CHAPTER- I

1. Introduction

1.1. *Srikrishnakirtana*: On some preliminary observations Srikrishnakirtana is a ballad, composed by Baru Chandidas. There are profound touches of drama mingled with lyric throughout the text. In his preface of Srikrishnakirtana, Basantaranjan Roy Vidadvallava, the editor, wrote that Srikrishnakirtana is a dramatic ballad with a lyrical quality composed on *Gitagobinda* as its model.¹

The extant copy of the text when discovered found to be incomplete since some portions at the begining and at the end are missing, also there are gaps in between. We can see the story from birth of Krishna to his journey to Mathura, from Mathura to his return to Brindavan for a short period, then his reunion with Radha and again his journey back to Mathura to crush Kangsa and resultant lamentation of Radha. Then two subsequent text pages are missing.

Srikrishnakirtana is divided in 13 sections, i.e. *Janmakhaṇḍa*, *Tāmbulkhaṇḍa*, *Dānkhaṇḍa*, *Naukākhanda*, *Bhārkhaṇḍa*, *Chatrakhaṇḍa*, *Brindābanhaṇḍa*, *Kāliyadamankaṇḍa*, *Tāmunākhaṇḍa*, *Hārkhaṇḍa*, *Bānkhaṇḍa*, *Bamṣikhaṇḍa* and *Rādhābiraha* sections. The last section, i.e. Radhabiraha was not accompanied by the suffix *kaṇḍa*, hence some scholars surmise that this section might not have been composed by Baru Chandidas, otherwise this suffix would have been there. Moreover, the literary style and mode of description of Radhabiraha is also somewhat novel. In Janmakhaṇḍa the birth of Radha and Krishna in response to the prayers of gods and goddesses to free the world from abuses is elaborately dealt with. This includes birth of Bishnu as a son of Vasudeva, his transportation to the house of Nanda, birth of Laksmi in the house
of milkman Sagara through his wife Paduma as Radha etc. In Tambulkhanda, Krishna came to know of dazzling beauty of Radha, that prompted him to send her a betel leave signifying amorous message through Barai(বড়াই); which marks a prelude(পূর্বরাগ) of Krishna. Radha vehemently refused the garlanded betel leave sent by Krishna and Barai too was subjected to severe humiliation. In Dankhanda, Krishna, to seduce Radha, hatched a plan in collaboration of Barai, took the guise of a donor and damaged the dairy products of Radha and fulfilled his beastial love forcibly. In Naukakhanda, Krishna masquerading as a boatman engaged himself in transporting milkmaid from one bank of the river to the other, and in the midstream overturned the boat which facilitated dallying with Radha in water. This overture of Krishna mellowed down to a certain extent the resistance of Radha and her attachment for Krishna had its germination. In Bharkhanda, Krishna, in his bid to woo Radha, relieved her of the burden of carrying milk-products which he himself took over. In Chatrakhanda, a subsection of Bharkhanda, there is the description of Krishna’s gesture of love by holding umbrella on Radha’s head. In Brindabankhanda, we find in springtime, Krishna through sustained efforts placated the companions of Radha and ultimately could reach Radha but to his dismay Radha was found to be in a dejected mood. In Kaliyadamankhanda, a subsection of Yamunakakhanda, the supression of Kaliya, a snake demon, by Krishna is depicted. In Bastraharankhanda under Yamunakakhanda Krishna’s watersports with milkmaids (Gopi) and subsequent theft of their costumes by him is described. In Yamunakhnada Radha is shown to have visited Yasoda to complain against Krishna for stealing her necklace, for which shamedul act Krishna was admonished by Yasoda. In Bankhanda, it is shown that Krishna felt insulted because of Radha’s complaint for which he had to face Yasoda’s
wrath, and instigated by Barai released a magically oriented floral arrow targeted towards Radha. She became unconscious and ultimately Krishna with his healing touch, brought Radha back to senses. And there was the hint of a happy union. It can be safely asserted that this Dankhanda marked the turning point of Srikrishnakirtana Kavya. In **Bamsikhanda**, we find Radha’s anxiety on hearing the flute of Krishna, theft of the flute by Radha on Barai’s advice, return of the flute to Krishna in response to his fervent appeal and Radha’s explanation for the theft.

Radhabiraha, Pad No.41, P.130

In **Radhabiraha**, there is lamentation of dejected Radha

Radhabiraha, Pad no.63, P.155

Subsequent sequences are copulation between Radha and Krishna, Radha’s deep sleep following fulfilment of her desire, Krishna’s journey to Mathura for crushing Kangsa during this respite, and then we are confronted with some lost pages.

Whether the narrative ends with the separation of Radha and Krishna forming the concluding section no one can say for certain. According to the norms of traditional Indian poetics and aesthetics even if the content is full of gloom and desolation, there should always be a happy ending. Of course, in two great epics of ancient India, Ramayana and Mshabharata, this happy-ending is conspicuously absent. Baru Chandidas also was not always guided by strict injunctions of Indian literary acethetics. So, till some new materials of the text are discovered to provide
contrary evidence, we are to accept the fact that the narrative ends in a sad note of separation. In this context, the critic Layek Ali says, “প্রতিটির সমাপ্তি কিভাবে হয়েছিল তার জন্য। হয়েছে শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন মধ্যযুগের সাহিত্যের সহিত বিলোপ করিতে যা বিরহে সমাপ্ত। সংস্কৃত আধুনিকর নির্দেশ অনুসরণ করে নায়কের মিলন কবি ঘটতেনই। এমন ধারণা নাও করা যেতে পারে। সম্পূর্ণ পুথি আবিষ্কৃত হলে হয়েছে বোধ যে এই গ্রন্থের রাধাকৃষ্ণ প্রচেষ্টায় প্রথম সার্বভৌম স্তোত্রের।” Asit Kumar Bandyopadhyay also admits the fact that Badu Chandidas did not adhere to Indian norms of aesthetics.

As already mentioned, the suffix ‘Khanda’ is not used in Radhabiraha section and hence some scholars think it to be an interpolation Bimanbihari Mazumder in his ‘Sodas Satabdir Padabali Sahitya’ observes : “ইহার পূর্বে কাব্যের প্রারম্ভ অংশের ঘন বলা হয়েছে, কিন্তু ‘রাধাবিহরের বেলায় উত্তরে ঘন বলা হয় নাই। খুব সত্যবাদ এটি একটি অত্র কাব্য।”

Also according to Bimanbihari Mazumder, the language of Radhabiraha is comparatively by antiquated. He says : “ইহার ‘রাধিকা কাহরির সঙ্গে আছে’র মতন আধুনিক ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।” But a preliminary observation would reveal that the word কাহরি is not a later formation. And the absence of the suffix ‘khand’ does not necessarily detach this section from the earlier sections. It might be that in the last page of Radhabiraha, the word khanda was there but the page was lost. Moreover, the concluding verses of other sections are not exactly uniform. For example, ইতি জনমাণ্ডল সমাপ্তি ও ইতি তাম্রপরিক সমাপ্তি, কিন্তু ইতি দানবর্ণ সমাপ্তি, ইতি নৌকারণ সমাপ্তি, ইতি ভারণ সমাপ্তি etc. Thus if we accept this criteria then Janma and Tambulkhanda are to be separated from other sections.

If the structure of the text is analysed, it would appear that Sanskrit slokas were used in other sections as also in Radhabiraha. And the sloka used as the preamble of Radhabiraha actually retains the link between the former and Bamsikhanda."
the last verse of Bamsikhanda Radha told Krishna:

अजी त hardwood तैल तोर दसी

Bangsikhand, Pad No. 41, P-13

And in the first verse of Radhabiraha, Radha was telling Barai

दूता चिरकाल तैल ।

तंत्रा बनमाली नाइल

Radhabiraha, Pad No. -1, P. 131

In the very first verse of Radhabiraha, there is the reference of Tambulkhanda.

Also let us quote some verses where made of earlier episodes,

i)  

radhabiraha, Pad No.- 42 Pp. 146-147

ii)  

Radhabiraha, Pad. No. 45, P. 147 etc.

These references make it clear that Radhabiraha is not an interpolation.

However, there are some words of later formation such as “तोहाक (tohāk) p.143, 

बाङ्को (bancimo) P. 153, साध (sādh) P.60 etc. which prompted Paresh Chandra 

Mazumder to say: “श्रीकृष्णकीर्तिन पुस्तितेत हययते एकाधिक पालार अज्ञानित संज्ञाशं घटेछे, 

अथवा तत्ते हययते कबी या गायनन रचित किछु पद अनुप्रबोध्ह हययते, किबु कत्तो तत्संतुा स्वीकार करते 

हय, मूल पहुँचि प्राय अधिकांश रचनाई एकक कबिरई सृजि।” With regard to content,
development of character, idea and language etc., surely there is a spectacular uniformity in the whole poem.

According to content, one can identify these distinctive features of the text: 1) narration of events, 2) dramatic ups and downs and 3) lyrical beauty. Among these three, the dramatic feature is most prominent. There are only three characters in the story, Krishna, Radha and Barai and their statements and counter-statements occupy the major portion of the text. The poet manifests his deep knowledge of psychology in building his characters.

Radha had the complicated interplay of mind and body while responding to the overtures of Krishna. But in the character of Krishna we find exusive presence of carnal love and depiction of this love with valgar by the poet at times makes a reader blush and for these excesses many critics consider the narrative obscene. However, that does not minimise the liveliness of the characters.

Scholars are more or less unanimous that the story of the text has been adopted by the poet from old and new Puranas. In this respect, Sukumar Sen says: “শ্রীমদ্ভাগবতের সঙ্গে শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তনের কোন কাহিনীর স্পষ্ট সংযোগ নাই। কোন কোন কাহিনী বিকল্প পুরাণের অনুসারী।” He further remarks, “শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন চিত্রনীতিগতি ও গীতগোলাম ধরনের।” Another historian of Bengali literature, Asit Kumar Bandyopadhyay, observes, “জনীনকৃষ্ণ কর্ণীয় বৃহু চীড়াস পুরাণের দ্বারা বেশী প্রভাবিত হয়েছেন । এই অংশে ভাগবতের প্রভাবই প্রাত্ন ।” He also says, “গর্সংহিতায় দানকুটের বিস্তারিত কর্ণে আছে । ‘রক্ষাও পুরাণে’ ভারতের কর্ণে দেখা যায় ।” Some sentences and elements are sporadically taken from Geetgobinda also. As Amitrasundan Bhattacharya points out, “শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন গঠন নানা দিক হইতে জয়দেবের প্রভাব লক্ষ্য করা যায় ।” Jahnavi Kumar Chakravarti also clearly says, “বৃহু চীড়াসের কারণে কবি জয়দেবের গীতগোলামের প্রভাব প্রতাপ ও স্পষ্ট। পণ্ডিত বৃহু জয়দেবের কোন উল্লেখ করেন
Jahnavi Kumar Chakravarti provides us a number of instances in support of this contention. However we will simply deal with only one of them, that is with regard to the most famous slokas of the fifth cantos,

**Gitgobinda**

\[\text{রতিসুখসারে গততপ্যিপারে মননমনেহরেখেম} \]

\[\text{ন কূরু নিতয়মিনি গমনবিলমধনমৃদুর তঃ হাস্যম} \]

**Srikrishnakirtan**

\[\text{তোর রতি আশোয়ান্তে গেলা অভিশাপে} \]

\[\text{সকল শীর্ষ বেশ করী মনেহরে} \]

\[\text{না কর বিলম্ব রাখো করহ গমনে} \]

\[\text{তোমার শক্তিতে নু রাজাএ যতনে} \]

Though the poet adopted a number of elements from Gitgobinda as well as some other Pauranic texts, he was mainly guided by the traditional orally-transmitted ballads of rural Bengal which were deeply rooted in popular culture. In *Prakrita-Paingal* also there are glimpses of old folk tradition. We may cite one of Krishna cult. such verse together with its modern Bengali translation:

\[\text{অরে রে বাহি কাহ নব ছোড়ি} \]

\[\text{ভগমগ কুপতি প দেহি} \]

\[\text{তই ইথি নসরি সন্তার দেই} \]

\[\text{যে চাহিলি নো লেহি} \]

\[\text{অনুবাদ} \quad \text{হে কৃষ্ণ, তুমি ছেট নৌকা বাহিতেছে ; অহিরভঙ্গে চালনা করিয়া সঙ্গে ফেলিয়া না। এই নদী পার করিয়া দিয়া তুমি যাহা চাও তাহাই লও। অথবা স্বল্পক (আমাকিকে) এই নদী পার করিয়া দিয়া} \]

‘Jhumur’, a popular variety of folk song sung by the tribal people of frontier
Bengal, is also composed mainly with episodes centering around Radha and Krishna.15

The poet, in his narration, though at times glorifies Puranas through the dialogue of Krishna and Barai, but it can be stressed that the inner structure of the poem is totally developed on the basis of folk tradition prevalent in rural Bengal. Thus in the text we find a vivid picture of the contemporary life of rural Bengal. The poet shows his capability in mingling Pauranic and non-Pauranic rural ingredients in the frame of his poetic work. For example, in Pauranic Danlila, he interpolates Badai, which subsequently became a very popular theme in Bengali Yatra-plays. Even in the 18th-19th century, no yatra recital would have been popular, if the character of Barai was not there. Though primarily an intermediary, she makes transactions between Radha and Krishna easy and there was a genuine sense of affection that inspired her help the couple in their love affairs, which was not socially accepted.16 This diversified creativity accompanied by proper execution proves how great a poet Baru Chandidas is. Ramendrasundar Trivedi in the preface of Srikrishnakirtana says, "মত্তন ওঠা আছে, বিশেষতঃ তার গোলাপের অক্ষরের আক্ষরিক কালিতেছে। চীনের সাজাতি তার দূরব প্রতিকূল প্রতিকূল শুনাইয়ে গিয়েছেন।" Some of the scholars may not agree with this opinion as the mundane and at times crude depiction of love life is not in conformity with the refined taste of a modern reader. Of course, the following remark of Ramendrasundur may be accepted by all: "সেই দীর্ঘ নিকটে সকল তত্ত্বকথা ও শান্তকথা মিলাইয়া যায়।"18 This narrative poem of Baru Chandidas can really be regarded as the greatest original poetical text of the medieval Bengal literature.
Besides, from all accounts, it is imperative to recognise Srikrishnakirtana as the most valuable source maternal for identifying the growth of Bengali language and rhetoric. After Caryapada, Srikrishnakirtana is the second most valuable record of ancient Bengali text. Caryapada was written in the 10th-12th centuries, breaking away from shackles of Apabhramsa-Abahatta, and about three to four hundred years later Srikrishnakirtana was written to pronounce and proclaim the independence of the Bengali language along with its maturity. In other words, Srikrishnakirtana provides the link between Caryapada and Vaisnava Padavali and Manngal Kavyas of the 16th-17th century Bengali literature. Details of this linguistic aspects will be taken up later.

1.2. The discovery of the text and structural formulation (naming of the text)

In 1316 B.S. (1909 A.D.), Basantaranjan Roy Vīdvadvallav discovered some old handwritten manuscripts in village Kakilya near Vanbishnupur of Bankura district. These manuscripts in the collection of Devendranath Mukhapadhya, who was distantly related to Srinivas Acharya from the maternal side. In this stock, there was an impressive large text containing a long narrative poem depicting love of Krishna and Radha, which is the present Srikrishnakirtan. No second copy of this text has ever been discovered. In 1916, under the auspicious of Vangiya Sahitya Parishad the text was published, edited superbly by Basantaranjan. The name Srikrishnakirtana was coined by Basantaranjan. Since both the opening and concluding pages of the text are missing, no one knows what the actual name of the book was. There was a great uproar among the literary circles of Bengal when the book was first published. Precise contexts of the debate were its alleged obscenity,
period of composition, name of the poet and naming of the text.

Basantaranjan, while editing the book, thought the name Srikrishnakirtana quite befitting. In the preface of his edited version, he gave arguments for his decision: "पुर्बिक आस्तविशिष्ट खण्डितांश कविर देश कालान्तर कथा दूरे या गृह, पुर्बिक नाम परंपरा पाया याय नाइ। कविर हय, चत्तीदास ‘कृष्णकीर्ति’ कविया रचना करेना। खेत्रीर एक बार्विक उत्साह चत्तीदास कृष्णलीला गीत हैंहालिं, अवश्य कीर्तिनाम ह। आलोच्य पुर्बिक प्रतिपाद्य से श्रीकृष्णके लीला-कीर्तिन, ताहते तत्क्रृत अवसर नाइ। अतएव प्राप्ते ‘श्रीकृष्णकीर्ति’ नामकरण असमीटिन नय।" 

In support of his contention, he also referred to 'महजन-पदाँकया' (1280) compiled by Jagadvandhu Bhadra and 'नवीदल चरित' (1311) by Brajasundar Sanyal.

Most vigorous opposition against this nomenclature of Srikrishnakirtana came from Amitrasundan Bhattacharya. He also criticises others who lent support to Basanranjan. Prominent among them are Ramesh Basu's 'चत्तीदासकृष्णकीर्ति' (S.P.P. 1334, 4th issue), Dakshina Ranjan Ghosh's 'चत्तीदासकृष्णकीर्ति' (Viswabani, 1337), Nalini Kanta Dasgupta's 'श्रीकृष्णकीर्ति' (1341, भारत संस्था), Yogesh Chandra Roy Vidyanidhi's 'चत्तीदास' (S.P. 1342, 1st issue) and by the same author's 'चत्तीदास चरित' (Prabashi, 1342, Asad) and Muhammad Shahidullah's 'चत्तीदास-समस्या' (S.P. 1360, 2nd issue).

It is interesting that those who did not agree to the nomenclature given by Basantaranjan were not unanimous in their opinion. For example, according to Yogesh Chandra Roy Vidyanidhi "एक में भूल घरे रहे, राधाकृष्णलीला ‘कृष्णकीर्ति’ नाम हो गया गये।" On the other hand, Nalini Kanta Dasgupta, Muhammad Shahidullah, Asit Kumar Bandyapadhyay, Amitrasundan Bhattacharya and other scholars thought that the same of the book should have been ‘कृष्णसंदर्भ’.
was written. 22 It was a receipt issued for taking the book as a loan but it cannot be
said for certain that the receipt positively refers to the text in which it was found. As
Asit Kumar Bandyapadhay says, “সম্প্রতি লেখা কৃষ্ণসন্দর্ভ (শ্রীকৃষ্ণ সন্দর্ভ) একাধারে শ্রীকৃষ্ণসন্দর্ভ নামে প্রচারিত হয়েছে। অবশ্য এটি আমাদের অনুমান মাত্র।” 23 However, an impartial opinion
was expressed by Tarapada Mukhapadhay in favour of the name Srikrishnakirtana.
The same opinion was expressed by Bratati Chakravarti. 25

According to Dr. Tarapada Mukhapadhyay “তার পুনরায় আমাদের অনুমান নাম ‘সন্দর্ভ’
বা ‘রাধাকৃষ্ণসন্দর্ভ’ বা ‘রাধাকৃষ্ণপ্রেমাশূল’ না হয় শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন হওয়ায় ওরার অন্যান্য হয়নে
গুরুত্ব অবৈতনিক বা প্রকল্প বিবর্ধন না পেলে সম্পাদক প্রস্তাব এবং পরিচালনায় শ্রীকৃষ্ণ ‘শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন’
নাম পরিবর্ধনের কোন হেতু নাই।” 26

Bratati Chakravarti makes a distinction between সন্দর্ভ and কীর্তন and tries to
determine the precise dictionary based meaning of the two : “সন্দর্ভ কথার অর্থ বিশেষ কোন ওপরের বিষয়ের দীর্ঘ আলোচনা, কোন গুরুত্ব রহস্য বা তত্পর প্রকাশ। সেদিক দিয়ে বিশেষ চতুর্দিকের কৃষ্ণলীলাবিষয়ক কাব্যকে শ্রীকৃষ্ণসন্দর্ভ বলা চলে না। বরং কাব্যিতে ‘শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন’
নামাকরণই দ্বীপে বুক্ত বলে মনে হয়।” 27 Moreover, according to her, “আজ্ঞাময় কথার
‘কীর্তন’ শব্দ যেমন যশ বা শুভ বা সুপ্নাম বোঝায়, তেমনি বিবরণ কথন বা ঘোষণাও বোঝায়। তথাহির
থেকে শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন বিষয়ের রাধাকৃষ্ণ কথন বা বিবরণ এবং তা গোষ্ঠ কাব্য। পুরুষ আপত্তিকর
নয়।” 28

Though some narratives of Srikrishnakirtan can be rightfully branded as slang
and obscene, there are portions that are quite exalted and of very literary value.
Thus obscenity is not the main feature of Srikrishnakirtana and none of the names
like শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন, শ্রীকৃষ্ণসন্দর্ভ, কৃষ্ণলীলা have any definite bearing on it so far as the
subject matter of the poem is concerned. In such a situation, till any other positive
evidence is discovered, it is safer to retain the name Srikrishnakirtana as given by
the editor of the text.
1.3 The poet of Srikrishnakirtana offers a riddle popularly known as চণ্ডীদাস-সমস্যা as his name is different from the well-known চণ্ডীদাস, ফিং চণ্ডীদাস and দীন চণ্ডীদাস. His name Baru Chandidas and he has different tags attached at different times. The problem is quite baffling and we are yet to find out all dimensions of the problem properly, let alone reasonably solved it.

In Srikrishnakirtana the name Baru Chandidas is used in various ways in the text as ভক্তিতে or self-expression of the poet. These are: (1) Baru Chandidas alongwith praise of the goddess Basali, (2) Only Chandidas alongwith adulation of Basali, (3) Baru Chandidas devoid of his religious affinity, (4) simply Chandidas without any prefix and (5) Ananta Baru Chandidas. In most cases, however the name Baru Chandidas is used.

Now the question arises: what was the real name of the poet? According to Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay 'Ananta' is the real name of the poet, 'Chandidas' was his title. Sukumar Sen observes: "অনন্ত নাম গাওয়ার প্রক্ষেপ বলিয়া বোধ হয় না। সাংস্কৃতিক নাম হইতে পারে আর যদি কবির নাম হয় তবে 'চণ্ডীদাস' কবির ছন্দনাম অথবা উপাসনা।" He concludes that perhaps the term Baru meant the man who had been in charge of a particular service of a temple.

Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay in his Baru Chandidas: Kabi Parichoy also doubted the Brahmin origin of Chandidas. He surnames, “ফিং চণ্ডীদাস নিজেকে ‘ফিং’ বলেছেন, সত্ত্বে পূর্ববর্তী কবি বড়ু চণ্ডীদাসের থেকে নিজেকে পৃথক করবার জন্য। এর থেকেই আমাদের মনে হয়, বড়ু চণ্ডীদাস রাগ্রাম ছিলেন না।” But apparently there is no logic to speculate that since ফিং চণ্ডীদাস used ফিং as a suffix, Baru Chandidas was not a Brahmin. It may be so that both were Brahmins and they used two different synonymous for Brahmins. Our impression is that the poet was a Brahmin and perhaps also a celibate.
Otherwise how could he be an assigned priest of a temple?

In this context an essay entitled *Ketugramer Kabi O Srikrishnakirtana* written by Harekrishna Mukhopadhyay deserves to be mentioned. He informs us that in Ketugram village near Nannur still there is an abandoned plot supposed to be the base of Chandidas’s residence. \(^{33}\) Even now, in this plot the goddess Vishalakshi is worshipped on the occasion of Durga Puja festival. Of course there is a difference of opinion whether the goddess daily worshipped by Chandidas was Durga or Saraswati. But that does not have any direct relevance for determining whether the poet’s name was Baru Chandidas or not.

*The date of Chandidas:*

Now we are to deal with another complex problem: What was the date of Chandidas? When did the poet survive to present us his famous piece of poetic work? As usual, scholars differ in this respect also.

According to Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay, “There is no middle Bengali work dating from before 1500 which is preserved in a contemporary MS: except one, and that is the Sri-Krsna-Kirtana.” \(^{34}\) On the other hand, Sukumar Sen opinions that the language of Srikrishnakirtana is not as old as thought to be. He cites linguistic evidences in support of his contention. He points out that the use of Arabic and Persian words, is a comparatively later phenomenon: “শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তির পুর্বতে আবশ্যক ও জমাট বৈধ চতুর্দশ-পঞ্চদশ শতাব্দীর সাহিত্যের ভাষা সম্পূর্ণ নাই। পাইয়াছি মোটামুটি মধ্যযুগীয় বাঙ্গাল ভাষা—দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিম প্রভাত অঞ্চলে মোটামুটি অবিকৃত রূপে আধুনিককাল পর্যন্ত চলিয়া আসিয়াছে।” \(^{35}\)

Harekrishna Mukhopadhyay in his *Ketugramer Kabi O Srikrishnakirtana* mentions that Nrisingha Tarka Panchanan, a descendant of Chandidas, wrote an
abridged treatise on grammar entitled 'गद्यविद्या' in which procedure for mass reading was incorporated. And in this book, Nrisingha gave his family genealogy. From this we find the following list of succession of his family: Asvapati > Chandidasa > Gopinath > Madhav > Nayan > Kumud > Srihari > Shyamadas > Vidyavagis > Gopal > Sarvabhauma > Kusal > Tarkabhusan > Nrisingha Tarka Panchanan. He discovered a document of Jagadananda, the grandson of this Tarka Panchanan, dated Agrahayana 4, 12, 18 B.S.36 On the strength of the same discovery, Sukumar Sen places Chandidasa in the middle of the sixteenth century.37 Here we find a straight difference of one hundred years. If this Chandidasa is Baru Chandidasa and he was a resident of Ketugram, then it is to be supposed that his affair with washerwoman Rami (रामी) took place there. But Asit Kumar Bandyapadhyay points out that there is no reference of Rami or Sahajiya cult in the text of Srikrishnakirtana.38

Keeping our mind quite open, we may reach a tentative conclusion that Baru Chandidasa was a poet of Pre-Chaitanya age. Reason:

1) The language of Srikrishnakirtana bears resemblance with both Assamese and Bengali language; since Bengali and Assamese parted ways in the beginning of the sixteenth century, there are reasons to believe that the language of Srikrishnakirtana represents a character developed before this process of separation, actually had begun. So it should be of the fifteenth century.

(2) Sanatana Goswami in his interpretative work on 'Bhagavata' entitled ब्रह्मबीज तत्त्वज्ञान रूपमाली makes mention of श्रीचैत्यदासादिकृत दानखंड-नौखंड etc.39 Both Dankhanda and Naukakhanda is present only in Srikrishnakirtana. So, the poet of Srikrishnakirtana must be a poet of Pre-Chaitanya age.
In 'Srikrishnachitanyacharitamrita' there is a citation as follows:

चतुर्दश बिद्यापति राजेर नाटक गीति
कर्षितर श्रीगीतगपोविद।

स्वरुप रामानन्द सैन महाप्रभु रात्रि दिने
गाय शून सरम आनंद॥

The author of Chitanyacharitamrita, Krishnadas Kaviraj, narrates how Chaitanya himself used to enjoy wholeheartedly the songs and dramatic lyrics of Jaydeva, Chandidas and Vidyapati. This also implies that Chandidas born was a predecessor of Chitnya (1486 A.D.)

Depending on archaeological and historical evidences, Rabi Lochan De says that in the ancient Basuli temple and the rampart around it made of bricks, he finds an inscription that says (a) केनह उत्तर राजा १४७६ शकः,
(b) हसिर उत्तर राजा १४७६, (c) श्रीश्री ज्ञान नगरेश श्रीश्री उत्तर राय १४७६ शकः। Saka 1476 means A.D. 1554. There is tradition that there were a necessity to reconstruct the earlier Basuli temple built 150 years back and accordingly this later temple and rampart was constructed. By deducting 150 from 1554 we get 1404 and that should be regarded as the original date of the construction of the first temple of goddess Basuli. Before that the goddess was installed at an attached house at Hattola at a field in the outskirt of Nannur. Chandidas was engaged as a priest this temple from the earliest period. He was at his prime of youth at that time and his age then could not be more than 32 or 35, which can be between 1404-1408 A.D. So, it may be surmised that Chandidas was born between 1360-70 A.D.41

The manuscript of Srikrishnakirtana was discovered in the district of Bankura and the manuscript of a lesson book for learner's use to learn the rythmic pattern of
Srikrishnakirtana was also found in Bankura. In the later work there are modernised versions of some of the poems of Srikrishnakirtana. On the basis of these evidences Sukhamay Mukhapadhyay drew the conclusion that Chandidas was apparently a native of Bankura.\textsuperscript{42}

The poet nowhere made any attempt to spell out either his individual identity, or spoke of his family or ancestry. So, we cannot be certain where his original home was. Debate normally centres around these places, Ketugram and Nannur of Birbhum district and Chatna of Bankura district.

There are some scholars who think that the same Chandidas in his youth wrote Srikrishnakirtana and in his old age composed Padabali or lyrical short poems. Again there are others who incline to believe that Baru Chandidas wrote only Srikrishnakirtana, but never composed any short poem.\textsuperscript{43} It needs to be mentioned here that even a casual observer would not miss to recognise that there is a big difference between the language and artistic imagination in Srikrishnakirtana and those in Padabali compositions. The poet of Srikrishnakirtana always claims himself to be Baru Chandidas whereas the poet of Padabali always wrote বি জ চাঁদীদাস, দীনচাঁদীদাস as his self identification. Moreover বি জ চাঁদীদাস is believed to be contemporary of Chaitanyadeva himself whereas Baru Chandidas is a pre-Chaitanya poet. On the other hand, there can be no denial of the fact that the poet of Srikrishnakirtana was a highly educated composer. His work was influenced by Gitagobinda and a number of Sanskrit Puranas, and for maintaining continuity, the poet himself composed Sanskrit slokas of high order. It is thus also hard to accept that a poet of such accomplishment would remain satisfied with composition of only one long narrative poem. Our surmise is that the isolated short poems of this Chandidas might have
been usurped by some other poets and some of them might have been lost for ever. In Chaitanyacharitamrita, (Madhyalila, third chapter ) there is a narration that at Santipur one Mukunda sang before Mahaprahu a song containing following words,

हा हा प्रिय सवि कि ना हैल मोरे
कनू प्रेमविष मोर तनु मन जारे ॥44

Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay informs us that Harekrishna Mukhapadhyay discovered this song complete in ten lines in an isolated leaf inside a very old manuscript. He further tells us that Biman Bihari Mazumder also accepted it as a genuine work of Baru Chandidas. Taking into consideration all these factors, Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay accepted this song as a genuine composition of Baru Chandidas.45

Now we can say that if this piece is a genuine composition of the poet of Srikrishnakirtana, then it can be ascertained that Baru Chandidas also composed some other short lyrical pieces besides his magnum opus (Srikrishnakirtana).

1.4. The date of the composition of Srikrishnakirtana:

We are confronted with a number of problems along with their dimension while deciding the date of the composition of Srikrishnakirtana which includes (1) Problem created by the copyist, (2) the date of copying the test, (3) the date of the poet himself and (4) the antiquity of the language of the narrative.

Doubts have been raised over whether the manuscript received by us was copied by a single individual or more than one Rakhaldas Bandyapadhyay identified three types of handwritings in the manuscript and concluded that they were made possibly in the first half of the 14th century. : “श्रीयुत बस्तरजन राय बिद्याकर्तर महाशय ‘श्रीकृष्णकीर्तने’रे ये पांडुलिपि अबिकार करित्तेन, ताहा १३८५ अश्विन्दे उपेक्षा, सत्तवत स्वत्तिय
According to Sukumar Sen, the manuscript bears marks of two different copyists. Also after examining the ink and pages of the manuscript, he held the opinion that the ink was of lighter shade, devoid of density and brilliance of the ink of earlier variety. According to him the manuscript could not have been order than of the eighteenth century, may be even of the nineteenth century. Asit Kumar Bandyapadhyay surmises that the manuscript might be of the sixteenth century. Radhagovinda Basak with the aid of scientific method compared the script of Srikrishnakirtana with that of the 1466 A.D. and came to the conclusion that the manuscript of Srikrishnakirtana was copied between 1450 and 1500 A.D. This suggests the manuscript was of the pre-Chaitanya era. It should also be remembered that the date of the manuscript can in no way be regarded as a determining factor of the date of the original composition. The most important determining factors are the period in which the poet lived and the language was prevalent.

In our earlier analysis, we showed that Candidas was a Pre-Caitanya poet. Caitanya was born in 1485 A.D. And the life span of Joydev was between the last part of the twelfth century and first part of the thirteenth century. Since the composition style of Baru Candidas was influenced by Joydev, it can be safely assumed that Badu Candidas was a later poet compared to Joydev. Thus we are left with the period between the later half of the thirteenth century and first part of the fifteenth century. Accordingly somewhere in between the two dates was born and
lived Baru Candidas was born and lived

Both thirteenth century and fourteenth century are regarded as a barren age in the Bengali literature. The researchers of history of Bengali literature believe that under the impact of the Turkish invasion, the literary of creativity in Bengali was stopped except in literature the folk-literature which continued uninterrupted. Moreover, there is a difference between the linguistic style and usage the Caryapadas composed between the tenth and twelfth centuries and the same of Srikrishnakirtana. We will discuss this aspect in details later. Here the relevant point is that this difference is normally estimated to be developed within a span of two to three hundred years. Generally, the assigned period of the last phase of Caryapada is normally believed to be the twelfth century A.D. If we add two or three hundred years with that date, considering the linguistic evolution we get Srikrishnakirtana the date of which is the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. It is normally accepted that linguistic evolution is a natural process through the passage of time and so, there is a definite date for the language as used in Srikrishnakirtana which by all means was composed between the first and middle period of the fifteenth century. Accordingly, the date of birth of Baru Candidas cannot be later than last part of the fourteenth century. Vaisnava lyrics composed immediately after that period i.e., in the late 15th century or early 16th century bear testimony to the influence of Srikrishnakirtana on them. For example, there is a verse in Radhabiraha of Srikrishnakirtana
In later *Padabali* we find the same idea expressed in the same mood in a comparatively later composition where language is sufficiently modern as in

- প্রথম প্রহর নিশি  
  সুষুপ্য দেখি বসি
  
  সব কথা কহিয়ে তোমারে হ।
  বসিয়া কুমস্তব্ধে  
  সে কানু করেছে কোলে
  
  চুম্ব দিয়া বদন উপরে হ। (Appendix of Skk P.158)

There are some critics who seriously doubted the actual antiquity of Srikrishnakirtana. But in spite of their objection, Suniti Kumar Chattapadhyay opinions that under no circumstances the antiquity of the language of Srikrishnakirtana can be placed later than 1400 or 1450 A.D. On the otherhand, Sukumar Sen, on the basis of the fact that there are some Arabic and Persian words to be found in the text and also because of use of some words now prevalent only in the South Western Bengal, declined to place Srikrishnakirtana prior to the sixteenth century.

We know that the Turkish invasion took place in the thirteenth century and the Muslim rule continued for more five hundred years. As a result, a large number of Arabic and Persian words penitrated in Bengali language. It is to be noted that the number of such word in Srikrishnakirtana is very limited just five only. Besides,
the random use of older and archaic words like আদিক্ষ ইলিঙ্ক তোল্পিক্ষ etc. does not leave much doubt about the antiquity of the composition. Moreover, the use of popular plural suffix ( বহুরচ্ছায়ক প্রাদান ), which is a special feature of early medieval Bengali cannot be found in Srikrishnakirtana (গুল্লা/গুলিক্ষ লিঙ্ক/লিঙ্কের etc.) Tushar Kanti Mahapatra gives us a beautiful example.নবীনের হাত ধরে ইটিলেই প্রবীন নবীন হয়ে যায় না, প্রবীনদের নিদর্শনগুলি অদৃশ্য হয় না বাত্সল্যকারণ করে না। And he found the opinion of Suniti Kumar Chattapadhyay quite acceptable. According to Paresh Ch. Mazumder, the language of Srikrishnakirtana represents the style of the early middle age.53 Sukumar Sen in his Bhashar Itibritta identifies 1350-1450 A.D. as the period of early medieval Bengali language.54 With regard to the antiquity of Srikrishnakirtana, he says “বড়ো চত্তীদাসের শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তনের পুথি তেমনি পুর্ণ না হইলেও মূলে হেমস্কুপে খুব বেশি না পড়ায় আদি-মধ্যবাসনার পরিচয় খানিকটা পাওয়া যায়।” These observations also suggest that the text concerned belonged to early medieval phase of Bengali language.

Now let us come to take the help of linguistics. In Srikrishnakirtana, first person / ইল (ila) suffix (প্রাদান) is used in past tense, for example-Srikrishnakirtana করিলে১ >Muk. করিলাঙ্গু > mod.B.করিলাম। In simple conjunctie infinite verbs ( সরল সংযোজক অস্তমোষিকা )we find /ইআ (iya)/as in Caryapada করিয়া (C.12,34). In Srikrishnakirtana also this /ইআ/ in the the same sense has been used regularly. For example--করিয়া, সিয়া, চটিয়া etc. This /ইআ (iya)/ in the same sense was not used by Mukundaram, he used / যা /for this ইআ/ইআ। For example--এমাছি, কর্যাছি, দেখাছি etc. This contraction of sound (ধ্বনি সংক্ষেপ ) from ইআ/ইআ is a letter development, taking
It is necessary now to determine the date of Mukundaram and the period of composition of his poem. It is said that Mukundaram took refuge in the house of Bankura Roy and was appointed as the private tutor of his young son Raghunath. Now it is accepted that Raghunath Roy reigned from 1573 to 1604 A.D. So, if mid-sixteenth century is the date of composition of his Chandimangal then the date of Srikrishnakirtana is to be placed at least a century earlier. Linguistic evidences speak of this time span. So, from linguistic point of view, the date of Srikrishnakirtana cannot be placed later than mid-fifteenth century. Hence we are bound to say that Srikrishnakirtana was composed in 1450 A.D. or may be a little earlier date.

1.5. Region where the language of Srikrishnakirtana was in currency:

It is yet to be finally decided whether Baru Candidas was a native of Nannur of Birbhum or Chatna of Bankura. However, we have already assumed that he was a native of Bankura. So, it is quite natural that the language of Srikrishnakirtana would retain traces of local dialect of South Western region of Bengal. Sukumar Sen indentifies some special symptoms which are still now treated as distinctive features of the language of this region. For example:

1) Random use of nasal vowel sounds (আনুষ্ঠানিক অর্থহীন) — আঁলাপ. 81 (আলক্ষ); উদ্ধ. P.32,56 (উদ্ধাম); একে একে P. 2, 13,30; কাঁচি P.5 (<কাঁচি); করিনী P.18; কৃষ্ণী P.18; গিঞ্চ P. 147, 151,153; চ্যাটর P.116; চাপাঙ্কুটী p.18 etc.

2) Tendency to pronounce aspirate in the place of non-aspirate For e.g. -- পুষ্কর
P.85(< পূর্ব; তীর্থ ); বদ্ধু P. 14, 45 (<বদ্ধু); বিখ্য P.7,15,20,34 (<বিখ্য); etc.

3) Use of retroflex (মূর্ধণ্য ধরনি) in Srikrishnakirtana: উত্থাত P.1,2,5 this word is derived. (<Skt.আবাযাযুত>Pkt.চূড়ান্ত>উট্ট(ছ)ট>উট্ট) mod. B. হোঁচাট) P.132, টেই P122 (<Skt চূড়ান্ত> Pkt. চূড়ান্ত>চূড়া, টুটিল P.145 (<ক্রেট>টুট>টুট + ইল ) 60, ডাহিন P. 110 (<দশিকা); পড়ি P.115, 132 (<Skt. পড়িত > Pkt.পড়ি > পড়ি, due to spontaneous nasalization. বাট P. 22,37, 38, (Skt. বাটর > Pkt. বাট র > বাট ) etc.

In Srikrishnakirtana, the influence of special phonetic features of south western Bengal is quite vividly present, so also the influence of special structural features of the same area. For example:

1. In present simple verb the 3 per. imperative we get here উ. For e.g -- আইসু P.77.3; আছু P.24,26,29; হাড়ু P9; পসূ P 4; (প্রবেশ করল ক) হউ P.60,63,72, etc. In SCB this উ is lost. But these features of Skk are still present in the dialects of south-western Bengal. 61

2. In Skk the past simple verb is ‘হনু’ P.160; In some dialects of S.W.Bengal this ‘হনু’ is still insted. For e.g.-- করুন, গেনুন, ধরুন, হনু etc. These are found mostly in Midnapore, Bankura, Hoogly. 62

3. There are several verbroots in Srikrishnakirtana which are not present in modern chaste Bengali but still current in the dialect of South-Western Bengal. For e.g- পেলা P. 63, 65, 113 (<Pkt.-পেল ), meaning to throw. The use is no longer there in modern Bengali, but in Srikrishnakirtana, it is often used (at least 22 times ). The word is still current in South-Western Bengal. In Assamese and neighbouring dialects
of East Bengal districts the word is still in free existence. "स्रोत / मूल ( <Skt. ✓ पी। -प्ली), meaning travelling. This verb-root is used in the text 16 times. The word is used in Abahatta and Caryapada frequently in mid-Bengali. In modern Bengali, it is completely lost. But it is vigorously present in the dialect of south-western Bengal as well as Oriya, Maithili, Hindi, Magahi etc. 64

To identify the prevalent place of the language of Srikrishnakirtana, we have so long discussed the linguistic side of the problem. Now we will examine the cultural background of the region. In this context the extant folk culture is very much relevant. We know that in Srikrishnakirtana, the Pauranic theme is used extensively, side by side the folk tradition, which also left its imprints in the text. In other words, the poet while using the Pauranic theme also made use of folk tradition of পুরুষ শাসন. These folk elements in the form of proverbs, riddles, legends and other oral traditions have a district place in Srikrishnakirtana. We believe the diffusion zone of the folk culture will lead to the better identification of Skk’s linguistic character and its prevalent time.

In his discussion on Jhumur song, the reputed folklorist Asutosh Bhattacharyya says: "চৈতন্যের আলোরে পূর্বাঞ্চলের মধ্যে পাঁচ কাহিনীর যে একটি লোকিক ধারা প্রচলিত ছিল, তাহা বড়ু চট্টোদাসের ভূবিদায় প্রচলিত 'শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন' নামক গান হইতেও জানিতে পারা যায়। একটি ধারা অনুসরণ করিয়া 'শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তন'ের উৎপত্তি হইয়াছিল এবং তাহা অনুসরণ করিয়া পদাঙ্গী সাহিত্য চন্দন যুগে যে 'শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তনের ঐতিহ্য অগ্রসর হইয়া গিয়াছে, তাহা কৃষ্ণর গানগুলি হইতেই জানিতে পারা যাইবে।" 65
Rajyeswar Mitra says: “বাকুত, বুমুর গান যে কৃত প্রাচীন তা বলা শক্ত। ‘জোমাণ্ডা’ নায়ক এক বৃহৎ গীতগোষ্ঠীর পরিচয় “সহীতরমাকর” পাওয়া যায়। এটি সেকলের সবচেয়ে বড় দেশী সংগীত ও দুঃখ “সূড়”-এর অন্তর্গত ছিল। অনুমান হয় যে জোমাণ্ডাই বর্তমান বুমুরের আদিরূপ। .... বড়ু চন্দ্রীদাসের এই গীতনাট্যে “চিঠা” এবং “বিচিঠা” নামক দুটি গীতরূপের উল্লেখ পাওয়া যায়। এ দুটি এই জোমাণ্ডাই অন্তর্গত ছিল।”

Subhash Chandra Bandyapadyay has shown that the folk tradition from which Jhumur songs had been sprung is also flowing beneath the surface level of Srikrishnakirtana. He also identifies some verses of Srikrishnakirtana where the influence of Jhumur tradition can easily be traced. He mentions a particular Jhumur song:

এখন সই, রানুতে সোলাম আপন মাখা খেয়ে,
হেনকালে দিল শ্যাম মুরলী বাজাইয়ে।
মুরলীর গান শুনে ঘরে দাড়ায় না প্রাপ্ত,
প্রথমবার ভাল রেঞ্চ দিলাম বেসর খেটে।
শাক দিয়ে সুকুতানি অমালে দিলাম ঝাল।
শুধু ইয়ডিতে চাল দিয়ে মিটাটিলাম ঝাল।
শাশ্বদ্বন্দ হয়ে চালিলাম ঝল,
ভাজা ভাজা চালগুলি উঠিল সকল।
সিম মরমর, সিম মরমর, সিম দিয়েছি বেঁটে।
কুটু তেলে নেওন ভেজে নামিয়েছি বেঁটে।
We find the echo of this traditional Jhumur in the following verses of Baru Candidas:

সুস্নায়ীর নাদ শুনিয়া বড়ায়ি
রাখিয়া যে সূচনা কহিনী,
আঁশল ব্যাঙ্জন মো বেশোরার দিলো
সাকে দিলো কানাসোরা পারী ॥

রাখের জুন্তি হারায়িলো বড়ায়ি
সুধিও বাঁশীর নাদ ॥

নানের নামন কাহু আড়বাংশী যাই
যেন কুই পাঞ্জরের শুঁ শ।

তা সুধিও ঘণ্টে মো পরলা রুলিও
ভাঁজিলো এ কাচা শুঁ শ।

সেই তো বাঁশীর নাদ সুধিও বড়ায়ি
চিহু মোর ভুল আকুল ।

ছোলনা চিপিও নিমকোলে কেলিলো
বিশি জলে চড়াইলো চাইল ॥

যমুনার তীরে কদম তরতলে
Subhash Chandra Bandyapadhyay also mentions another Jhumur song (actually compiled in বাংলার লোকসাহিত্য Vol-III by Ashtosh Bhattacharyya) collected from Banspaharhi of Midnapore district:

বন পোড়ে সহ সবাই দেখে মনের আঞ্চন কজন দেখে
থাকে থাকে থিকে থিকে-জুলছে আঞ্চন তুমের পারা।
আমি নইলে পোড়াস্ না গো তারা।

This is clearly a translated version of Srikrishnakirtana:

বন পোড়ে আগ বড়াই জগজন জাগলী।
মোর মন পোড়ে যেক কুমারের পনী।

These Jhumur songs are all collected from South Western Bengal. From the style of expression, use of simile, allegony, rhetoric, proverbs and the structure of the thematic manifestations (dramatic form) available in Jhumur recitals, we can surmise that Srikrishnakirtana has a strong affinity with this tradition and hence it must be a work composed in south Western Bengal called *rarh* in ancient times. Surely Baru Chandidas was a poet of this *Rarh* region and his catholicity of mind to blend both classical and folk tradition gives us a glimpse of his scholarly genius as well as his liberalism.
1.6. Depiction of contemporary society in Srikrishnakirtana:

To discuss the influence and impact of contemporary time and place on Srikrishnakirtana, we should take into account the date and period of the poet and his work. It has been accepted more or less by all that Srikrishnakirtana was composed in mid-fifteenth century. The work is recognised as a pioneer in the dramatised poetic narrative of a Pauranic theme composed in Bengali language. The period in which the work was composed generally regarded as the age of long narrative poetry dealing with a tale, story or myth. Then how did this dramatised verse emerge?

It is commonly believed that the purpose was to attract illiterate or semiliterate people to a broader theme of Bhakti. Among different forms of literature drama is the only medium where poetry and visual art mingle together to stimulate people’s mind irrespective of their educational attainments. At the same time, it is evident that in the middle age, the people of the region were fond of dramatic art. However, our objective is only to discuss the social background of early middle age as manifested in Srikrishnakirtana. As one scholar states: “পাঞ্জাইতে আমাদের বীরভূম বংশধর অঞ্চলে মুসলমান আধিপত্য প্রতিষ্ঠা হইলেও ঐন্দ্রিয় ভূমির ভূমিগণ বাঙ্গাল সুলতানের কর্তৃত্ব না মানিয়া কৃষ্ণরই মত মহাদেবী সাজিয়া বসিতেন।” (‘শ্রীকৃষ্ণকীর্তনে ইতিহাসের স্মরন’, Naliniranjan Bhattacharya, ভারতবর্ষ, শ্রাবণ, 1353 B.S.)

This romantic ballad was composed centering around a Bengali rural background mainly inhabited by cowherds and milkmaids. The major characters are Krishna, Radha and Barai. The basic structure of the narrative is based mainly
of two components: Pauranic ingredients with spiritual thrush on the one hand, and folk and social elements on the other. The basic theme of Srikrishnakirtana centred around the village of the cowherd and the way it is depicted gives us an impression that the people though belonging to a comparatively lower strata of the society did enjoy some prestige in spite of their caste composition. The structure of the rural society was depicted as family oriented and average population was more or less well-to-do. Different professional and social classes were also portrayed among whom Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Porters, Oilmen, barbar, boatman were prominent. Along with the beggars and yogini with human skull in hand also had a place.

In Tambul Khanda we find messenger Barai was sent by Krishna to Radha with battleleaf as memento. It was definitely a reflection of the prevalent folk social custom.

(29)

(Tambulkhanda, Pad No.-7, P.6)

In Dankhanda, we come to know that Radha was married to Aihan even before reaching the age of eleven. This childhood marriage of Radhika manifests
the custom of child marriage prevalent in Bengal during the period. Krishna, in his effort to get Radha, conspired to pretend as a revenue collector which manifests that collection of toll from milkman was also a customary system of the period. Forcible abduction of a woman and to use force for enjoying her is an element of male-dominated society and often it was taken as a question of pride and prestige. However, often subterfuge and machination had to be used for influencing a woman which suggests that woman were not as helpless as thought to be. Radha is the most striking and dazzling character of Srikrishnakirtana because in her we find her distinctive feminity in full blossom.

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বড়ার বহু মো বড়ার কী।
আদ্রে পানী তুলী তোমাত্ত কী॥
*    *    *
সোয়ালিনী আদে নহো নাচুনী।
মোহর কাজ নাহি তোর কিছুনী॥
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(Jamunakhandha, Pad No.-2, P.95)

This self-respect in fact did not allow a woman of the period to become a mundane commodity of lascivious enjoyment. Krishna was a rastic village youth, who did not care for the social relationship and wanted to enjoy Radha violently violating the customery social prohibition. But the proposal could not be easily by a traditional woman. This crisis of decision, a salient feature of any poetic exercise, was skillfully drawn by Baru Chandidas. Baru does not miss the point that Aihan, the husband of
Radha, was impotent and this crude fact plays a major role in psychological transformation of Radha, who, at the beginning, was hostile towards Krishna but ultimately became a willing partner. Depiction of this subtle transformation, along with social realities of rural Bengal and its impact on individual characters, is accomplished by Baru with rare acumen and artistic talent.

Another aspect deserves to be mentioned. Radha was a housewife of a wealthy family, but she herself used to visit market as a milkmaid. In later period also, we find Fullara of Candimangal used to sell meat in the market. This was an honourable element of the professional castes. No doubt it had a positive contribution in building up individuality of women based on professional self-reliance. On the other hand, if we look at the character of Krishna, there was a kind of bohemianism in his character, who wanted to shirk domestic duties and mainly jobs for earning a livelihood. Of course that is the common or general feature of the cowherd community.

From the text, it becomes evident that women in Bengal are not confined within the boundaries of the house, but mothers-in-law were capable of restricting their movements. One such aged lady threatened Aihan’s mother when she found Radha impersonal at house.

As a result, Aihan’s mother, under the threat of being boycotted, allowed Radha to
visit market place. This boycot or social isolation was a grim punishment of which everybody was afraid.

As a sign of devotion to husband, Bengali married women now use bangles made of conch shells and red vermilion on the forehead. This folk belief is found also in Srikrishnakirtana:

কেশ পাশে শোভে তার সুরঙ্গ সিন্দুর
সজল জলকে মেঝে উইল নব সুর || (Tambulkhanda, Pad No.-4, P.-5 )

With regard to matters concerning day-to-day life, say food habits, dress and attire, hair-style, ornaments, conveyance etc., we find lively descriptions in the poem.

1) আন ডঃ দিতা বড়াই নাসিতের পো ||
কানাডী খোপা বড়াই মুজামিরো মো || (Dankhanda, Pad No.-60, P.35 )

2) আর না পিছিয়ে বড়াই সুরঙ্গ পাঠেল ||
এধা দেখি মাঙে। কাহাঙ্গঞ্জি বিরহের কোল ||
মুজিয়া পেলাইয়ে বড়াই লিশের সিন্দুর ||
বাতর বলহয় মো করিব শনাচুর ||
ছিড়িয়া পেলাইয়ে বড়াই সাতেস্বরী হার ||
যা দেখিয়া মাঙে। নিবিড় শুধুর || (Dankhanda, Pad No.-60, P.35 )

3) ময়ূরপুঞ্জ বাঁধি চূড়া || কেশপাশে দিতা বেঁধা
কনয়া কুসুমে বাঁধি ঘটা
দেহ নীল মেঝে ছটা || গঙ্গা চন্দনের ফোটা
ফেন উয়ে গগনে চান্দ গোটা ||

(Radhabiraha, Pad No.-15, P.136 )
In some verses, there are references of rural folk customs prevalent among the males and females of the village:

কোন আশ্বস্ত ধরে পাশ বাড়িয়েলো।
হাতে জিতী আয়র উঁকট না মানিলো।
শুন কলসী লই সথী আঁপে জাদে।
বাঁধার শিশুল মের ভাইবে জাদে।
বাঁশীর লাগিজাঁ মের কে ভুল বড়ায়ি।
আখায়িল থাক্ত রিক জালিল কাহলিঢি।
কথা দূর পড়ে মেরা দেখিলা সগলী।
হাতে খাপর ভিজ মাঙ্গ যেবিনী।
কান্দে কুরুফ লিয়া তেলী আগে জাদে।
সুখান ভলতে বসি কাকে কাড়ে রাই।

( Radhabiraha, Pad No.-28, P.125 )

So, the belief in God and chaste women, still prevalent among common people while going out of the house, was an old custom observed during the age of Srikrishnakirtana as well, In Bankhanda, we find the folk belief in incantations and occult practices:

থেআন করিশা করে লায়ডে বনমালী।
থারে থারে পাতখানী তোলে চমদালী।

( Bankhanda, Pad No.26, P.114 )

During the time of Baru Chandidas, which is before the birth of Chaitanya, Shakti worship or cult of mother goddess was also popular. We find the evidence:
In this work, though not in its totality but in pieces and fragments, the social life of Bengal of the period are depicted to a considerable extent. This social life was enriched by two parallel trends, one made of Pauranic-Brahmanical value system, another made of vitality of the folk tradition.

1.7 A comparative study of the language of Caryapada and Srikrishnakirtana: Caryapada was composed in between 10th and 12th century A.D. It is seen that Srikrishnakirtana was composed in the first half of the fifteenth century. In terms of time element, there is a difference of two to three hundreds years between the two works. This difference of time is bound to bring about linguistic changes. Naturally, in comparison to Caryapada language of Srikrishnakirtana is comparatively modern. Though the later has retained some earlier forms available in Caryapada, it also shows some distinctiveness of its own. But both the languages are influenced by Radha dialects of South-Western Bengal. Our effort would be to show differences and similarities of the languages of two poetical works. It is to be kept in mind that with regard to spelling both works represent both the written style and verbal expression current in the region during the time under discussion. Thus same word may be spelt in two or more different manners. At first, we would discuss phonetic elements and their significance:
Vowel sound (ব্যবহার ণনি):

i) Because of open (বিভ্জিত) pronunciation of /অ-কার (a)/ in many places it became /আ-কার (a)/ in both works. For example অইস C.14 / অইস C.29; কাবলি C.11 / কাবলি C.18; ঘরে C.4 / ঘরে C.39; সায়স C.43 / সায়স C.33. In Srikrishnakirtana similarly the symptom is present. For example; অতি/আতি, আকারণ, আচ্ছন্ন, আতিশয় etc.

ii) At times, same words are spelt in different ways: For example, কাঁথা C.1 / কাঁথা C.13, রাম/রাম C.34 etc. Similarly, in Srikrishnakirtana we find a number of multiple spellings. The single word কাঁথা (চুষ্টি)is spelt in a number of variation, i.e.;
কাঁথা P.2,3,6,8; কাঁথা (derogative) P.111; কাঁথা P.9; কাঁথা P.8; কাঁথাচি P.56,143;
কাঁথাচি P.2,4,10,11; কাঁথাচি P.153/ কাঁথাচি P.141/ কাঁথাচি P.154,here /ক/ is case sign (বিভিন্ন চিহ্ন); কাঁথাচি P.80; কাঁথা (here also /ক/ is case sign, lovingly called ) P.70, etc. There are number of such other examples.

iii) In Caryapada and Srikrishnakirtana the sound /অ (a)/ was retained. But in the absence of stress (শ্বাসাঘট), sometimes /অ/ is transformed into short /অ/ and at times it is altogether lost. For example, করিস C.12, 34/ করিস C.1; পলিস C.35/ পলিস C.13/ পানী C.16,14,47; পুঁচিষ C.1/ পুঁচিষ C.8 etc. In Srikrishnakirtana, at time for sluggish pronunciation, /অ(�)/ has been converted to /ও(ও)/. For examples,
kথোকল P.152, নন্দোলা P.23,115; মেহ গেলা P.6,30; মেহ জাএ P.123; রাখোল P.4,8,13 etc. The tendency to pronounce /অ/ as /ও/ is still in currency in modern Bengali. For example, ‘অমূল্য’ is often pronounced as ‘ওমূল্য’, ‘বন’ as ‘বোন’ Similar examples are available in abundance. On the other hand, in the age of Caryapada, perhaps /ও/
was pronounced carelessly, hence at times /ও/ is transformed into /অ/ like 
C.10 (= সর্বর).

iv) In both Caryapada and Srikrishnakirtana difference between the short and long vowel sound is not well-demarcated as in case of ত্ত্ব words in modern Bengali. For example, লুই C.1/লুই C.29 ; দীসই C.15/ দিসই C.15; শবরি C.50 / সর্বরি C.28 etc. Similarly in Srikrishnakirtana we find উজলে P.39, 106 / উজলে C.150 ; উত্তর P.7,10 / উত্তর P.139, 140 ; দুঃস্তী P.152/ দুঃস্তী P.6,8,10, etc.. In modern Bengali also this distinction is not always maintained, for example, পাশি/পাখী.

v) In both Caryapada and Srikrishnakirtana we find Metathesis in use of ঈ/ এ (i/e). For example, মিলি C.44/, মিলি মিলি C.8/ মেলে C.27 /; Similarly, in Srikrishnakirtana--- কিমনে P. 48, 116 ; কেমনে P.87, 113, 119/ কেমনে P. 24,51,56 ; হিনারি P. 125,146/ ছেনারি P.33 ; বিচারি P.12 ; নেবারি P.142; etc. But Metathesis (বিপর্যয়) of /উ/, /ও/ is not discernable in Caryapada, where as it is available in Srikrishnakirtana. For example কুষ্ঠ P.143/ সাগর কৌয়রী P.143 etc.

vi) In Caryapada /ঝ (r)/ becomes /উ (U)/ as per Prakrit norms, thus উজ C.32< স্ক্ত. ঝংকৃত ; উজুটটি < স্ক্ত. ঝংকৃত বর্ত্ত ; রুখ C.2 < স্ক্ত. বৃক্স ; হিংস C.18 < স্ক্ত. হাদয় etc. On the other hand we find use of /ঝ/ sound is in a few cases of Srikrishnakirtana. For e.g.-- ঝল P.127 ; ঝলেগনা P.80 ; ঝবি P.26,42,68 etc. It may be said that as in present day, in the age of Srikrishnakirtana also /ঝ/ was pronounced as কিরি/ . In written spelling there are instances loke: কিসিপান প.29< স্ক্ত. কুলপান, পুষ P.141, প্রিয় etc.

vii) In Caryapada there is no example of Epenthesis (অপসিহিনিতি), but in
Srikrishnakirtana we find one such example; such as / চৌর/ Dankhanda Pad No.23, P.21, Jamunakhand Pad No.7 P.97.

viii) In Caryapada there is no example of Umlaut (অভিশ্রুতি), but in Srikrishnakirtana there are definite instances of Umlaut (অভিশ্রুতি). Example, রিদীক (Brindabankhanda Pad No.29) P.90; লাস ক্লে করে চুরি (Dankhanda Pad No.30, P.24; অভিশোভা করে (Dankhanda Pad No.44, P.29), etc.

Consonants:

i) Consonant of all the five classes or Bargas are available in Caryapada, as single or as a conjunction of more than one. For example: the nasal /ও(ন)/ and /ং(ন)/ are never used as single sound, they are always used as conjuncts. Example, সন্ধ চ.37; সন্ধম C.5 (< সংক্রম); সন্ধ C.10 (< সল); সিঙ্গহ C.14; কুঞ্চল-পাঞ্চল C.21; পটঙ্গচ্ছ C.1, 6, 7, 9. (name of a রাজিনী or tune). Besides these two, all other consonants from /ক/ to /ম/ to all sibilants and laterals are used as single. In Srikrishnakirtana, all five Bargas are used as single sound. Of course, we should keep in mind that in Caryapada we are acquainted with only 46 and half poems. On the otherhand, Srikrishnakirtana presents a vast mass of literature with a wide range of verses having all scopes for using all the consonants. So, the limited text mass did compell the poet to use less consonant forms in Caryapada, but that does not necessarily mean that they were not existing during the period of Caryapada.

ii) Both in Caryapada and Srikrishnakirtana the Retroflex/Cerebral sounds (মূর্ধম কর্ক) have been widely used. At times they come as a result of Cerebralization,
sometimes called Spontaneous Cerebralization (ক্ষুদ্র মূর্শীভজন). Examples of first kind are: গচ্ছ C.5 (<* গ্রথিত); ছাড়ি C.6,10 (Skt. ছাড়ি); বট C.7 (<বর্তন); বট C.7,15,38 (<Skt.বট); to be compared with Srikrishnakirtana চতুর্থ P.132 (Skt. চতুর্থ); বট P.22,37,38,46; বট C.5,16,38. More examples of this type (spontaneous cerebralization) বড় C.2; ছাড় C.47 (<খে); তাতি C.8 (<Skt. তাতিত); ডাহিত C.49 (<Skt. ডাহিত). Similar instances from Srikrishnakirtana: গঙ্গাজী P.94 (<Skt. গঙ্গাজী); গঙ্গাজী P.81; খাভ P.1,2,127 (<Skt.খাভ); খাভ P.115,132 (<Skt.খাভ > পড়া) etc.

iii) Both in Caryapada and in Srikrishnakirtana, we find /n(n)/ and /n(n)/ are used interchangeably to produce same nasal sound. It appears that there was no difference of pronunciation between these two during the period. For e.g.— অন C.38/ অন C.44; নিষ C.28,30,49/ নিষ C.13; পার্বী C.13/নারী C.8 etc. Comparable with Srikrishnakirtana পার্বী P.100 / নারী P.74; পাল P.127 / নাল P.127 etc.

iv) In both texts, /j(j)/ is always used in place of /য় (j)/ from which it can be presumed that /য় / was normally pronounced as /জ/ during the period. In modern Bengali also most /য় / is pronounced as /জ /. For examples: জে C.7/ জে C.22; জাই C.21,41/ জাই C.14 etc. Sometimes /জ/ is used in the place of /য় (y)/. For e.g.— ইনি জানী C.34 (= ইনিয়ািনী). In Srikrishnakirtana জানী P.32/ জানী P.120; জান P.9,87/ জান P.135,139. Sometimes/ য়/ is used in the place of /জ/. For e.g. জন P.2,31,59/ জন P.126 etc.

v) Both in Caryapada and in Srikrishnakirtana /শ(শ)/, /শ (শ)/, /স (স)/ of Sanskrit are used indiscriminately without following any fixed norm or system. Of course as a sole
inheritor in Magadhi Prakrit, /\#/ sound is predominant in Srikrishnakirtana. On the other hand, both /\#/ and /\#/ are dominant in Caryapada, whereas use of /\#/ and /\#/ in place of /\#/ is rarely found, rather /\#/ is often used in place of /\#/ and /\#/.

For e.g.  

vi) Though nasal sounds are quite prominent in both texts, they are more prevalent in Srikrishnakirtana so much so that nasalization is a special feature of it. Of course in both texts nasal sound in company of Aspirate (মহাপ্রাণ) is used at random. For e.g.—

vii) We do not find infiltration of Persian words in Caryapada. However a Turkish word is found  তুর্কী (Pkt&Skt., Turk তুর্কি, Turk তুর্কি) that means it entered through Sanskrit. On the other hand a few (only five or six) Persian words are available in Srikrishnakirtana. For e.g.—
Morphology (রাশতন্ত্র)

Gender: In Caryapada, distinct gender change used to take place with regard to both inanimate and animate objects. Accordingly, we find gender-based distinction was made in adjective, pronoun and verb forms also. Normally a word of masculine gender was converted to feminine by adding suffix /W(i)/ For example ... তিতি-খাও খাট পড়িলা সবরা মহাসুরে সেজি ছালিলী C.28; সবরা ভুজের নইলামণি দারী পেন্দ রাজিত পেহাইলী C.28; সোনে ভরিলী কলাপা নবী C.8; হাড়েরি মালী C.10 etc. In Srikrishnakirtana, normally gender change in adjective takes place in animate objects; and in similar cases feminine derivative was used in preterite past (কৃত্ত অতীতকাল), As also in verbal adjectives e.g. কোঁসে গরজিলী মাথা মেন কালাসাপ P.11; দারুণী বুটী তোর বাপেত নাহি বাজু P.7; নিতি নিতি যাসি রাণা মধুরা নগরে P.44 etc.

Case-ending (কারক-বিভক্তি)

i)/অঞ্চ (amhe) and তুঞ্ছ (tumhe), are the two Sanskrit plural terms actually being used in singular in Skk as well as in Caryapada. In Srikrishnakirtana suffix / রা (ra)/ is used to make them plural like আঞ্চা, তোঞ্চা, from which modern Bengali words like আঞ্চা, তোঞ্চা etc. are derived.

ii) In both Caryapada and Srikrishnakirtana suffix /ত(t)/ is used in locative case. Example: টালত মোর ঘর নাহি পড়বেশি।

হাড়ীত ভাজ নাহি নিতি আবেশী || (C.33)

In Srikrishnakirtana: সমুখ দীঘে পড়িলে বন্দী (Danka, No.-6,9, P.38) the use of /ত/ in locative case In a special feature of Skk. But in modern Bengali this /ত/
becomes /তে/ with the edition of /৫/, which is itself a locative form Sanskrit. Example, /থেকে আঁক কে রবে বলে /। This double use of 7th case affix (সপ্তম) had its earlier manifestation in Srikrishnakirtana, For e.g.-- বাটিত সম্পত্তি দান করি তার আপনার (Tambulkhanda, Pad No.21, P.11), etc.

**Tense (কাল)**

i) We do not get any example of habitual past (নিত্য কাল) in Caryapada. But some such examples can be found in Srikrishnakirtana:

a. কথোদিন বাকিরো নে দিনে য মনাঙ্গ (Bankhanda, Pad No.-19, P.112)

b. পূৃণ ঘট পাতী বড়ায় চাহি ত মঙ্গল (Radhabiraha, Pad No.-17, P.137)

The habitual past past/ইত(ইt) /also occurred in simple past.
Example: কিনা বিষ লিখিত কপাল (Radhabiraha, Pad No.--21, P.139)

ii) Compound Tense (যৌগিক কাল)

Examples of Compound Tense (যৌগিক কাল) are not available in Caryapada. However, it is used, for the first time in Bengali literature in Srikrishnakirtana. For e.g.-

a. এই রাজা যমুনাত পাতিত্যাচ্ছে নানা (Naukakhanda, Pad No-5, P.56)

b. তে মোর নিঃশীল বাণী (Bangsikhanda, Pad No-36, P.128)

c. সত ভাগ আঁকে নুনিত্যাছ তোমে (Bharkhanda, Pad No-10, P.69) etc.

1.8. **Elements of Asamiya, Oriya, Maitheli etc. in Srikrishnakirtana:**

Bhojpuri or Bhojpuriya, Maithili, Magahi, Oriya, Bengali and Asamiya--

These six new Indo-Aryan languages belong to the family of Magadhi group of
languages. Among them, Bengali has a close relationship with Oriya and Asamiya. In fact, originally these three linguistic streams belonged to the same linguistic tri confluence which can be compared to a great river. The stream of Oriya started separating as early as thirteenth-fourteenth century. Separation of Asamiya begun a bit later, in late 16th century.71

Srikrishnakirtana was written in the first half of the fifteenth century, i.e., more or less midway between the thirteenth and sixteenth century. Thus it is natural that some common elements of both Oriya and Asamiya would be present in the language of Srikrishnakirtana, which were above present in all six languages of the Magadhi group mentioned earlier. Later, through process of evolution, some elements have been transformed to different forms in different languages, and in some languages, a few elements have been abandoned altogether. Thus in Srikrishnakirtana, we find some such words, or formations which in old Asamiya and Oriya. Even in modern Asamiya, a few of these elements are present. In this context, Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay in his ‘Origin and Development of Bengali Language’ writes: “The genuineness of the work is borne out by the remarkably archaic character of the forms, which agree with such widely distant dialects as North Bengali and Assamese and some of its expressions are found in early Oriya.”72 Banikanta Kakati also observes that though written in early Bengali, the works contains number of the earliest Assamese formations and feathers: “Another important work has been claimed as a purely Bengali work, but which nevertheless
preserves the earliest Assamese formation in Srikrishnakirtana of Badu Chandidas."  
On the otherhand, that early Bengali retained close association with Maithili language has been admitted by Suniti Kumar Chattapadhyay. In his ODBL, he writes: “The Maithili Brahmans were renowned for their Sanskrit learning, and right down to the 16th century, Mithila used to be the resort of students from Bengal and other parts of Eastern India (R.D. Banerjee, Op.cit. PP 130ff). The Brahmans of Mithila did not despise their Mother-tongue and we have an unbroken literary record in Maithili from the beginning of the 14th century, probably even earlier, down to the present day.”

In this background, we can easily surmise that the same words and symptoms of Maithili language came to Bengal and other parts of Eastern India through the students who had their academic grooming there and it is no wonder that in Srikrishnakirtana this infiltration is manifested. It has already been established that Baru Candidas was a poet with vast learning and liberal bent of mind. He used, accepted and adopted whatever was available and found suitable for his poem, may it be classical literature, folk literature or oral tradition. Hence it is quite natural to expect some influence of Maithili in his work.

Now let us cite examples of influence or infiltration of words of different languages in his work:

1) In Srikrishnakirtana we find some words which are still used in Assamese: For e.g. আই P.36,55(mother); একে P.138 (="একটি"); ৪ঠ P.4,13(="ঠেক");Beng. ঠেকঃ
Compare with As. 4#f P. 12,59,79 (<Pkt. कल्ल|Skt. कल्ल>) As. कल्ल and O. कल्ल: खेल P.24 (= थुग), As. खेल: गुड़ा P.81,120 (<Skt. गुड़क>) गोपा० P.19 (<Pkt. गोहा०<Skt. गोहा०>, meaning, pray or complain), Hindi. गोहा०, O. गोहा०, As. गोहा०:

जिठ P. 38, As. जिठ, lizard; तिर S.11,33,36,52, As. तिर० for wife; दहि P. 52, As. दहि:

धामली P.8,14,20, As. धामली: नई P.116,120,130 (<नै०), As. नै०; बाट P.22, 37, 38, 46; सोक P.10,15,23, to me. Use of some case endings in Srikrishnakirtana are still in vogue in Assamese, i.e. meaning “to me,” in Brahmaputra valley—it is / सोकाम/ meaning ‘be quick or morning’. There are some words which have been used in old Assamese like Ramayana of Madhav Kandali and also in later Bengali poem. In the Ayodhakanda of Madhav Kandali, we find / पाइला० / P.7,10,15,18 (= पाइलाम), this /०/ suffix has been used as a 1st per. present perfect (बर्तमान समापिका क्रिया). पितृसम जिठ भाइ आनिबाक याँ०.

In Chaitanyabhagabat we find, तब बर्दो श्रीकृष्णचैतन्य महेश्वर।

ii) Oriya or Oriya-like usage of Srikrishnakirtana: For e.g. आयर P.6,63,83, O. अरर = आर: उलट P.15,99,100, B.० उलट + इ suffix. काप P.30, O. काप, mod.B. काप: काप P.12,59,79, O. काप, Skt. कल्ल: कोन P.10,33,42, O. कोन: गुड़ा P.81,120, O. गुड़ा: गोपा० P.19, O. गोहा०: तधन P.9,76,80, O. तधन: तिर P.11,33,36,(< जी०) O. तिर०; तोड़ P.1,5,6,7, O. तुक; मचल P.81, O. मच आ. mod.B. मच: मेलु P.81, O. मेलु mod.B. मेलु etc. Moreover, some other Oriya-like usage is available Srikrishnakirtana: आउटो P.95, O. आउट: हच्छन P.31, O. हच्छन <Skt. फ्ल्ङद्द>; फ्ल्ङद्दण P.81/ हातीतन P.81, O. हातीतन etc.
iii) Maithili elements in Srikrishnakirtana: P.5,6,18; P.126,136; P.1. In Maithili, the use of /&/ and / which may be taken as an element of old pronunciation which is also discernible in old Asamiya. In Apabhransha sing. instrumental 3 case affix (তৃতীয়), we find use of /&/ in all three genders. This usage is comparable to Bengali /&/ or /&/ Marathi /&/ /Maithili/ / etc. In Srikrishnakirtana, & P.1; in Prakrit also this /&/ occurs in fam. inst. sing. & P.38(Mai. & = &); काने P.3, Skt. pkt. का, Mai. का, /&/ case affix; कलि P.12, Mai. कलि ; केरोअल P.60, Mai. करুণাল OB. হৃদৈল C.8,13; (Skt. &); তিরি P.11,33,36,52, Mai. দীর্ঘ ; দীহ P.30, Mai. দীহী, সোন P.57, Mai. সোন (Skt. সুর্নি > pali সোন, for gold ) etc. Many other similar Maithili features are present in Srikrishnakirtana.

1.9. Linguistic specialities of Srikrishnakirtana and its distinctiveness:

A modern reader, if he to read Srikrishnakirtana, would face serious difficulty to follow its language. As Sukumar Sen says: The remark is just and aptly made. The merit and individuality of the language of this work is undeniable. The crafty use of classical and folk simile, ornamental use of rhetorics along with composite use of words taken from Tadbhaba, Tatsama, Semi-tatsama and Deshi sources coupled with Prakrit words all these mingled together to give his language a unique character which is
aesthetically invaluable. While assessing the language and poetic beauty of Srikrishnakirtana, Suniti Kumar Chattapadhyay observes:

"The language had all its Bengali characteristics fully established during this period, so that form the speech of the Caiyas it was transformed into that of the Srikrishnakirtana. The post positions in the declension were fully established; the conjugation becomes active in the past and future forms of the transitive verbs, and the system of pronominal affixation to the past and future bases came in, though it was not fully established till the 15th century and later. The old matra-Vṛtta metre, of 16 or 15 mora, found in Caiyas, became by an arrangements of aksaras, a syllabic meter of 8+6=14 aksaras or syllables during this period; tendencies towards the development of this special meter of Bengali, the 'Payar' metre found also in Assamese and Oriya, are noticeable in the old Bengali period and were possibly present in common Eastern Magadhan (Apabhramsa Magadhi of the East)."  

We can examine the validity of this statement of the renowned savant analysing examples for Srikrishnakirtana:

i) Phonetic specialities of language

a) /অ-কর (a) /or / আ-কার (ৈ) / if followed by/ ই (i) or /উ (u)/ becomes Diphthong (ডিসর), which gives little time for pronouncing the second syllable. For e.g.-- নিদাঙ্গী P.122; (ছুমাড়ানি); ভেল P.2,5,9,13; হইলো P.121 etc.

b) Abundance of nasal aspirate (মহাপ্রাণ বর্ণ), For e.g.- আমি P.5,122,125,43>mod.B. আমি:কাহ P.2,3,68,>mod.B. কানু (< কৃষ্ণ); তেন P.54,68,82>mod.B. তেন (= অল্প); মেহ
c) Nasalized vowel (নাসিক), Nasal consonant (নাসিক) and cerebral (স্ক্রিন্ড) are widely used. At present this symptom is prominent only in Rarhi and Jharkhandi dialects. Though these sounds are hard (স্ক্রিন্ড) in pronunciation, in these areas (Bankura, Jharkhand, Midnapore etc.) the practice is still prevalent. Chandidas adopted these features from the current speech of the people to infuse strength in his language. With regard to spelling, he also followed the distinctive pronunciation of this language. This precision, liveliness and mobility are the speciality of his poetic genius. For examples, Cerebral (স্ক্রিন্ড) resulting out of cerebralization (স্ক্রিন্ডভন); আক্ষর P.81(<Skt. আক্ষর <Skt. আক্ষর); কান্ড P.82(<Skt. কান্ড) Pkt. কান্ড; কান্ড); জালিম P.14,47,95(<Skt. জালিম); বটুল P.3,16 (<Skt.বটুল >Skt. বটুল ) etc. Examples of Spontaneous cerebralization (স্ক্রিন্ডভন) ; গঞ্জড়ী P.94(<Skt. গঞ্জড়ী); গঞ্জড়ী P.81 (গঞ্জড়ী); ঠাই P.1,2,127 (<হানে) etc. In Srikrishnakirtna, examples of nasalization are numerous. For e.g.-- আওলা P.81(<skt.আমল); আকোড P.18(<Skt. আকোড); কাঁচা P.39,47 (<Skt.কাঁচ); কাঁয়ল P.92(<কাঁয়ল); ঠাই P.30,106,108(<Skt. ঠাই); জিউরে P.47 (<Skt. জিউরে ) etc. Now e.g.of Spontaneous Nasalization: উচিতে P.128; উচিত P.125 (অক্ষর চরণগুলো আবাদ ); একে একে P.2,13,30; কাহারি P.2,4,10,11 (<Skt. কাহারি> Pkt. কাহারি > ‘কাহার’, In enderment, but the / খিম/ in a case of double nasals- a vowel and a consonant sitting together in nasalized form. This peculiarity was also current in contemporary speech habits.
d) Contraction of vowel (জ্ঞাপকোচ) or blending (সংক্র) is one of the important features of Srikrishnakirtana. Normally two vowel sounds combine together, but in some cases one vowel is lost in the process: For e.g--

At times, vowels of two different words also has came in formation of conjunction (সংক্র) 'অ+অ+ অ = অল্পাতু P.26 (<অজ + অম = অল্পাতু >অল্প + অউ= অল্পাতু)

e) Compound words; Assimilation of two or more co-related words are called compound word. This kind of contraction gives the language structural precision and saves it from unnecessary elaboration. Srikrishnakirtana has plenty of such usage. For e.g--
f) Proverbs and maxims: To express an idea with minimum words and make the language pointed and forceful proverbs and maxims are used. Bengali language is very rich in this regard. Poet Baru Chandidas was quite addicted in using this method. We can have a glimpse of the aesthetic taste mingled with perception of reality of the poet through the use of such proverbs and maxims. It requires special mention that proverbs used by Baru Chandidas gave remarkable exposition of different characters, particularly of Radha. Dankhanda is the richest part in respect of proverbs and maxims and mostly these are uttered by Radha. This gives Radha an identity quite in conformity with a traditional damsel of rural Bengal. Same examples of such usages:

i) দেখিল পাকিল বেল গাছের উপরে।

আরাতিল কাক তাক ভোরিতে না পারে। (Dankhanda, Pad. No.-13, P.18)

(Modern version is বেল পাকিল কাকের আশা নাই।)
ii) মাকড়ের হাতে যেহ কুনা নামিকল (Dankhanda, Pad No-43, P.29)

iii) চারি পাস চাঙ্গো যেন বনের হরিশ ল

নিজ মাসে জগতের বৈরী (Dankhanda, Pad No-49, P.31)

iv) হাথ বাড়ামিলে কি চাঙ্গের লাগ পাই (Bharkhanda, Pad No-17, P.71)

(Modern version is রামন হর্জে চাঙ্গে হাত বাড়ায়া )

v) কাটল ঘাড়ে লেজে দেখ কত | (Radhabiraha, Pad No-69, P.157) mod.B. ‘কাটল ঘাড়ে নুনের ছিটে’- a proverb widely used at the present time. Moreover, there are some superstitions or folk beliefs that we trace in the work :

i) কোপ আসুন খন্তে পাতে বাড়ামিলে ল |

হাটী জিণি আয়র উঠট না মানিলে || (Bangsikhandha, Pad No-28, P.125)

ii) শুন কলসী লাই সথি আলে জে |

বাখার শিয়ল মোর ভাঙিনে জে || (Bangsikhandha, Pad No-28, P.125)

iii) কাঙ্গে কুন্তু লাটাঁ তেলী জে |

সুখেন ভালত বসি কাঙ্গে নাচে রাই || (Bangsikhandha, Pad No-28, P.125)


g) Concord of words (শব্দ সংহতি): In literature precision of expression and condensation of description through word concord are great qualities. These qualities abound in Srikrishnakirtana as shown in earlier sections on সাজ্জি and সবস . However, we add some other general examples :

i) দীলার কাটিল খন মুদু দীর্ঘ কেশ |

তাত মুরের পুচ দিল সুবেশ ||

চন্দ্রতিলকে আতি শোভিত কপালে ||
In describing Krishna’s physical adjectives and superlative adjectives are freely used. Designating Krishna as ‘বনমালী’ adds beauty to the rythme and at the same time bestows a new dimension to the expression. ‘বন’ and ‘মালী’ by themselves are not capable of signifying anything special, but if we accept বন as garden and মালী as gardener, then the expression assumes a new beauty. Moreover, ‘বন’ can be taken as Bridavan and damsels of the village as flowers, then the sentence ‘বনমালীতে কেলি’ becomes more significant since this ‘কেলি’ or frolicing romping is performed with none other than the damsels of the Gopa village. This way use of proper words opens up a beautiful picture before our eyes from the nature itself.

ii) আহি চুনরেখ মেহ্ম দেখি ।
কেটর বাটুল দুই আথি প্রফে মাহা পুট বাবা দওহীমে ।
উন্নত গণে কেচোল ধীমে । (Janmakhananda, Pad No-9, Pp.3-4)

Here only nouns and adjectives are arranged to create this special effect of symetry.

iii) দেখিলো প্রথম নিশ্চি পুরন সুন তো কেলী
সব কথা কহিতাটো তোল্কারে হে ।
বসিঙ্গা কসম্ভতলে সে কৃষ্ণ করিলো কেলো
চুমিল বনন আঘারে হে । (Radhabiraha, Pad No-2, P.131)
Here a proper balance has been maintained between the nouns of place and all other words used.

iv) কে না বংশী বাণে বড় কালিনী নদীকুলে ।
   কে না বংশী বাণে বড় মর্য এ গোঠ গোঠুলে ॥

(Bangshikhanda, Pad No-2, P.116)

Here true Beng./বাণে/, /গোঠ/, /বংশী/, ts. /গোঠুলে/, Beng. and ts. mixed /নদীকুলে/ etc. gives a proper symmetry between words of different origins. If it were written in other this way, say,

কে না বংশী বাণে বড় কালিনী নদীকুলে ।
   কে না বংশী বাণে বড় মর্য এই গোঠ গোঠুলে ॥

then there would be a fall in rhyme and phonetic beauty would have been lost, making it completely out of tune.

h) Prosodic order of Srikr

With regard to the rhyme pattern of Srkrishnakirtana, Sukumer Sen says:

“যেৌড়শালক্ষিক পাদাকুলক পজারিকা হইতে চতুর্দশকর পয়ারের বিকাশ”

In Bengali verses, mainly three rhyme patterns are normally used: সঘাতবৃত্ত বা কলাবৃত্ত, অনাতবৃত্ত বা মিশ্রবৃত্ত এবং নবর্তী বা দলবৃত্ত.

In Caryapadas, we can trace the presence of যোনিমাত্রক পাদাকুলক, চব্দ্যাতঃকর

লেহা and মিশ্রনাতঃক চূলাইষা rhyme pattern of Sanskrit Prakrit origin:

সারা নিদ গেল বহুঢ়া রাগান ।
কানের চোরে নিল কাগাই মাগাগ (C.2)
Here mora is 16, “গে” of “গেল”, “নে” of “কনে” and “চে” and “ব” “ঝেল” are pronounced in short. Bengali rhyme pattern has become more explicit in Srikrishnakirtana.

The পায়ার of 14 mora (8+6) used in Srikrishnakirtana along with লব্ধ ত্রিপদী of 20 mora or 6+6+8 and 26 mora variety of দীর্ঘ ত্রিপদী are actually formations evolved from Caryapada. This variety of rhyme is called নাভাবত্ত. In this variety, we find plenty of flexibility of pronunciation. According to one critic this rhyme has assumed a different form under the influence of popular ways of pronunciation prevalent in rural Bengal. These symptoms are fully manifested in Srikrishnakirtana. For e.g-

পায়ার 8/6 মাতক —  
তামুল লাইআ যাহা পরাণের দৃষ্টি।
বকুলতওত আছে সে সুন্দরী সতী।
যোড় হাত করী তাক বুলিহ বচনে।
আমাক পাঠায়লে রাধা নান্দের নন্দনে।

(Tambulkhanda, Pad No-7, P.6)

Here তামুল, সুন্দরী, আমাক, নন্দের নন্দনে—all these words are conjoined words where all the conjunct consonants have one mora each. It is a bright example of নাভাবত্ত পায়ার because the contraction of two consonants one mora, represents actual they giving in all 14 moras instead of 16 mora. Another example:

নীল জলদ সম কুণ্ডলভার।
বেকত বিজ্ঞু শোভে চম্পকমাল।
শিশুত শোভে তোর কামসিন্ধু।
ছাত্র সম যেহ উঃ গেল সুর।
Here the verses of the first three verses are of two mora each. All other verses belong to one mora category. Here it is to be noted that first two lines resemble the samhita of Caryapada of 16 moras whereas the rest falls in the category of sthana.

Examples of flawless and pure pronunciation are also there. For example:

The poet actually has a unique style by accommodating popular pattern of pronunciation. This rare capability proves how great his poetic genius was.

1.10. Relation of Srikrishnakirtana with modern Bengali language:

If we search for the origin of some very important phonetic and aesthetic specialities of modern Bengali language, we have no other alternative but to depend on Skk, the only literary work available of old mid-Bengali literature. Suniti Kumar Chattapadhyay says: “The grammar of the speech of the ‘Srikrishnakirtana’ gives a clue to many of the forms of new Bengali.”

Taking clue from this observation, we can find the relation of Srikrishnakirtana with modern Bengali literature.

i) Vowel Harmony (শব্দরসস্তিতি)—is one of the special feature of Bengali language. For example, দেশি>দিশি, বিলাদি>বিলিতি, মুলা>মুলো, মোজা>মুজা, যাস>যেধা etc. In a sense, this vowel harmony had its origin in the age of Srikrishnakirtana. In this work, we find a number of examples of vowel harmony that tallies with modern Bengali; for
example—-আপনেP.10,12,20,21/আপুনী P.11,19,99; এখনী/ঃখুনী P.43,104, কার্ণীী P.126,136(<Skt. কাশিনিকা>* কথিনিকা>কার্ণীী), কৃষিণী P.30,57,116,121(<Skt.কৃষিণী > কার্ণীী> কার্ণীী, due to vowel harmony). ভিনী P.126/ ভিনীী P.128 ;
চাহু প.1(<Skt.চাহুতে >Pkt. চাহুী>সক্ক চাহুী,verb)/চাহুীী P.95. Here the word is used as a noun, that is one who dances, so the word should have been চাহুীীী, but because of vowel harmony it becomes চাহুীীী. There are other examples of this kind.

ii) In Srikrishnakirtana, the difference between দীর্ঘরা and হ্রস্বরা is not always properly demarcated. For example: Such dual pattern of spelling signifies that the system of spelling was yet to assume a definite form, and in fact, laxity in this regard knew no bounds. For e.g.—
P.12,43,144,146; উটীলা P.101/উটীলা P.114;
কলিণী P.55,56; কপূর P.8/কপূর P.151; কাকৃতি P.48,143/কাকৃতী P.9,54,77;
কেনি P.34,59,90/কেনি P.3.87,12; ছাড়ি P.18,154/ছাড়ি P.14,24,28 etc.

Of course in most of NIA words compensatory lengthening (করিপূর্ণ দীর্ঘিভিন্ন) was accepted almost as a rule. This trend is current in modern Bengali also. Some such words are : আগে P.112,126(<Skt. আগে>আগে>আগে); অজে P.4,7,9,12 (<Skt. অজে>পীত.অজে>অজ + ই ); অঠ P.22(<Skt. অঠ>পীত.অঠ>অঠ); আনীচান P.1(<Skt. আনীচান>পীত.আনীচান>আনীচান); কালি P.12,59,79 (<Skt.কালি>পীত.কালি>কালি>ই for surety ); হাতী P.77,78,120 (Skt.হাতী>পীত.হাতী>হাতী>ই, খাদ্যার্থ); ভাল P.10,12,16,19(<Skt. "ভাল" >পীত. ভাল>ভাল) etc.

iii) As in modern Bengali there is no gender distinction in pronouns in Skk, except for first person (উক্তস্লুষ্ট). In pronouns there are two forms, general and honorific. Thus, in first person :-
Singular: - Skt. m(Gen.) AP* OB > MB, In Skk with this /m/ different case endings are used; such as mO > mO; mO, mO, mO, mO, mO, mO, mO etc. Among these mO and mO are still used in Bengali poetry and in some local dialects. With this “mO”, at times ‘mO’ is added to make it ‘mO’, Plural of ‘mO’, mean. Skt. (Gen.) > Pkt. (Gen.) > Pkt. with this plural case ending was used to make a new pronoun from the ‘mO’, the pronoun originated, which is a regular word in modern Bengali.

Second person:

Singular: - Skt. m(Gen.) Pkt. and OB > MB, Skk “বেশ চরিতে মেনি শিক্ষা দেয়াল মনে” (Dankhanda, Pad No-25, P.22) became Example:

Locative case (অবিক্রিয়া): - তোকে P.41,97,101/তোকে P.17,18,19,22

Genitive (সংক্রিয়া): - তোর P.2,5,6,8,9 ; তোক P.130. Both তোক and তোর are current in modern Bengali and with case-endings, তোর and তোক are also prevalent, in plural

Second Person

Plural: - Skt. * তুমাকে, *হুমাইন (=হুমাইন) > Pkt. তুমাকে > Pkt. তুমাইন > Pkt. তুমাইন > OB তোমাইন > MB তোমা, Skk. তোমাইন. With this তোমাইন, বিবর্ণ case ending was added to make it তোমার > from which modern Bengali তোমার. Plural /র/ was added to make it তোমারা, from which modern Bengali তোমারা. Here we can see, from তোমাইন which is হ and হ, combined only হ is abandoned in modern Bengali.

Third Person Pronoun (প্রথমপূর্ব সর্বনাম) : - Skt. > Magadhi pkt. > Skk For e.g.--- কে না বাঁশি বাএ রাখা হ না কোন জন।

(Bangsikhand, Pad No-2, P.116)
In modern Bengali /সে/ is retained intact as third person singular.

iv) Verb forms (ফ্রামপাদ):-

Present tense : If the root verb (ধাতু) is অ-কারণ, then last syllable was /হ/ or /দহ/ For e.g.-- আপি P.133/আপি প.66, 117, 119; আপি P.5; করি P.22, 34, 58; চলি আই P.80; ছাড়ি P.39 etc.

i) অহং লা রাখা লেখা করি দন | (Dankhanda, Pad No-24, P.22)

ii) রাখা সদে চলি আই হাট মনুনা | (Brindabankhanda, Pad No-6, P.80)

Second Person (মধ্যমপুরুষ)/সি/---উপেক্ষা P.20, কাদিসি রাএ P.98; সুপিসি P.50; ঘোসি P.20, 29, 39 etc.

In modern Bengali ইস, originated from সি, is used. Examples: আহিস, করিস, গুনিস, দিস, নিস etc. Direct case-ending of second person is /হ/ is developed from imperative/ ত/। This /হ/ is after used in Srikrishnakirtana. For e.g.-- আন,উঠ, এড়া, ওলাঘ, কর, চলঙ্গ, ছাড়, ত্যাগ etc. In old Bengali also we find similar examples: করেছ C.21; খনন C.21; খাব C.2, 10; চাল P.3 etc. The modern Bengali has retained this system almost unaltered, in regional dialects also the case is the same. Example: আন, কর, চল, ছাড়, পড়, বল, মর etc. In all modern Indo-Aryan languages, this pattern is maintained. For example: Hindi- তু কর, or তুমি করো etc. Assamese: তো কর etc.

In Srikrishnakirtana, the case-ending /এ/ is used mostly in third person present tense. This /এ/ came from Sanskrit /তি/। Examples: Skt. করি>করই>করে, that means Skt. তিচং, this becomes a after being muted with the /হ/ that sits immediately after it. /হ/. In Srikrishnakirtana-- করে P.90; কারে P.129; ওনে P.52; ডুরে P.101; ধরে P.1, 3, 25; বাজে P.6, 24, 57 etc. In modern Bengali this /এ/ suffix* has remained intact.

Past Tense (অতীত কাল )----

In Srikrishnakirtana, eternal past tense ending with /ত/ is only available in first person only. Example- কহিতে P.146; দিতে P.146, P.88; জানিতে P.88, 146; দিতে P.112; নাসিতে P.88
(58)

<রায় অর্থমণ্ডল> ; কান্তো P.88 etc. In second person, it was not used in Srikrishnakirtana. As present, use /ম/ as ending of past tense is used in first, second and third person at random. This usage was not found in Caryapada. In this regard, words to depict past tense with /ম/ endings used in Srikrishnakirtana assumed a new significance.

The /ল/ originating from /ম/, an ending of past tense, is used in first person in Srikrishnakirtana. Examples: অনিলা P.69, 107; উন্নারিলা P.40; এড়িলা P.7; কারিলা P.8, 11, 19, 44; মাল্লী P.143 etc. The /ল/ is still used in Assamese. From this /ল/, modern Bengali has developed /দম/; For e.g.-- Skk কারিলা >Muk. করিলাঙ্গ >mod.B. করিলাঙ্গ। In Srikrishnakirtana /দ/ used in the place of /ল/ for e.g.--বিলু P.99, 103. In Srikrishnakirtana, only once /দ/ is used in place of /ম/ হইল P.160. In modern West Bengal, this /দ/ is used quite frequently in some regional dialects; especially in Midnapore, Bankura, Hoogly etc.

There is a song of Tagore, ‘দিয়ে গেলু বসন্তের এই গানখানি (Gitabitan, P.276)

In Srikrishnakirtana, future tense is mainly depicted by case-ending /ব/. originated from Sanskrit /ব/। Some examples:

First person case-ending /ইব/ আনিব P.136; এড়িব P.34, 82; চাহিব P.12, 101, 120; জাহিব P.53, 56, 58; etc.

In Chaste Bengali (সাঁওতালা) this use is still prevalent. In Srikrishnakirtana, the use of future tense related to second person is lesser than first and third person. We find the use of /ইব/ for this purpose only once: পাহিব P.156,

ঘরে ঘরে বুলে কাহ চাহ বড়রায় সেই থানে

তবে তার পাহিব দরশন ই।

(Radhabiniraha, Pad No-66, P.156)

/ইব/ : It is also used in the place of /ইব/ for second per. For e.g.--আইবি P.14, 40; বন্ধিতি P.156; নিমি P.126 etc. In mod. B and As. this /ইবি/ (ibi) applies to also for
second per. inf. Use of future tense in third person is in abundance in Srikrishnakirtana. Example: /হৃ/ - অদেশিব P.147; অসিব P.17, 119; কবিব P.10,17,24; খাইব P.36,48; হাড়িব P.52,1119 etc. It appears that the use of /হৃ/ was current in all three persons. Another important suffix in first person future was /ইবে/ For e.g.-- -এড়িবে P.30.32; জবিবে P.115 ; This suffix is also still used in chaste Bengali (SLB) But at present it is not used in respectable sense, but in Srikrishnakirtana such use was not uncommon : তাহার হাতে হীরে কংশাসুরের বিনাশে (Janmakhanda, Pad No-2,P.1) All these facts and formulation combined together show us the close relationship between the linguistic form of Srikrishnakirtana and Modern Bengali Language.

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