Abstract

*Bhakti* implies the sense of a personal relation with God, there is a surge of love and intense devotionalism. It is reaction of heart versus rigid intellectualism of Vedas. It involved ethical and emotional content.

*Bhakti* Movement of Medieval India was shaking the social structure and challenging the privileges and authority of the custodians of religion and was trying to establish direct relation between God and men.

This movement was undoubtedly an expression of the emotional aspect of Hinduism. It took inspiration from the ancient scriptures of the Hindus, but after its contact with Islam, particularly in Northern India, its character changed considerably. In the religious terminology *Bhakti* means the worship of a personal God and is a spirit of love and the attainment of liberation.

The earliest saints of *Bhakti* school belong to Tamil land, they were the follower of either Vishnu or Shiva and known as *Alvara* and *Nannya*. These saints composed their devotional songs in vernacular. They address the people without any discrimination of castes. They made an appeal to the hearts of the masses and became very popular.

Chapter one depicts the socio-political condition of Northern India during 15th and 16th centuries. Before the Turkish conquest of India politics and society of India was dominated by the Rajput and *Brahmins*, Turkish conquests brought their supremacy to an end. The Turkish deprived the *Brahmins* of their temple wealth and state patronage, so the *Brahmins* suffered both materially and ideologically.
Chapter two is devoted to the evolution and thought of Bhakti through the Religious Scriptures like The Bhagvada Gita, The Bhagavata Purana, The Bhakti Sutra of Narada and Shandilya, Saints of Vaishnava and Shaiva school of Bhakti and thoughts of Vaishnava acharyas. The evolution and early development of Bhakti thought and ideology, both Vaishnava and Shaiva, took place in South India and it was brought to Northern India in the medieval period.

Chapter three follows the transformation of Bhakti movement in Northern India. Here it spread out under the leadership of Ramananda, a Vaishnava saint and the reviver of Ramanandi sect. lays stress on the concept of equality. He removed the distinction of caste and accepted his disciples from the different strata of society.

Chapter four deals with the attitude of Bhakti saints towards the Bhakti theory. Several eminent saints from various parts laid emphasis on the unity of God and surrender to His will in order to attain salvation which is goal of human life. These saints provoked people to bring changes in their life and thoughts. These saints have two different aspects of Bhakti i.e. Nirguna Bhakti and Saguna Bhakti Both Nirguna and Saguna Bhakti saints believed in the unity of God, importance of a Satguru in the life of human beings and unreality of maya (illusion).

Chapter five focused on the short biography of the prominent Bhakti saints and Sufi saints of India who spread their valuable preaching in India and tried to remove the discrimination in society.
Chapter six and the last chapter of the thesis deals with the interaction of thought, personal contact and common teachings of the *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints of Northern India during 15\(^{th}\) and 16\(^{th}\) centuries. Both gave importance to the vernacular language and used as the medium of their preaching. Both *Bhakti* and *Sufi* saints were against the caste system and orthodoxy in society.

*Bhakti* saints preached universal toleration and brought about a revolution in the structure of Indian society. The main purpose of the *Bhakti* Movement was to unite Hindus and Muslims as there was a wide distance between them. So the result of *Bhakti* Movement was that the two great cultures came into close contact with each other and a healthy synthesis came about.