, Kavi Surya Baladeva Rath* : One and all have been sufficiently influenced by the memorable lines and songs of the model *Gīta Govinda*. That is why Orissa has developed a rich, profound and highly entertaining lyrical, musical as well as lyrico-dramatic literature of significantly commendable dimensions. Covering all the aesthetic aspects of *Gīta Govinda* shall constitute a voluminous work, therefore lack of scope in a single paper forbids us to delve deep and discuss extensively here at this instant.

Conclusion:-

In conclusion, the poetic analysis of Jayadeva's *Gīta Govinda* has revealed the depth and beauty of this ancient Indian masterpiece. Through a careful examination of the text, we have gained insight into the themes, symbols, and imagery that make the work a beloved piece of literature even today. The author's skillful use of language, rhythm, and meter creates a rich and evocative world that captures the essence of love, devotion, and the divine. The *Gīta Govinda*'s popularity and influence are evident in its widespread

adaptations and translations into various languages and artistic forms, from music and dance to visual arts and literature. Thus, this study not only sheds light on the artistry of Jayadeva but also highlights the enduring appeal and relevance of his work for generations to come.

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3. Obviously based on the erroneous belief that Jayadeva belonged to Bengal.
4. A.B. Keith, A History of Sanskrit Literature, p.191.
5. Ibid.
6. S.K. De; Indian studies past and present, p.647.
7. *Gīta Govinda*, I.2.
8. Ref. *Gīta Govinda* with Sarvāṅgasundarī and Śṛtiranjani, commentaries ed.B. Panda, Deptt. of Culture, Govt. of Orissa, Bhubaneswar, 1985.
9. In some editions of *Gīta Govinda* the forms or *svarūpa* of different ragas are also described. For, example, *mālava-rāga* is depicted as
*nitambini - cumbita – vaktrapadma sukadyutikundalavan pramatta/
saṅgītaśatam pravisan pradose maladharo malavaragaraja //*
Gg, Manamohan Press, Cuttack, no date, p.81.
10. See, Raghunatha Panda, Orissa's Contribution in Sanskrit Lyrics, Abhijeet publications, Delhi-94, pp.82-123; Suryamani Ratha, *Gīta Govindam* (ed) with *Rasikaraṅgadā* commentary; introduction; Banamali Rath, Imitations of the *Gīta Govinda*, Kalyani Prakasana, Berhampur.
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12. *Gīta Govindam* 1/38
13. *Chekānuprāsa*; 1.2, 5, 6, 10, 26, 27 etc.; *vṛtṭyānuprāsa*, 1.1, 2, 9, 12, 13, 15 etc; *Antyānuprāsa*; 1.5, 8, 39, 42 etc.
14. *Gīta Govindam* 3/1
15. *Ibid* 1/2
16. *Saṅgītacuḍāmaṇi*- 16

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