We have already dealt with the Rukmini-haraṇa legend in Sanskrit in both original and later creative works as well. Here we propose to discuss the presentation of the legend in various works of later Indian literatures namely, Bengali, Hindi, Gujrāti, Maithilī, Mālayālam Oriyā and Telugu and with a special reference to the Assamese literature. The original legend in various Sanskrit versions came to make a great impact on later Indian literatures and has reappeared in different and interesting forms.

THE RUKMINĪ-HARĀṆA LEGEND IN ASSAMESE LITERATURE:

The Rukmini-haraṇa legend is found extensively presented in the Assamese literature through different works composed from the mediaeval period up to the modern time.

THE WORKS OF ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARADEVA:

Śrī Śaṅkaradeva, popularly known as Mahāpuruṣa Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva of Assam, composed two prominent works e.g. 'the Rukmini-haraṇa-Kāvyā' (a poetical work), and the Rukmini-haran-Nāṭ (a dramatic work) on the basis of the original Rukmini-haraṇa legend in mediaeval period. Śrī Śaṅkara was
a great poet, philosopher, preacher and a progressive reformer. Prior to a discussion on these works of the saint poet, it is felt necessary to provide a brief introduction of the saint poet.

THE LIFE, AND WORKS OF ŚRI ŚAṆKARADEVA:

Śri Śaṅkaradeva, the saint poet flourished in the middle part of the 15th century A.D. in Assam. He was born in the Bhūyān family of Bardowā, or, Baṭadravā or Ālipukhūrī gaon of Nowgaon District, in the middle of Assam. He was the son of Kuśumvara Bhūyan and the grandson of pious Rājadhara. Śaṅkaradeva's mother was Satyasandhyā. Such a biographical account regarding Śri Śaṅkaradeva is met with in the Gurucarits (the biographical accounts of the preceptors). Further, we come to know of the saint poet from the biographical notes given by the poet himself in different works, including his Rukmini-haran Kāyva.

1 Śri Śaṅkar Deva was the descendant of the siromani Bhuyan Chandibar whom Durlabhnarayan, the king of Kamata, settled in Kamārupa about the middle of the fourteenth century. EHK. p. 204.

Sankara was born (1449-1569) in a Bhuyan family at Alipukhuri a place about sixteen miles from the present town of Nowgong on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. AFAL. p. 66.

2 rāja dharar mṛtyur satayā vāryavātak kale, ejanak upāsanā karivā, tene hāle putra labh /...... BGC.II.pp. 44-45.

.āśvina praveś pānṭadina vahi gaila......


3 tembuāṁi vandhe vaisāilā pravandhe varadōvā nāme grāma .. ....Kṣamivā doṣa āmāra // RIKS.529-531. p.97.
Sri Sankaradeva's literary works are still regarded as the most valuable treasure of Assamese literature. The literary and the cultural contributions of Sri Sankaradeva's and his chief followers headed by Sri Madhavdeva, have come to pass as Sañkarite literature and Sañkarite culture respectively.

The works of Sri Sankaradeva, can be classified in the following groups, viz. (i) the versified works — In this group we may include verse-works like the Hariścandra Upākhyāna, Balicalan, Rukmini-haran Kāvya, Amrt Manthan, Ajāmil Upākhyāna, and Kuruksetra; (ii) the Ānkiyā Nāts:— These are the dramatic works — like, the Cihnyātṛa (the play through picture), Kāliyadaman (the play on the subjugation of Kāli), Patnīprasād (the play on the favour of the consorts), Keliyopāl (the play on Gopālas sports), Rukmini-haran (the play on the abduction of Rukmini), Parijāt-haran (the play on taking away of Parijāta flower), and the Rāmviyaj-Nāṭ (the play on the victory of Rāma); (iii) the philosophical poetic works — In this category we have works like, the Nīminavasidha Samvad (the talk between king Nimi and the nine Siddhas or ascetics), Bhaktipradip (the light of devotion), Bhaktiratnākara (the

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This drama Cihnyātṛa is not available now. The very description of the performance of the Cihnyātṛa is met with specially in the Gurucarit of Ramcaran Thakur (about 1520-1600 A.D.)

GCR, p. 336.
store of the jewels of Bhakti), a work in Śaṅskrit, and Anādīpātan; (iv) the translations (in to Assamese)—like the Bhāgavata purāṇa, the Books — Ith, IIth, VIth (only the episode of Ajāmila), VIIIth (only the Amṛt manthan and the Balicalan stories), Xth, XIth, and XIIth and Uttarā-kāṇḍa Rāmāyaṇa (the last book of the Rāmāyaṇa); (v) the Gīts (songs) — like, the Bargīts (the superior songs, or noble numbers), the Bhaṭīmās; Ṭotay and Capay; (vi) Nām-prasaṅg (songs invoking the holy names of the Lord),—like Kīrttana (uttering of holy names), and Guṇmālā (a garland of attributes i.e. uttering or remembering the manifold qualities of the Lord).

PROPAGATION OF KRŚNA-BHAKTI : THE LITERARY OBJECTIVE OF THE POET ;

As a philosopher of the Vaiṣṇava cult, and as a religious preceptor, Śaṅkaradeva's intention was to preach and popularise Kṛṣṇabhakti (devotion to Kṛṣṇa) and the 'Ekāraṇ-nāndhārma (the religious faith in the form of absolute surrender at the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa by way of reciting His holy names)’ in the society, though his numerous literary

5 The Bhāṭīmās are a kind of prāṣasti-gītās (benedictory songs or devotional songs). Such Bhāṭīmās are of four types, viz. (1) Gurubhāṭīmā (benedictory song in the name of the preceptor), (ii) Rājbhāṭīmā (benedictory song in the name of king), (iii) Deva bhāṭīmā (benedictory song in the name of God), (iv) Nat Bhāṭīmā (the benedictory songs in the Aṅkiyā Nāṭs).
works and cultural performances. With this purpose in view, therefore, he used his literature as the medium of his propagation. Śrī Śaṅkaradeva took up the legend of Rukmini-haraṇa as it is very much associated with Lord Kṛṣṇa. As stated earlier, the saint poet composed two works based on the Rukmini-haraṇa legend, e.g. the Rukmini-haraṇ-Kavya, a versified work and the Rukmini-haraṇ-Nāṭ an Aṅkiyā Nāṭ, a dramatic work.

THE RUKMINI-HARAṆ KĀVYA OF ŚRĪ-SĀṆKARADEVA:

The Rukmini-haraṇ-Kāvyā, composed on the basis of the Rukmini-haraṇa pastime of Kṛṣṇa is one of the prominent versified work of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva.

It is a matter of investigation for the scholars as to which of these two works, i.e. the Rukmini-haraṇ-Kāvyā and the Rukmini-haraṇ Nāṭ of the saint poet may be the earlier composition. There is no adequate external evidence, however, to ascertain a definite period with regard to the composition of the works. From the records of the Kathāguru-Carit it is learnt that Śrī Śaṅkaradeva composed his work Bhaktipradīpā (literally meaning the light of devotion) on the basis of Sankara's creed was therefore based on the Gita and the Bhagavata. Sankar began preaching this creed to the people of his locality.

EHK, p. 207.

Besides producing far-reaching religious and social effects, the Sankorite movement gave a great impetus to the development of learning and literature in Assam... He himself composed a large number of texts... to expound his creed.

AEAL, p. 68.
materials borrowed from the Garuda-purāṇa and the Rukmi-
ni-haraṇa from the Harivamśa when he was in Baṭadrava. 7
It is not so clear whether it was the Rukmini-haraṇ-Kāvyā,
the versified work, or the Rukmini-haraṇ-Nāṭ, the dramatic
presentation of the legend. Yet from the reference of the
Harivamśa it appears to be the Rukmini-haraṇ-Kāvyā of the
poet. Because, it is stated by the poet himself that he
takes the theme from the Harivamśa version of the legend,
and adds matters from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version there
with so that it may be sweeter as the milk mixed with
honey. 8 On the other hand, the legend, presented in the
Nāṭ, the dramatic work is similar to the Bhāgavata-purāṇa
version of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend. From this point of
view also it becomes clear that the work mentioned above
must be the poetic work on the legend composed by
Śrī Śaṅkaradeva.

In this regard, Dimbeswar Neog, another prominent
writer of Assamese literature remarks that the Rukmini-
haraṇ-Kāvyā is one of the earlier composition of Śaṅkaradeva

7 taite garudapurāṇ cāī 'bhakati pradīp' karile;harivamśar
marā rukmini-haraṇ kariche/
KGC. p. 44.

8 eke harivamśa kathā amrta sāksāt /
āro bhāgavata kathā mīśra dilō tāt //
duyo kathā...............svāda ati pāy //
RīKS. Vandanā. 4-5. pp.1-2.
and he might have composed it while he stayed at Tembuānī. Belguri or at least at Dhuāhāt. This view seems to be supported by B.K. Baruah also.10

THE RUKMINĪ-HARAN KĀVYA : A SPECIAL DISCUSSION :

The Rukmini-haran Kāvya, the popular versified work of Śrī Śāṅkaradeva is met with in different editions and collections. The work is found in the form of the manuscripts of different periods written on Snāchīpāṭ (i.e. on the bark leaves of the Snāchī tree). Thus, an old copy of a manuscript is found in the Khatikuci Satra of Kāmarūpa district which was collected by H.N. Dutta Baruah, Dutta Baruah and Company, Nalbari, from Dharma Chandradeva Adhikari. The date of this manuscript may be placed some time before more than two hundred and seventy-five years from present.11

Another manuscript of the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya is found in the Gauhati University Library.12 The manuscript

9 The Rukmini-haran Kavya appears to be another early work of Śāṅkaradeva and he must have composed it while he stayed at Tembuānī, or at least at Belguri or Dhuāhāt. NLHAL. p.167.

10 Another Kavya of his younger age is Rukmini-haran (Abduction of Rukmini). AEAL. p.88.

11 kāmarupar khatikuci satrar adhikār pūjaniya śrīyekta... dharmacandrādeva... RHKS. Sampādakar nivedan.

12 Vide. MSS. No.517. (Snāchīpāṭīya) Gauhati University Library.
The manuscript is entitled as the 'Rukminī-haran-sār-Katā'.

This manuscript is found to have only fifty leaves as for its pages and is written on the Snāchī leaves. Most of the leaves are worn out on both sides. It appears also as a very old copy of the poem, the age of which may be probably not less than two hundred and fifty years. It is to be added that the manuscripts on the Snāchīpāṭ of the work 'Rukminī-haran-Kāvyā' are found from an early period.

MODERN PUBLICATIONS OF THE WORK:

The Rukminī-haran-Kāvyā of Sīrī Sākhara-deva already has appeared in printed publications. In this respect, the different editions and publications of Sīrī Harinarayan Dutta Baruah, Nalbari must be referred to. In 1962 the poem was selected as a text book in Assamese for the Degree course of the colleges under the University of Gauhati. Then for the benefit of the students, H.N. Dutta Baruah published an edition of the work with a valuable prefatory note by renowned scholar B.K. Kakati. Several editions of the work are published by the same publishing House (i.e. Dutta Baruah & Co.). The fifth edition of the Rukminī-haran-Kāvyā is published by Sīrī Munindra Narayan Dutta Baruah for Dutta

13 Vide covrr note. MSS.No.517(Snāchīpāṭ)Gauhati University Library.
A photostatic copy of the Manuscript is incorporated in the present work vide Annexure-A.

14 Materials collected from the Manuscript Department, Gauhati University Library.

15 Vide RHKS. Publisher's note, dated Gauhati, 20.9.62.
Baruah and Company from Gauhati in 1972. This edition also presents a valuable prefatory note by late B.K. Kakati. Thus the fifth edition of the work by Dutta Baruah and Company received wide circulation even to this date.

THE CONTENTS : MODE OF PRESENTATION :

In the beginning of the Rukmini-haranâ-Kâvya the author makes a salutation to Lord Krsna. Further, the main narration of the legend begins with a benedictory poem, styled Vandana consisting of six stanzas. The main work excluding the Vandana poem, is presented in twenty divisions, which may be described as Khandaas (Parts), or Adhyayas (Chapters) dealing with different aspects of the legend. The whole work consists of twenty-nine poems or cheds (pieces) of poems including the Vandana poem. Further, the work contains seven hundred and ninety five stanzas, including the six stanzas that occur in the benedictory poem.

THE SOURCE OF THE POEM :

As stated earlier, from the Kathâ-Gurucarita, we come to know that Sri Sankaradeva adopted his theme of the

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16 Vide, Ibid. Patani (Preface). pp. i - IV.
17 'Sri Krsnaya namah' /
    Ibid. p. 1.
18 jaya jaya jagannâtha jag-tara jîva /
    trailokya mohana sanâtana sadâ śiva //... / /
Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā mainly from the Harivamsā version and certain additions have been made on the basis of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the legend. Further, as mentioned above, the poet himself states that he makes a mixture of the sweet stories of Harivamsā and the Bhāgavata, so that the legend (i.e. the work) may be sweeter like milk mixed with honey.

In Chapter II of the present work, the narrations of the legend occurred in the Harivamsā as well as in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa are described in course of the presentation of the legend in Sanskrit versions. Therefore, we refrain from relating the legend of the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva here.

DEVIATIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL:

Though Śrī Śaṅkaradeva borrows the theme of his poem from the Harivamsā and the Bhāgavata-purāṇa versions of the legend, yet the legend is presented here with some deviations by dint of his own poetic genius.

It is already mentioned earlier that the Rukmini-harana legend is presented in the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva by way of making a combination of the versions of the legend occurring in both the Harivamsā and the Bhāgavata-purāṇa.

Śrī Śaṅkaradeva, in his work adds to the story of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa the incident of Kṛṣṇa's coronation
ceremony on the way to Kuṇḍina, as stated in the Harivamsa. Deviation is, however, noticed in this respect also. According to the Harivamsa version, Kṛṣṇa arrived at the city of king Kṛṣṇa and Kausāmbika and received their hearty worship. But according to the narration presented in the Rukmini-haran-Kavya, the city was Kauśāmbika, situated on the territory of Vidarbha, and the name of the king of Kauśāmbika or Kauśāmbi was Viśvaketu. Again, as stated earlier, the Harivamsa states that Kṛṣṇa made His journey to Kuṇḍina by the mighty bird Garuḍa to attend the Svayamvara ceremony of Rukmini. But the Rukmini-haran-Kavya describes that Kṛṣṇa came to Kuṇḍila (the term passes as thus in Sankaradeva’s works and other works of Assamese literature) by His chariot, driven by Dāruka from Dvārakā and He was accompanied by Vedanidhi, the Brāhmaṇa messenger from Rukmini. In this respect, the author follows the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version. Further, the incidents, like the attendance of Jarasandha and other kings at the coronation ceremony of Kṛṣṇa celebrated in the city of Kaiśika, the presence of king Bhīṣmaka there in the ceremony, the conversation between Kṛṣṇa and Bhīṣmaka, and also Kṛṣṇa’s

20 ekedine pālā gaityā vidarbha simā //
kauṣāmbika nāme eka dekhilā nagarī // ....................
RHKS. 163. p. 28.

21 viśvaketu nāme rājā kauṣāmbira pati // ....................
Ibid. 164. p. 28.

22 divyaratha khāna sāji prama utsuke // ....................
Ibid. 149,150,151,159. pp. 26-27.
suggestion to Bhīṣmaka to cancel the Svayamvara ceremony of Rukmini, which occur in the Harivamsa version are not met with in the Rukmini-haranā-Kāvya. Moreover, the incidents, like Kṛṣṇa return to Mathura, the dismissal of the first Svayamvara ceremony of Rukmini as related in the Harivamsa version are not met with in the work of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva. It is noticed that unlike the Harivamsa version of the legend, the arrangement of the Svayamvara ceremony of Rukmini at Kuṇḍina twice, is not mentioned in the versified work of Śaṅkaradeva.

Notwithstanding certain deviations noticed, in the presentation of the major incidents from the description of the Svayamvara of Rukmini up to the marriage ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini at Dvārakā leading to their happy union, it appears that Śrī Śaṅkaradeva has followed the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the legend. In some matters, Śrī Śaṅkaradeva has deviated from both the Harivamsa and the Bhāgavata-purāṇa versions of the legend as noted below:

First of all, deviations are found in respect of presentation of characters in the work. For instance, the names, like 'Cāṣīprabhā' for the queen (i.e. the mother of Rukmini), 'Vedanidhi' for the Brāhmaṇa messenger which are found in the work of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva are not met with in the Harivamsa version, or the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version
of the legend. Like wise, the character, of 'Sumālinidhi' (the nurse of Rukmiṇī by that name) is poet's own creation. Similarly, the name Viśvaketu, the king of Kauśambi is also not found in the original purānic versions. Viśvaketu, however, represents Kaisīka, mentioned in the Harivamsa-purāṇa version of the legend.

Deviations are also noticed in respect of presentation of some other incidents also in the Rukmiṇī-haran-Kāvyā as noted below.

King Viśvaketu's accompaniment with his Lord Kṛṣṇa being well-armed in His journey to Kuṇḍina, his role in the battle field for sake of Kṛṣṇa, and Viśvaketu's fight against the rival kings and prince Rukmi etc. are all new additions presented by the author of his own in the work. Deviation is also noticed in the introduction on the interesting and farcical scene created by the author i.e. the humorous scene where Vedanidhi, the Brāhmaṇa messenger got fainted.

Again, as stated in the chapter II, of the present work, the Bhāgavata-purāṇa states that while Balarāma came

\[ \text{Ibid. 189. p. 32.} \]

\[ \text{Ibid. 298. p. 54.} \]

\[ \text{Ibid. 502-511. pp. 91-92.} \]

\[ \text{Ibid. 154-160. pp. 26-27.} \]
to know that Kṛṣṇa went to Kuṇḍina alone to abduct Rukmiṇī and also of the plot of the enemy kings against Kṛṣṇa then he, being moved by his brotherly affection towards Kṛṣṇa started for Kuṇḍina accompanied by other Yadava heroes for Kṛṣṇa's help. But in the Rukmini-harana-Kāvyā, the incident is described in deviation, that goes as follows: Daivakī (the name passes thus in Śrī Saṅkaradeva's works) came to know that Kṛṣṇa went to Kuṇḍila alone for Rukmiṇī. She further, heard of the strategy of the opponent kings against Kṛṣṇa. At this, as a mother, Daivakī was naturally perturbed and she called upon Balarāma and Sātyaki, and asked them to go for Kṛṣṇa's help. Balarāma pacified Daivakī with consolation explaining the extraordinary power of Kṛṣṇa, who could alone overpower the three worlds in a moment. Balarāma, however, got prepared to go to Kuṇḍila being well-armed in order to help Govinda.

Some more deviations are noticed in the poem in respect of the description of the battles also. In Śaṅkaradeva's work, the fights between Kṛṣṇa and the opponent kings, Kṛṣṇa and Śiśupāla and also between

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27 ekeśvare laṇiyève gailanta govinda/
śuni devakīra nayanata nāse ninda //
putra balabhanda gada sātyakika āni ......
Ibid. 312-316. pp. 56-57.

28 henaśuni daivakīka matanta balāi/
govindaka lāgi āi kichu cintā nāi //
ekale trailokya kṛṣne jinivāka pāre /...

29 Ibid. 296-311. pp. 54-56.

Balarama and Jarasandha\textsuperscript{31} are described separately. On the other hand, the descriptions of the battles are more elaborate than in the original versions. Thus the fierce fight between Kṛṣṇa and Sīṣupāla is described in two long poems in the work of Śrī Saṅkaradeva\textsuperscript{32}.

Again, it is stated in the work of Śrī Saṅkaradeva that at the time when Sīṣupāla got defeated in the hands of Kṛṣṇa then Kṛṣṇa was almost prepared to kill him. But at that moment He remembered His own commitment made earlier to His aunt (i.e. the mother of Sīṣupāla) and hence refrained from killing Sīṣupāla. The poet, further refers to the mysterious story, regarding the birth of Sīṣupāla of which mention is made in the chapter V of the present work with reference to the Sabhā Parva of the Mahābhārata. Such a reference to the birth of Sīṣupāla does not occur in the original version of the legend. It is further stated in the poem that at the very defeat of Sīṣupāla, Kṛṣṇa with a sharp weapon cut the crown and the hair of Sīṣupāla. The arrow pursued Sīṣupāla in such a way that he began to run without any turn backward in order to save his life.\textsuperscript{33} This

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31] Ibid. 404-429, pp. 73-77.
\item[32] Vide. Ibid. pp. 62-70
\item[33] ehi śarapāte āji mora prāna dhāy /
  dileka lavara rājā pāchakā nācāi //... ...//
  Ibid. 373. p. 69.
\end{footnotes}
interesting scene is also a deviation, being a penpicture of poet.

Moreover, the attractive description of the terrific fight between Balarama and Jarasandha which occurs in the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā is not met with in such an elaborate form in the purānic versions of the legend.

Like wise, in the description of the war preparation of prince Rukmī new matters are noticed, which do not occur in the original versions of the legend. In Śri Sankaradeva's work, it is stated that a huge number of soldiers, on chariots, elephants, horses and foot got ready to march against Kṛṣṇa at the command of prince Rukmī. At that time, prince Rukmī himself got prepared with his crown decorated with gems and jewels, and with armour covering his entire body. On his back Rukmī tied a Tun (a particular case of arrows), full of divine weapons. Thus, being well-armed, mounted on a chariot Rukmī started his march for battle. At that moment, alarming omens appeared before Rukmī in various ways, as stated below.

'Some woman, with open hair and cut nose, began to dance with loud cries and laughter. Snakes passed across the way before Rukmi from his left side and the female jackal from the right. The Yoginīs (some female

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rathi ratha hast! ghora bhaila ekasthana //

rathi rathā bhailā ekasthaṇā /

....................... s'ara dhanu dhari //

mandicants) and the Telinies (oil selling women) were roaming here and there. The trees were falling down uprooted without wind. Vultures in flocks were flying above in the sky. The crows were crowing looking at the face of prince Rukmi. Further, Rukmi's left thigh and the arm were throbbing.\textsuperscript{36} These are all regarded as the bad omens suggestive of the danger to come.

Furthermore, in the description of the fight between prince Rukmi and Kṛṣṇa also new matters are found introduced by the poet, Śrī Saṅkaradeva. Thus it is stated in the Rukminī-haran-Kāvya that at the first attack of Rukmi the Yādava heroes were defeated badly, and being terrified they shouted calling Kṛṣṇa for help.\textsuperscript{37} Such a description is not found in the puranic versions. Again, as stated earlier, Rukmi's fight with Viśvaketu, as found in the work of Saṅkaradeva, also does not occur in the original versions.

Moreover, an interesting scene is introduced in Śrī Saṅkaradeva's poem in course of the description of the

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{36} yātṛā laiyā rukmī vīre karila gamana/
āgata dekhaya nāna vimaṅgala gana //
kesameli nāka kāti ..........dēkhilā vistara //
Ibid. 469-472. p. 86.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{37} rukmīra viṅkrama dekhī bhaila mahātrāsa /......
Ibid. 492. p. 89.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{38} Vīd̮. Ibid. 497-510. pp.90-92.
\end{quote}
fight between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmi. It is stated that Rukmi became senseless at the fierce attack of Kṛṣṇa. Then the faithful charioteer of Rukmi carried him to a distant place to save his life. \(^{39}\) After a while, Rukmi regained his senses. Being astonished Rukmi came to know from the charioteer all about the incident how he was taken away from the battle field. Rukmi then became angry with the charioteer, because, he considered that escape as a matter of shame for him and a stigma to his reputation. The noble charioteer then tried his utmost to pacify him with his humble words. He requested Rukmi to leave the battle and established a good relation with Kṛṣṇa, the victorious one in the three worlds. \(^{40}\) But proud Rukmi became more furious with him, and ordered him with threats to drive the chariot again to the battle field where Kṛṣṇa was. The charioteer did accordingly and Rukmi again arrived at the arena. Such descriptions are not met with in the original version of the legend. Again, in Śaṅkaradeva’s work it is stated that the charioteer of Rukmi, being afraid of Kṛṣṇa’s attack prayed Lord Kṛṣṇa to save his life. Kṛṣṇa then pleased with him and left him alive. \(^{41}\) It is also only Śaṅkaradeva’s

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\(^{39}\) phuri phuri rathe pari mučchā gaila
sārathi ākali tāka / .........kumaraka rakṣā kari /
Ibid. 527-528. p. 96.

\(^{40}\) Ibid. 537-541. p. 99.

\(^{41}\) .....trāhi trāhi kṛṣṇa buli parila bhū·ita //
Ibid. 559. p. 102.
creation. Furthermore, deviation is also noticed in the manner of punishment inflicted by Kṛṣṇa on Rukmī after his defeat. According to the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the legend, Kṛṣṇa captured Rukmī and kept him bound. He snipped at Rukmī's beards and also hairs here and there on his head. But Śrī Saṅkaradeva adds more to the original. According to the narration in Saṅkaradeva's work, after snipping Rukmī's hairs and beards, Kṛṣṇa poured Ghola (Butter-milk having no water in it) on his head, decorated his fore-head drawing lines using Cūna (lime) and Kāli (ashes, or black coloured paint) and pushed Rukmī from the chariot with a Dhaṅkā (i.e. a hit on his back). Because of such disfiguring by Kṛṣṇa, Rukmī looked like a big monkey, or a monkey called Hallau Vānar. It is to be added that the poet creates humour by means of this description.

Moreover, in the versified work of Śrī Saṅkaradeva it is stated that the Gods from the Heaven enjoyed the terrible fights between Kṛṣṇa and Śiśupāla, Jarāsandha and Balarāma and also between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmī. The Gods and the semi-Gods who get afraid of the power of their rivals came to be joyful at the victory of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of

42 galāta kāpora diya dharila merāy // .........................
  rukmika dekhīya yena hului pasu goṭ //
  Ibid. 581-583. p. 105.

43 Ibid. 354. p. 64.
44 Ibid. 424. p. 76.
the universe. Such descriptions are not met with in the original versions in course of the narrations of the
Rukmini-haranā legend.

Śrī Śaṅkaradeva presents incidents by making deviations from the original not only in respect of the
description of the battle field as mentioned above, but in presentation of some later happenings also. In the
Bhāgavata-purāṇa narration of the legend, the description of the fight between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmi ends at the very
defeat and humiliation of Rukmi. The Bhāgavata-purāṇa
version simply makes the mention of the establishment of
the new city of Bhojakāta by Rukmi for his failure in
keeping his vow. But in Śaṅkaradeva’s work, the legend is
made to continue to an extent more to accommodate the reaction of Rukmi’s defeat. The extended portion of the narration of the legend by Śrī Śaṅkaradeva runs as follows:

Rukmi felt very sad and ashamed at his extreme
defeat and insultation, he received in Kṛṣṇa’s hands. He
felt more dead than alive recollecting his fierce, vow
made in presence of all, just before his march against Kṛṣṇa.
Therefore, he was lying on the ground in the battle field
pretending dead. In the mean time, king Bhīṣmaka was
informed of the defeat and the destruction of Rukmi and

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Ibid. 586-588. p. 106.
his army in the battle. A rumour got spread in the city of Kundila that prince Rukmi too was killed by Krṣṇa in the battle.

As soon as the sad news was heard, king Bhīṣmaka, queen Śāśiprabhā, wives of the prince and other relatives began to lament beyond description. During their lamentations, it was known from some others also that prince Rukmi was still alive and not dead. Rukminī saved him as her brother. Then all of them became relieved to an extent. The king, being accompanied by the queen, the wives of Rukmi, the royal officials and also with other relatives arrived at the battle field in search of the prince. The poet here, presents a most pathetic picture of the deserted and grave war-field.

There the women started crying embracing bodies of their dead husbands. Others were also lamenting excessively as they saw the life-less bodies of their relatives lying on the ground with the heads of most of them being cut.

Rukmi was searched out in the long run. But due to his being disfigured by Krṣṇa nobody could recognize

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48 ......... kumāra jivante āche
   rukminī rākhilā bhāl bulī //
     Ibid. 620. p. 113.
49 Vide. Ibid. 626-629. p. 115.
him. Further, as Rukmi was lying pretending dead, it was very difficult to ascertain whether he was dead or alive. Though the situation was very pathetic, yet the poet creates humour by way of describing the pretension of prince Rukmi. He was bodily moved for the sake of a test. But he remained in that place wherever they put him and thereby he tried to prove himself really a dead one.

At this time, from the charioteer of Rukmi was kept hiding himself among the horses, it was known, that prince Rukmi was not dead, but being sad and ashamed due to his defeat as well as failure in his vow he remained with such pretension. King Bhīṣmaka and queen Śaśīprabhā then gave consolation to Rukmi, their eldest son. Bhīṣmaka further asked Rukmi to return to the city of Kuṇḍila. But prince Rukmi refused to go back to the city. He requested king Bhīṣmaka, his father to admit him to remain there establishing a new city so that he might keep his vow intact. The king then very gladly agreed to the proposal of Rukmi. Rukmi established a new city there called Bhojakaṭa (the abode of the Bhojas) and used to remain there. This Bhojakaṭa or Bhujakuṭa became a

50 tharamara hātāpāva mṛtakara thān /
   dekhi save bole etikṣaṇe gaila prān //
   ikāṭi sikāṭi kari .....................


52 rājāra ādeaśa pāi hariṣa kumara / ...........
   ......................... nāma thailā bhojakaṭa //
   Ibid. 659. p.119.
prominent city later on. Here up to the scene of reunion between Bhīṣmaka and Rukmī in the arena is a new narrative, which are not met with in the original versions.

One of the major deviations is the beautiful delineation of the marriage ceremony of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī at Dvāraka. In the Bhāgavata-purāṇa versions of the legend the marriage ceremony is described very briefly. Only in six verses. The Harivamśa-purāṇa simply makes mention that Kesāva accepted the hand of Rukmiṇī according to the prescribed Vedic law or code. But the Rukmini-haran Kāvyā describes the marriage ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī at Dvāraka in a very elaborate manner. Saṅkaradeva, devotes comparatively a major portion of his poem to describe this social marriage. In the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā, some pictures are depicted in course of the description of the marriage ceremony, which do not occur in the original versions of the legend.

As for examples, Kṛṣṇa requested king Ugrasena to invite all kings of Jambudvīpa (i.e. India) sending messengers so that all of them might enjoy the marriage ceremony. Again, the attendance and arrival of all kings

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54 RHKS. 661-791. pp.120-142.
55 Ibid. 668-669. p.121.
at the marriage pavilion, excepting Sīśupāla and Rukmī, the arrival of the Gods, Lord Brahmā, Mahādeva, Gandharvas (semi divine Gods), the Nāgas (snakes) headed by Vāsukī by their respective carriages are beautifully described by the poet.

At the time of Homa (oblation to the fire) in the marriage, the poet creates an interesting scene. Brahmā was the priests who recited the auspicious vedic hymns. At the time of Mukhacandrikā (the first glance of the bride and the bride-groom towards each other before Homa or sacrificial fire) he came to look at the extra-ordinary beautiful face of Rukmini. Then the erotic feelings badly disturbed him. Brahmā fainted overwhelmed with amorous feelings. After a while, remembering the holy names of Lord Viśṇu he regained his calm state of mind with great effort. The saint poet Śrī Sāṅkaradeva introduces this scene only to show the action of Māyā (or ignorance) even upon Lord Brahmā on one hand, and the power of Viśṇunāma (the holy names of Lord Viśṇu), or Viṣṇubhakti (devotion to Viśṇu) on the other.

Another humorous scene created by the poet is as follows: King Bhīṣmaka made Sampradāna (i.e. offering) of

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56 Vide Ibid. 675-720. pp. 122-123.
57 brahmāyo bhaïlanta bhola/
    nāhi ēko māta bola //
    erilanta .......... viṣṇu śmari //
    Ibid. 750-752. p. 133.
the bride Rukmini to Kṛṣṇa, according to the Vedic codes. He then presented various properties like, elephants, horses, and even the half of his kingdom as Yautuka (property given to a woman at her marriage) to his beloved daughter Rukmini. Then Purandara (i.e. Indra) offered valuable divine clothes, divine elephants etc. as presentation. Thus Vāsuki (the Lord of Snakes), Kuvera (the God of wealth), Varuṇa (the Lord of water), Candra (the moon God), Sūrya (the Sun God) and others offered valuable Upahāras (i.e. gifts) to Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini. 

At that time, poor Lord Śiva, was thinking over his poverty. He considered that he had nothing with him to offer except his tiger-skin, the Trisula (trident), the Dambaru (drum) in his hand, and the Vṛṣabha (bull) only on the other hand, he had nothing but ashes in the Bokandi (wallet). It would be a matter of shame if he would offer it (i.e. the wallet with ashes). He was so poor that his fore-head carried the crescent moon, his body was adorned with the serpents for ornaments, and with the skulls for necklaces. As Lord Hara (Śiva) was thinking thus, Kṛṣṇa, the knower of all said, 'Oh Lord Īśāna, I want only bliss,

59 Ibid. 760-768, pp. 135-136.  
60 save devagane ucargi āche / mane mane hare guṇanta pāche //..haivo laghu samuli //  
   Ibid. 771-773. p, 137.
and nothing else. So, kindly be pleased with Me. 

61 Then Siva felt more ashamed and vanished from the scene. 

62 This scene is depicted by the poet in such a way that everybody will find humour here at the pitious condition of the popular God Sadā Śiva. It is one of the major deviations in the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya from the original versions. In this way, numerous deviations from the original accounts are met with in the presentation of the legend in the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya.

A LITERARY APPRECIATION OF THE WORK:

Though composed with the singular purpose of propagating the devotion to the Lord Krṣṇa, yet the literary works of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva never lacked in literary excellences. 

63 Specially, as a poetic composition, the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya appears to possess most of the characteristic features of an epic poem prescribed by Indian (Sanskrit) poetics.

As for illustrations, we find that the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya consists of twenty one divisions as stated

61 dayāse lāge nalāgaya ān/ huye suprasanna deva īkān // 
Ibid. 774. p.137.

62 hena śuni hare dagune lājilā /.....antardhāna śiva samāje// 
Ibid. 775. p. 137.

63 ...Though primarily a religious movement it led on to manifold expressions in art and literature. 

AFAL. p.66.

The religious activities of Sankaradeva however,... a popular Vaisnavite literature in Assamese. 

Ibid. p.67.

64 SD.VI. 321-325. pp.592-593.
earlier, comparable to the cantos of an Sanskrit epic poem. Again, the poem also begins with a salutation to Lord Kṛṣṇa made by the poet and there occurs a benedictory poem. Like the Śiśupāla-Vadhān-Mahākāvyam of Māgha, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa a divine figure is the hero of the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā. As in an epic poem, royal princess Rukmini is the heroine of the poem.

Again, as in an epic in Sanskrit literature, the five Sandhis (plot junctures), like Mukha, Pratimukha, Garbha, Vimarśa, and Upasāṅhṛti, or Nirvahana can be shown in the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā also. Thus at the depiction of the erotic feelings in the minds of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini, the hero and the heroine of the poem and of their attachment to each other hearing the matchless beauty and qualities, there occurs the Mukhasandhi, where the germination of the seed for the poetic end takes place. Again, the Pratimukhasandhi takes place in the effort made by

\[\text{antaraikārthasamvandhah sandhirekānvayaṃ sati} / \\
\text{mukhaṁ pratimukhaṁ garbho vimarśe upasāṅhṛtiḥ} // \\
\text{Ibid. VI. 75. p. 430.} \]

\[\text{śunīlā kanyāra hena kathā nārāyaṇa} / \\
\text{ketikṣane pāivo}................. \\
\text{RHKS. 32-34. p. 6.} \]

\[\text{niścaya kārile sau kṛṣṇaka vivāha} / \\
\text{......................... kikahive lāge} // \\
\text{Ibid. 44-45. p. 8.} \]

\[\text{yatrā vīja samuttirnānārtha}............. \\
\text{SD. VI. 76. p. 430.} \]

\[\text{phalāpradhāno pāyasya mukhasandhi nivesinā} / \\
\text{Ibid. VI. 77. p. 430.} \]
Rukmini by way of sending Vedanidhi, the Brahmana messenger to Kṛṣṇa with her proposal of being married by Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā. This Sandhi covers up to the preparation of Kṛṣṇa's journey for Kuṇḍila. With the arrival of Kṛṣṇa, the hero, at the city of Kuṇḍila, His abduction of Rukmini, the heroine, Rukmini's happy meet with Kṛṣṇa, her lover in the chariot, the Garbha Sandhi covers a part of the poem where the partial fulfilment of the fruit is met with.

Furthermore, the Vimarṣa Sandhi occurs when the primary means to the end though in an advanced stage, is found confronted with obstacles. Thus the clash occurring between Kṛṣṇa and the opponent kings headed by Śiśupāla, the rival, and Rukmini provide scope to Vimarṣa Sandhi in the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya. With the attainment of the result, the Nirvāhana Sandhi occurs in the poem, which is marked by the happy union of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini at Dvārakā.

As stated earlier, the theme of the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya is taken from the puranic versions like those of Māgha's Śiśupāla-Vadham and Śrī Harṣa's Naisadhā-Caritam. Thus as of a Sanskrit epic the theme of Rukmini-haran-Kāvya is also a noble one taken from a traditional source. Just as a Sanskrit epic is characterised by description of city, river, mountains, forests etc., the work of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva

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69 phalapradhānopāyasaya prāgudbhinnasya kiñcana .......... Ibid. VI. 78. p.431.
70 Ibid. VI. 79. p. 432.
71 Ibid. VI. 80. p. 433.
also is conspicuous with the descriptions of the city of Kundila, that of Dvārakā, its reference to the rivers, the forests, and the ocean, the description of battles, (as referred to earlier), the delineation of the marriage ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī, their happy union etc. Unlike in a Sanskrit epic, though the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya is composed in various metres, yet no change of is observed towards the end of a ched or Adhyāya. As in a Sanskrit epic poem, the bliss comes to be the fruit obtained and for that matter, the union between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī stand for that bliss in Saṅkarā's work. Thus the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya of Saṅkaradeva appears to reflect most of the features of an epic poem.

THE RASAS IN THE RUKMINI-HARAN KĀVYA:

The delineation of different Rasas is met with in the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya as described below:

The sentiment of love (i.e. Śrṅgāra) between the hero and the heroine is successfully delineated by Śrī Saṅkaradeva in his poetic work on the Rukmini-haran legend. The whole narration of the legend centres round

76 Ibid. 110. p. 20.
the love between Kṛṣṇa the hero and Rukmini the heroine. Further, the work comes to an end with the happy union between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini.

In respect of love affair pūrvarāga (the dawning of love) occurs in an epic when both the hero and the heroine get attracted towards each other after hearing of each other's good qualities. In the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya also the Pūrvarāga takes place when Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini got attracted to each other and fell in love after hearing their matchless beauty and good qualities.

Sambhoga Śṛṅgāra is relished in a Kāvya when the happy union takes place between the hero and the heroine and they get in explicable pleasure by way of having glances, touches etc. between them. The presence of the Sambhoga Śṛṅgāra is realised in this Kāvya at the very union of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini marked by their amorous sports as delineated towards the end of the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya.

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77 śravaṇāddarāṇādvāpi mithah saṅrudharāgayoh / ....
SD. III. 188. p. 230

78 dvārakāka yāi kunḍilāra deśāntari /
Kṛṣṇaka kahanta kāthā sunā deva hari //.....
RĪKS. 29-34. pp.5-6
Vide Ibid. 44-45. p. 8.


80 rukminikapālī pāche yadurāy
erailā madana pīḍa /.....
..... railā rangē kridā kari //
RĪKS. 733-791. pp.141-142.
In the versified work of Sri Sañkaradeva the sentiment of the Viprolambha Śṛṅgāra is delineated in a very interesting and attractive manner. The Vipralambha Śṛṅgāra occurs there when inspite of the present of deep love between the hero and the heroine the fruit or goal (i.e. the union between the hero and the heroine) is not attained due to some obstacles.\(^{31}\)

In the Rukmini-haṛṇ-Kāvyā, the obstacle appears in the path of union between Kṛṣṇa and Rukminī, (i.e. the hero and the heroine) for the first time, when prince Rukmi vehemently opposed the marriage of Rukminī with Kṛṣṇa, his enemy, and invited Sisupāla, his friend as bride-groom.\(^{82}\) This hindrance in the path of the love affair between Kṛṣṇa and Rukminī continued up to the fierce fight between Kṛṣṇa and prince Rukmi. As a result, the hero and heroine come to suffer from the pangs of separation. Thus Vipralambha Śṛṅgāra is depicted in the poem.

**PRESENTATION OF THE HĀSYARASA\(^{\text{a}}\) IN THE WORK :**

The Hāsyarasa or the comic sentiment is successfully delineated in different narrations in the Rukmini-haṛṇ-Kāvyā. Humour is relished in the description when Vedanidhi,

\(^{31}\)yatra tu ratih prakṛṭā nābhīṣṭamupaiti vipralambhoasau //  

\(^{82}\)śunileka rukminīra kṛṣṇa same viyā /  
mahā kope rukmāvira māte kāndi hiyā //  

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the brahmin messenger fainted due to the high speed of the chariot of Kṛṣṇa. Further, in the description of the insultation and punishment inflicted on Rukmī by Kṛṣṇa, in comparison of Rukmī, to a big monkey, his pretension as dead. sufficient elements of comical sentiment are met with. Moreover, the description of the pitious conditions of Lord Śiva due to his poverty at the time of presenting gifts in the marriage ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmīni and that of Śiva's disappearance out of shame from marriage pavilion, present comical sentiment in the work.

DELINEATION OF KARUṆA RASA:

The Karuṇa rasa (the pathetic sentiment) is also very successfully presented in the work. Thus, in the lamentation of Rukmīni at the obstruction of her marriage with Kṛṣṇa and at the time of punishment inflicted by Kṛṣṇa on Rukmī, the pathetic sentiment is attractively depicted. Moreover, the lamentation of king Bhīṣmaka and the queen, and also of the relatives and women in the battle field by embracing the dead soldiers present a most pathetic scene in the poem.

Among other Rasas, the Raudrarasa is noticed in the anger of Rukmī, Śiśupāla etc. The Bhayānakarasa is presented in the fierce fights of Kṛṣṇa with Śiśupāla, of

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83 Ibid. 581-582. p.105.
84 Ibid. 583. p. 105.
86 Ibid. 775. p. 137.
Balarama with Jarasandha, and of Krishna with Rukmi in which even the Gods got also terrified. Thus the scenes of victory attained by Krishna and other Yadava heroes headed by Balarama over the rival kings obviously presents the Virarasa (i.e. the heroic sentiment).

THE PRINCIPAL SENTIMENT IN RUKMINI-HARAN-KAVYA:

As per poetic norms, in a Mahakavya (epic) in Sanskrit either Srngara or Sanga becomes the principal sentiment (Angirasas). The other sentiments may be there only as subordinate (anga) ones. The Rukmini-haran-Kavya primarily relates the love episode between Krishna and Rukmini leading to their happy union at the end. So, the Srngara-rasa (i.e. the erotic sentiment) appears to be the primary sentiment of the work. We find this sentiment depicted in its both forms i.e., Sambhoga and Bipralambha.

But as a Vaishnava preceptor, Sri Sankaradeva's purpose was mainly to preach and popularise the Krishna Bhakticul't in the society through his poetic work. Therefore, in addition to the Vandana poem, in many places of the work the poet urges the readers to have recourse to devotion to Lord Krishna obtainable by reading the Rukmini-haran-Kavya for sake of attaining eternal bliss. Further, the work ends with

87 śunā sabhāsada ...... ihāra śravane ghora
saṃsāraka tari ............ bolā hari hari //
Ibid. 99. p. 16.
also Vide. Ibid. 111. p.20; 196.p.33; 213.p.38;
272.p.47; 293. p.53; 794-795. p.143 etc.
Rukmini’s attainment of Paramapada (supreme bliss through the grace of the Lord). From this point of view, some scholars opine that the principal sentiment of the Rukmini-haran-Kavya is Bhakti (i.e. the sentiment of devotion). Bhakti is not universally regarded as a Rasa. It was not in the original list of Rasas recognised by Nāṭyasāstrasāstra-kāra Bharata and his successors. The love for the God (Devaviṣayaka rati), when suggested, came to be given the status of Bhāva. Thereafter there came the recognition of bhakti as a bhāva. It is noteworthy that some Vaiṣṇava Alamkārikas in Bengal headed by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, came to advocate this new Rasa (i.e. the Bhaktirasā) specially in the literary works of the Vaiṣṇavite poets. According to them Bhaktirasā comes from the Sthāyibhāva, Kṛṣṇarati (i.e. love to Kṛṣṇa). It may be further added that Abhinavagupta included the Bhaktirasā in the domain of Sāntaraśa (the sentiment of quietism). But Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, a rhetorician in Bengal, on the other hand, forwards the view that Bhakti is not only a mere Rasa, but it is the chief of all the Rasas. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī makes a five-fold primary divisions of the Bhaktirasā. Of the five divisions, as held by Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī Dhurya type of bhakti

83 kṛṣṇa ratiḥ sthāyibhāvo bhaktiraso bhavet / SSBRS. dakṣiṣṭabhāgaḥ 5. p. 163.
89 mukhyobhaktirasah pañcavidhaḥ ..............
is the Rasa in the contest of beloved wives of Kṛṣṇa.\textsuperscript{90} As such, the principal Rasa of the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā may be regarded as the Dhūrya bhaktirasa. Prof. B. Nirmaliya, on the other hand, opines that the principal sentiment in both Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā and Rukmini-haran-Nāṭ of Śaṅkaradeva is the Śṛṅgārarasātmāka bhaktirasa (the sentiment of devotion originating from the eros) as because, Rukmini wanted to attain Kṛṣṇa as her beloved husband, a lover exactly as Lakṣmīdevī treated Lord Viṣṇu.\textsuperscript{91}

As in the Prabodha Candodaya of Śrī Kṛṣṇamisra, here also in the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā (as well as also in the Rukmini-haran-Nāṭ) the Sāntarasa may be finally regarded as the principal sentiment. It is because the state of quietism in the minds of the devotee readers is the final objective aimed at by the author. Tirtha Nath Sarmah, a famous literary critic in Assamese also regards "Bhakti" as a Sthāyibhāva like Nirveda and thus according to him the main sentiment of the work Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā (of the drama as well) is the Sāntarasa.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{90} kṛṣṇasya preyasīvarg... yah prītīṁ tanute ... 
Ibid. Pasćimāḥ bhāgah. 29. p. 23.

\textsuperscript{91} DCM. Annual Number, 1982-83. p. 7.

\textsuperscript{92} bhakti ei nirvedare etā ..... bhāv..... mūl ras sānta / 
SVP. p. 157. 

Sāṅkaradeva composes his versified work in various metres. It is observed that the change in metres is done by the poet according to the situations very appropriately, as noted below:

**THE USE OF PADA METRE:**

Generally, recitation of all poems are called, indiscriminantly the recitation of 'Pada' by Assamese people. Of course, the term 'Pada' is used in Assamese literature for the term 'Caranā' used in a Sanskrit metre. There is also a particular metre of the same name (i.e. Pada) appearing in the old Assamese literature. A 'Pada Chanda (metre)' consists of two lines containing fourteen letters in each. The use of Pada metre appears to be common in Assamese literature in comparison to other metres.

Sūri Sāṅkaradeva uses the Pada metre in eighteen poems or cheds in his *Rukmini-haran-Kāvya*. Thus in the Vandana poem, in the description of king Bhīṣmaka and his children, of Rukmini and also in the description of

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93 sanskritar yi kono candere kavitā nāgāok.................
Ibid. p. 182

94 padat caidhya ākharar dutā sāri thāke / ... .... padat pratyek sārite āstam ākharar pāchat virām va yati baire //
Ibid. p.182.

95 RHKS. pp. 1-2.
96 Ibid. pp. 2-3.
97 Ibid. pp. 4-6.
preparation of Rukmini's marriage etc. the poet uses Pada metre.

THE USF OF DULADI METRE:

Next to the Pada Chanda, 'Duladi Chanda' is used commonly in Assamese poetic works, especially in religious scriptures. A Duladi metre is governed by three Parvas or Caranas. The first and the second Parva or Carana in the first line contain six letters each. The third Carana or Parva in the second line contains eight Akṣaras (letters). Thus the Duladi metre is completed in such six Parvas or Caranas and in four lines as noted below. This Duladi metre is known as Tripadi metre in Bengali literature. Apart from the religious scriptures, the Duladi metre is used commonly in the Bihunams (i.e. Bihu songs), Biyā nāms (the marriage songs), and Āināms (the prayer songs in the name of Goddesses) etc. in Assam.

Sri Sañkaradeva composes five poems in his Rukmini-haran-Kavya in the Duladi metre. Thus in the description of the city of Kundila, in a poem, in the description of the abduction of Rukmini and in the concluding poem etc.

\[98 \text{ Ibid. pp.6-13.}
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\[99 \text{ duladi yati niyantritt tinitākai parva thāke /}
\]
\[\text{pratham āru dvitiya phnākit ātakaī trtiya sārit}
\]
\[\text{āthoṭā ākhar thāke/pratyek phnākir śeht yati pare /}
\]
\[\text{SVP. p.183.}
\]
\[100 \text{ Ibid. p.183.}
\]
\[101 \text{ Ibid. p.183.}
\]
\[102 \text{ Vide RHKS. pp.33-38}
\]
\[103 \text{ Vide Ibid. pp.47-53.}
\]
\[104 \text{ Ibid., pp.138-143.}
\]
of the work the Duladī metre is used very appropriately.

THE CHAVI METRE:

Like the Duladī metre mentioned above, the 'Chavi metre' is also governed by three Carana and is completed in four lines. The first and second Carana contain eight Akṣaras (letters) in each and the third Carana contains ten Akṣaras (letters) as shown below. As the formation of the Chavi metre is similar to that of Duladī metre so it may be called a long Duladī. In Bengali this metre is known as 'Dirghā Tripadī (the long Tripadī metre)'. Of course, in comparison to Pada and Duladī metres, the use of Chavi metre is very rare.

In some verses of the Rukminī-haran Kāvyā also Sāṅkaradeva uses this Chavi metre. Thus, in the description of Rukminī's message, in that of the defeat of the kings like Siṣupāla and also in narration of consolation to Siṣupāla by king Jarásandha, etc. the Chavi metre is used in the poems.

THE JHUNĀ METRE:

Another metre used in the poetic work of Sāṅkaradeva is Jhunā metre. Jhunā is a metre consisting

\[ \text{сутам тхаке, каранр ахар санхья атн атн ару дах, чата каранат сампурна хай} \]  

\[ \text{SVP. p.184} \]

\[ \text{Vide RHKS. pp.16-20.} \]

\[ \text{Vide. Ibid. pp.79-83.} \]
eleven Aksaras or letters. Like a Pada metre here in the Aksaras are equal in both the lines. The yati occurs at the end of the eleventh letter. In the Rukmini-haran-Kavya, however, the Jhunā metre is found used once.

USE OF THE JHUMURI METRE:

The Jhumuri is another peculiar metre used in the works of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva. Two types of Jhumuri metres are found, one is the Laghu Jhumuri (the short Jhumuri) and the other is the Dīrga Jhumuri (the long Jhumuri). The Laghu Jhumuri consists of eight Aksaras and the Yati occurs after every fourth letter. On the other hand, the Dīrga Jhumuri is governed by ten Aksaras (or letters). Both the Jhumuri metre get completion in four lines.

Two poems, one in the description of the fierce fight between Balarama and Jarāsandha, and the other in

109 jhunā eghāra ākhariyā dusārī thāke - āru sehar ākharar mīl thāke / SVP. p. 186.
110 RHKS. pp. 136-137.
112 Ibid. p. 137.
113 Ibid. p. 137.
114 duyo víra / maha māla / ...... yena yuje / yama kāla // --- Vide. RHKS. pp. 75-77.
the description of the bewitchment of the Gods and Lord Brahma at the sight of extra-ordinary beautiful bride Rukmini in the marriage ceremony are composed in Laghu Junuri metre in Sri Sankara's poetic work. The metre, Laghu Junuri generally seems to be used in the poems to describe a duel fight very appropriately. Poet Sankaradeva uses this metre in other works also. For instance, in the Kirttan, the very combat between Krsna and Jamvavanta, occurring in the narration of the Syamantaka-haraṇa legend is described in the Laghu Junuri metre. Thus the use of various metres, mentioned above, is noticed in the poetic work of Sri Sankaradeva through which his poetic genius gets manifested.

FIGURES OF SPEECH IN THE WORK:

Sri Sankaradeva uses both Sabdańskaras and Arthałanarkaras in his poetic work. Thus in many places Sabdańskaras, like Anuprasa, Ślesa, and Arthałanarkaras like Upama, Rūpak, Prativastupamā.

115 dēvatā manusya nāge / rukminiṅka /'dekhī āge // ........... 
Ibid. pp. 132-134.

116 hena śuni/jāmvavanta / dhāilāma/ hā vaḷavanta // ....... 

117 Vide. RIKS. 13,14 p.3; 24 p.5; 25,26. p.5; 66.p.11 etc.

118 Ibid. 42. p.7; 65. p.11; 67. p.11.

119 Ibid. 23. p.4; 89,90. p.15; 379. p.69; 582.p.105.etc.

120 Ibid. 20,22. p.4. etc.

Dratanta, Aprastutaprasansa, and Arthantaranyasa, are met with. In respect of the application of Upama (simile) in particular, Sri Sankaradeva may be described as the Kālidāsa in the Assamese literature. Dr. Sivanath Barman favours such a comparison. The poet shows his poetic art by way of using different Alamkāras.

ART OF DESCRIPTION:

Though the work Rukminī-haran is composed under limitations as the theme is borrowed from the puranic works yet the poet shows his genius by way of exhibiting the attractive art of description. Thus the description of princess Rukmini with her moon like frame body, pearl like teeth, lotus like eyes, and also with eyebrows like the bow of Cupid, with beautiful hairs like Cāmara is really very vivid and attractive. The very description of Rukmini's appearance in the Svayamvara pavilion, the scene of bewitched kings at the matchless appearance of Rukmini and the manifestation of amorous designs of kings falling on the ground on that account present an interesting scene.

122 Ibid. 519. p.93.
123 Ibid. 211. p.37; 221,222. p.39 etc.
125 Prak. 10th year, No. 11th, 1985. p. 53.
126 trailokyata samarupa nahi rukminika /...........
RHKS. 18-25. pp.4-5.
Again, the description in the poem of the fights between Kṛṣṇa and Śisūpāla, Balarama and Jarāsandha, and that between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmi and the like are very much attractive. Moreover, at the time of Kṛṣṇa’s arrival, the poet presents a very beautiful description of the city of Kuṇḍila (i.e. the city of Kuṇḍina).\(^{128}\) This description of the city of Kuṇḍila, along with the depiction of rows of beautiful buildings, charming gates, different types of vehicles like elephants, horses and chariots and with the Parks full of various kinds of fruits and flowers may surely be compared to a great extent to that of the beautiful city of Ujjaini, presented in the famous prose work Kādambarī of Bāṇabhaṭṭa.\(^{129}\) It is interesting to note that even the description of the behaviours of the ladies striken with amorous feelings at sight of Kṛṣṇa in the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya\(^{130}\) is quite similar to the description of the same of the ladies at the sight of Candrapīḍa that we come across in Bāna’s Kādambarī.\(^{131}\) As we cannot say that Śrī Śaṅkaradeva is influenced by Bāna we can easily appreciate his independent power of description here.

\(^{128}\) Ibid. 197-205. pp. 33-36

\(^{129}\) asti sakalatribhūvanalākamabhūtā... tuṣāragiriśikharai ..... stimitamurarajravagambhira ... māttamayurai .... avantisūjjasī yī nāma nagari /


\(^{131}\) āvirbhūtamedanarasanan............makaradhvajam //

BK. Kumāradarsanoditabhāvanām kāmininām mithobhāsaṇāni / pp.137-139.
Furthermore, the descriptions of the warfields with the dead-bodies, and the very heart-touching pictures of the lamenting women and other relatives met with in the poem are very lively. The poet seeks to present an atmosphere of Assamese wedding festival in the course of the description of the marriage ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini.132 Thus Dimbeswar Neog observes a magical power in the art of description in the Rukmini-haran-Kavya.133

LANGUAGE : USF OF PHRASES AND PROVERBS IN THE WORK:

The language of the Rukmini-haran-Kavya is another attraction for a reader. Though the language used in the poem which is obviously old Assamese is of Sanskrit origin, yet the poet presents his work in a very lucid language. Furthermore, the use of appropriate words, phrases, idiomatic expressions colloquial proverbs, familiar even to the common people makes the work much more popular and attractive for all kinds of readers. A few examples are given below in support of the view. To express the animosity of Rukmi against Kṛṣṇa it is said, 'Rukmi did not put even a straw in fire' in the name of Madhava i.e. Kṛṣṇa'.134

Again, at the obstruction of the marriage of Rukmini with Kṛṣṇa, Rukmi rebuked her brother Rukmi saying that he

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133 Sankardeva, even at this early stage gives enough evidence of his magic power and condensed description NLHAL. p. 168
134 mādhavara nāme sito jūta nede kher. RHKS. 47. p.8.
(Rukmī) was not her brother, on the contrary, he was worse than a great enemy. In the battlefield Rukmīnī lamented saying that she was going to get only a piece of glass in lieu of a valuable gem (i.e. Kṛṣṇa). Thus frequent use of proverbs and idiomatic expressions are noticed in the Rukmīnī-haran-Kāvyā. In this respect, M. Neog observes how the poet's style of writing with colloquialisms, idiomatic expressions makes the work more popular among the readers.

ANURŪP AND ANUKĀR ŚABDAS IN THE POEM:

The frequent use of the Anurūp and Anukār Śabdas in suitable places naturally enhances the beauty of the poem of Śrī Sāṅkaraṇāva. Thus, for instance we find Anurūp Śabdas like, 'ugul-thugul', 'śātāpāṇca', 'āṅgī-bhaṅgi', 'āul-jaul' and also the Anukār Śabdas like 'jhāta-jhāta', 'gīra-gīra', which are used very appropriately.

CHARACTERS: AND CHARACTERISATION:

As the theme of the Rukmīnī-haran-Kāvyā is taken from the purāṇic versions so the poet is to proceed under

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135 jyeṣṭhabhāi nuhī sāta śatrato āgal / ..............
Ibid. 87. p. 14.

136 knācaka cahante yono mānika harāy /
Ibid. 305. p. 55.

137 The colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions are also numerous ...... The pleasant subject matter, appropriately treated, this is one of the most popular of Sāṅkara's works. SHT. p. 177.

138 RHKS. pp. 6,11,34,39,74,87 respectively.
limitations. Yet poet Śrī Saṅkaradeva delineates the characters in his work very successfully keeping their individuality in tact. Besides the hero and the heroine, different types of characters are present in the work viz. the kings, like Bhīṣmaka, Jarāsandha, Śisūpāla, Viśvaketu, prince Rukmī, the Brāhmaṇa, Vedanidhi queen Sasīprabhā, Sumālinī dhāi (i.e. the nurse to heroine Rukmīṇī) etc.

Kṛṣṇa the hero of the work was an ideal male character. He exhibited all human behaviours, particularly as an ideal lover, who was ready to face any obstacle for His beloved and ultimately became victorious. Another important point is that in Kṛṣṇa was depicted a picture of an ideal Puruṣa with qualities of head and heart.

Bhīṣmaka was a meek and noble king devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa. But due to this meek nature and love for his son, he could not protest the doings of his proud son Rukmī although he had all intentions to give his daughter Rukmīṇī in marriage with Kṛṣṇa.

Jarāsandha, the powerful king of Magadha was the leader of the chieftains and made the plot against Kṛṣṇa. Śisūpāla, the king of Cedi was longing for beautiful Rukmīṇī and arrived at Kuṇḍila as a bride-groom. He was very much conscious of his self-prestige and therefore, felt very sad at the extreme defeat he met in the hands of Kṛṣṇa.
Rukmī was a very proud, haughty and brave youthful prince who disobeyed even the words of his father and had great animosity against Kṛṣṇa. Of course, he was, however, very resolute in his own decision and thus he kept his vow. In the words of Laksminath Bezbaruah, Rukmī was the Barbopā (the eldest son with an air) of an Assamese family. 139

Vīśvaketu was a very devoted king who honoured and worshipped Lord Kṛṣṇa even offering his own kingdom. He was, therefore, quite opposite to the rival kings like Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla, Dantavaktra and Rukmī.

Vedanidhi, the Brāhmaṇa messenger was very faithful, devoted, and dutiful. He helped Rukmini, the bride by way of conveying the message to Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā and he did not expect any reward in return.

Among the female characters, queen Sāśiprabhā was a responsible mother who reminded the king of the marriagable age of her daughter Rukmini. Similarly, Sumālinī dhai is a very faithful and kind hearted nurse of the heroine. Most of these characters in the work are depicted in the local racial shades of Assamese society and this view is

maintained by some literary critics also.\textsuperscript{140}

Thus Sāṅkaradeva simply borrowed the skeleton of the Rukmini-harana legend from the purānic works, and he made the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā lively and attractive by way of supplying flesh and blood. In this respect, Dr. S. N. Barman remarks that Sāṅkaradeva took the 'Jumuthi (literally a thatch-made base for making an earthen statue)' only from the purāṇas but he made and established the 'Sāhitya Pratimā (the statue of literature)' by his own hands with the soil and water of Assam.\textsuperscript{141} Again, Dr. Purnananda Saikia also remarks that the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā, which succeeds in occupying a place in Assamese literature is like a golden pitcher on the high peak of the traditional Assamese literature.\textsuperscript{142} Thus in conclusion it may be said that the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā of Sāṅkaradeva is the master piece of the poet that shows his genius in respect of poetic art.

\textbf{THE RUKMINI-HARAN NĀṬ :}

It is already mentioned that apart from the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā, Sāṅkaradeva composed a dramatic

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid. Preface by B.K. Kakati.\textsuperscript{p.1.}
\textsuperscript{ASSI. p.139.}

\textsuperscript{141} Prak. 10th Year, No.11. August, 1935. p. 50.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid. 12th year, No.7, May, 1937. p. 64.
work also on the theme of the Rukmini-harana legend known as the 'Rukmini-haran-Nat', which is one of the prominent Ankiya-Nats in Assamese literature.

AN ANKIYA NÄT : A SHORT INTRODUCTION :

Before going to discuss on the Rukmini-haran-Nat of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva, we feel it essential to provide a brief introduction to the Ankiya Nats.

The Ankiya-Nats represent the earliest dramatic compositions in the history of Assamese dramatic literature with Śrī Śaṅkaradeva as the pioneer in respect of creating this species of literary art.143 Regarding the dramatic works i.e. Ankiya Nats of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva mention has been made earlier. Besides Śrī Mādhavadeva, the chief disciple of Śaṅkaradeva also composed several Ankiya Nats. A few Nats were composed by the followers of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva like, Gopāl ātā, Dvijabhusāna and Rāmānanda.

THE STRUCTURE OF AN ANKIYA-NÄT : THE COMMON FEATURES :

The plot of an Ankiya Nāt is adopted from the puranas or the great epics relating the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa or Rāma. The drama begins with a benedictory verse relating

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143 Ankiya nāṭar janmadātā mahāpuruṣ Śrīmanta śaṅkardōv / RHNS, Preface, p.1.
the activities or Lilās of Kṛṣṇa or Rāma connected with the play. Then Sūtradhāra (lit. who holds the thread of the play) comes and recites the Sanskrit sloka(verse) and Bhaṭīmā songs after his dance. In the Bhaṭīmā song the story presented through the play is related in brief, and then with a sloka or stokas and prose commentary the Sūtradhāra declares the entrance of the hero (either Kṛṣṇa or Rāma as the case may be). Thus the actors enter into the stage (an open stage) and the main play begins. As an Aṅkiyā Nāṭ contains a good number of Gīts (songs) which are generally known as 'Aṅkiyā-gīts' so it reveals its lyrical beauty. These Aṅkiyā Gīts are sung in some particular Rāgas (musical mode) and Tālas in accompaniment of a musical instrument called 'Khol (a kind of drum)' and Tāl. These Aṅkiyā Gīts are sung at the entrance of the actors, during fights and also to relate specific situations in the play.

The Nāṭ ends with an Aṅkiyā Song called 'Kalyāṇ, Kharmān' and a 'Muktimaṅgal Bhaṭīmā' song. Dr. H. Bhattacharya also notes the five-fold technical divisions of an Aṅkiyā Nāṭ, which are as follows (i) The Nāṇḍī sloka or slokas, (ii) the Bhaṭīmās (iii) the Sanskrit Ślokas (iv) the Aṅkiyā Gīts (v) the Prose passages. In

144 Vide ODADS. p.12.
this respect, it should also be noted that in an Ankiya Bhāonā (i.e. stage presentation of the Nāṭ) there is Gāyana-Bāyana in the Pūrvarāṅga. Therefore, in an Ankiya Bhāonā there are six divisions.

THE LANGUAGE OF AN ANKIYA NĀṬ:

Apart from the Sanskrit Ślokas, the language used in the songs and other prose portions of an Ankiya Nāṭ is Brajāvalī, or Brajabuli. 145 This Brajāvalī language seems to be similar with the language used by another Vaiṣṇava saint Vidyāpati of Mithilā in his famous Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī. From this, the influence of Vidyāpati on Śrī Sāṅkaradeva in respect of the use of language in his plays is observed by some scholars. 146 On the other hand, some scholars like Dr. S.N. Sarmah, Dr. M. Neog are of the opinion that Śrī Sāṅkaradeva used this Brajabhāṣā or Brajabuli language with the intention of popularising the Vaiṣṇava cult in the neighbouring regions of North-East India. 147 The Brajāvalī, an artificial language, however, was specially used in the Ankiya-Nāṭs and the Bargīts of Sāṅkarite literature.

THE POSSIBLE SOURCES OF AN ANKIYA NĀṬ:

We observe three kinds of influence in respect of the development of the Ankiya Nāṭs of Assam. As for instance,

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the influence of the Sanskrit dramas, specially of the Nāṭakas on Ankiya Nāṭa is clear from the use of Nāndī Śloka, and introduction of the character of Sūtradhāra etc.

Again, the use of the Brajabuli language is the result of Śaṅkaradeva's own pilgrimage.

Furthermore, Śrī Śaṅkaradeva was influenced by some of the cultural institutions, traditionally performed in Ancient Assam, even from a time before him. These are recitations of Sanskrit versions, the 'Pūtalā Nāc (i.e. the puppet-play)', 'Deodhani Nṛtya,' 'Ojāpāli-Nṛtya-Gīts' etc. Among these the influence of the 'Ojāpāli-Nṛtya-Gīt' and the puppet-play is obvious.

THF RUKMINĪ-HARAN NĀṬ : THE PLAY UNDER DISCUSSION:

The Rukminī-haran, the Ankiya Nāṭ under consideration is obviously a dramatic presentation of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend. Śrī Śaṅkaradeva composed the drama on the same story which he narrated earlier in his versified work, 'the Rukminī-haran-Kāvyā'. It may be that he did it only in view of more effectiveness of the dramatic composition. Because, it is generally said that among all literary works or Kāvyas, the dramas are most suitable, most attractive.\[143\]

\[143\] 'kāvyesu nāṭakam ramyam'.
THE SOURCE OF THE PLAY:

In respect of the source of the play Rukmini-haran-Nat it can be safely said that Sri Sañkaradeva borrowed the theme from the Bhagavata-purana version of the legend and composed the work with his superb dramatic skill. Though the main story of the play is similar to the narration of the Rukmini-haran-Kavya, the versified work of the author, yet several major deviations are noticed.

DEVIATIONS NOTICED:

Deviations, from the poetic work is noticed in respect of the introduction of some characters in the play. In addition to the character of Sūtradhāra, common to all Ankiya-Nāts, some other characters are also added in the drama, and some characters found in the Kāvya are omitted herein. For instance, two characters called Bhāts (or, Bhāṭṭa or Bhāṭa, meaning Śrutipāṭhaka i.e. reciter of prayers), Haridāsa and Surabhi Bhāṭa, from Dvārakā and Kuṇḍila respectively are introduced in the play.149 These are described as Desāntarī (wayber, or traveller going from one country to another) in the poetic work and they communicated messages to Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī. Further, the two friends of Rukmiṇī namely, Līlāvatī and Madanamanjari are also Sañkaradeva's own creations. These names are met with in neither the original

149 RHNS. p.7.
Ibid. p. 10.
versions of the legend, nor his poetical work. On the other hand, the character and the episode of Viśvaketu, the king of Kauśambi are omitted in the Rukmini-haran-Nāt. Thus the characters like, the charioteer of Rukmi, Sumālinī dhāi, the faithful nurse of Rukmini which appear in the versified work are not found in the Rukmini-haran-Nāt.

Moreover, the message from Rukmini conveyed by Vedanidhi to Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā is mentioned as 'Sandesā' in the poetic work. But in the Nāt a letter from Rukmini is introduced that was carried by Vedanidhi, to Kṛṣṇa. Thus the long description of the war preparation of Rukmi, the appearance of omens of danger, lamentation of the king, the queen and others at the defeat of Rukmi, the pathetic scene in the war-field, Rukmi's pretension as dead-body and the elaborate picture of the marriage ceremony, which are presented in the poetic work are not met with in the similar manner in the Rukmini-haran-Nāt. These are the major differences in respect of material presentation between the two works composed by Śrī ŚaṅkaraDeva on the basis of the Rukmini-haran legend.

THE RUKMINI-HARAN NĀT: AS A WORK OF DRAMATIC ART:

As an Ankāya Nāṭ the play Rukmini-haran-Nāt cannot be fully compared to other dramatic works, like the

\[\text{svasti śrīparamesvara-sakala-surāṣura-vandita} \]
\[\text{...........................kin vahu lekhyamīti patramidam} /} \]
Vide. Ibid. pp. 24-25.
Sanskrit Nāṭākas. Yet some internal techniques of a Sanskrit drama come to be observed in the Rukmiṇī-haran-Nāṭ. Thus the five Sandhis viz. Mukha, Pratimukha, Garbha, Vīmāraṇa, and Nirvahaṇa and the five Avasthās, viz. - Ārāmbha, Yatna or Prayatna, Prāpyāśā, Niyatāpti and Phalāgamāna appear to be existant in the work.

The feelings of love, arise in the hearts of the hero and the heroine for each other at the messages presented by the Bhāṭs through the Bhaṭimā Songs. There then occurs the development of the love affair between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī which may be said to represent the 'Mukha (Sandhi)' or the 'Ārāmbha (Avasthā)' as in a Sanskrit drama.

Again, as for the second stage in the plot development, at the preparation of the Svayamvara and Kṛṣṇa's determination to abduct Rukmiṇī receiving the message conveyed by Vedanidhi, there occurs the Pratimukha (Sandhi) or Prayatna (Avasthā) as are found in a Sanskrit drama. Thirdly, Rukmiṇī, the heroine met Kṛṣṇa, her Lord, in the chariot when she was abducted by Kṛṣṇa. This situation may be said to present the Garbha (Sandhi) or Prāpyāśā (the Avasthā) in the manner of a Sanskrit drama. Thereafter, Vīmāraṇa (Sandhi) and the Niyatāpti (Avasthā) occur at the stage of the obstacles created by Śiśupāla, Rukmiṇī and other rival kings. This Sandhi up to the fierce

fight of prince Rukmī with Kṛṣṇa and ends with the defeat of proud and brave warrior Rukmī. The Nirvahanā (Sandhi) and the Phalāgama (the last Avasthā) are noticed at the happy ending of the play Rukmini-haran-Nāṭ in the joyful atmosphere of the marriage ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini the hero and the heroine of the play and their happy union. Thus these five Sandhis as well as the five Avasthās are noticed in the play as in a Sanskrit Nāṭaka. The last but not the least important point to be noted is that the Muktiṃgāl Bhaṭīmā at the end of the Nāṭ may be compared to the Bharatavākyā of a Sanskrit drama. Thus like a Sanskrit Nāṭaka, the main story of the Rukmini-haran-Nāṭ runs in an attractive and significant way.

THE RASA IN THE PLAY:

The treatment of Rasa (sentiment) in the play is the same as in the case of the Rukmini-haran-Kāvyā of the author of which a discussion is made earlier. Like the poetic work here through the Nāṭ also Śrī Śāṅkaradeva tried to establish the greatness of the Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti cult. Therefore, throughout the play in the songs and in the speeches of Sūtradhāra the audience is reminded of the

152 dharamakarājānām / ......... bolahu rāma rām /
     RHNS. p.4.
153 teju sāmājika kām/dāki bolahu rāma rām/...
     Ibid. p.12.
154 sūtra-nirantare hari bota hari bota /...
     Ibid. p. 9.
need to utter the holy names of Hari and to worship the Lord with devotion. From the generally accepted point of view Bhakti being a Bhāva, the Sāntarasa appears to be primary sentiment of the play. This view is supported by late Pandit T.N. Sarmah also. 154

THE CHARACTERIZATION IN THE PLAY:

The individuality of the characters is maintained in the play as in the poetic work. Among the new characters, the two Bhāts, the devotional singers relate the beauty and attributes of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini (the hero and the heroine) and thus they help in the matter of enhancing between them. So, these two characters are introduced with a dramatic purpose in view. Similar is the case with the two friends, Lilavati and Madanamañjarī who help the heroine Rukmini in all respects. Thus in respect of characterization also the author shows his own capability in the dramatic art.

In view of above, the Rukmini-haran-Nāt appears to be one of the prominent Aṇkiyā Nāts of the author. Sāṅkaradeva himself describes it as the chief of the Nāts. 155 Dr. M. Neog regards the play as an abridgement of

154 Vide. ṢVP. pp. 158-159
155 rukminiḥaraṇa nāṭa paradhāna / ......................
RHNS. Muktimangal bhaṭīmā. p. 55.
Sāñkaradeva's earlier poetical work in view of requirements of Sāñkarite dramatic art.

DIFFERENT EDITIONS OF THE PLAY:

Like the Rukmini-haran-Kāvya, the Rukmini-haran-Nāṭ is also found in the manuscript form written on Sañcipāṭ. For instance, the Manuscript No. 1494 of Gauhati University Library is a very old copy of the Rukmini-haran-Nāṭ. This Manuscript is collected by the Gauhati University Library from Puspadhar Mahanta Kumamara Satra, Nowgong. Another Manuscript copy of the play is also found in the Gauhati University Library collected from Kusachandradeva Adhikari, Batadravā Thān, Nowgong. Two pages of photostat copies of these manuscripts are provided in the Annexure of the present work.

The editions in print of the Rukmini-haran-Nāṭ are found from the middle of the twentieth century A.D. In this respect the edition of 'the Aṅkīyā Nāṭ' by B.K. Baruah,

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156 This drama seems to be an abridgement of Sankaradeva's earlier poetical composition on the same subject, as such abridgement was required by the art of Sankarite drama with its preponderating elements of dancing and music. SHT. p. 201.

157 Vide Manuscript. No. 2804. Manuscript Department, Gauhati University Library.

158 Vide Annexure B and C.

REFERENCES TO THE LEGEND IN OTHER WORKS OF ŚRĪ ŚĀṆKARADEVA:

Apart from these two major works mentioned above, the references to the Rukmini-harana legend are also met with in some other works of Śrī Śāṅkaradeva.

REFERENCE TO THE LEGEND IN KIRTITAN:

The Kirtitan, a devotional poetic work of Śrī Śāṅkaradeva contains references to the Rukmini-harana legend in three Adhyāyas (chapters). Thus in the Adhyāyas entitled ‘Nārādār Kṛṣṇa Darśan (the visit of sage Nārada at the abode of Kṛṣṇa),’162 ‘Kṛṣṇar Līlāmālā (the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa),’163 and ‘Rukminīr Premkalah (the love quarrel of Rukmini),’164 episode of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini makes its appearance.

IN GUNMĀLĀ:

Śrī Śāṅkaradeva presented the entire Bhāgavata in an abridged form in his famous lyric called ‘Gunmālā’, which

relates the pastimes of the Lord. There, in Gunmālā, course of the description of manifold activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa the Rukmiṇī-harana episode also comes in brief.

IN BARGĪTS:

Śrī Śāṅkaradeva and his chief disciple Śrī Mādhavadeva composed some devotional classical songs which are later on called 'Bargīts (the sacred songs)'. Dr. B.K. Kakati describes these Bargīts as 'noble numbers'. These songs, relating the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma pass as the devotional prayers containing high philosophical knowledge. In one of these Bargīts, it is described how Rukmiṇī prayed Kṛṣṇa to save her life from Śiśupāla, who appeared as Yama (God of death) to her.

THE RUKMIṆĪ-HARANA LEGEND IN THE WORKS OF AUTHORS CONTEMPORARY TO ŚRĪ ŚĀṄKARADEVA:

The Rukmiṇī-harana legend is found in some works of Vaiṣṇava poets contemporary to Śrī Śāṅkaradeva.

IN THE WORK OF ANANTA KANDALI:

Ananta Kandali, one of the Vaiṣṇavite poets and followers of Śāṅkaradeva translated in Assamese the IVth,

166 ASSI. p. 148.
167 'keśavah hāmākeri rākhahu prāṇ ...................... ..... pāpi śiśupāla kāla velimelineri.................. // Bargit.'
Vth, VIth, IXth and some portions of the Xth of the Books (Skandha) of the original Bhāgavata-purāṇa. In the Xth book, the poet narrates the Rukmini-harana legend. It appears that the poet followed the legend presented in the poetic work of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva, and therefore, Dr. B.K. Kakati regards the work of Ananta Kandali as the second edition of the Rukmini-harana-Kāvyā of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva.168

POEMS OF PĪTĀMVARA KAVI:

Pītāmvara Kavi was also contemporary to Śrī Śaṅkaradeva. It is learnt from the Kathāguru-Carit that Pītāmvara Kavi composed poems169 narrating the Rukmini-harana legend and these lyrics came to be popular. It is further known that Śaṅkaradeva did not like Pītāmvara's interpretation of the Rukmini-harana legend and therefore he called Pītāmvara a Tāmasik Kavi (a poet of the attribute of Tamas).

THE KATHĀ-BHĀGAVAT OF BHAṬṬADEVA:

Baikuṇṭha Nāth Bhaṭṭāchāryya, popularly known as Bhaṭṭadeva, composed his prose work Kathā-Bhāgavat relating the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa after the original Bhāgavata. Dr. S.N. Sarmah wants to determine Bhaṭṭadeva's time between 1558 to 1638 A.D.170 On the other hand, Dr. B.K. Bhattacharya

168 RIKS Preface, p. 16.
169 vilapa kariya kande ......................... yadumani // KGC. p. 121.
170 ASI. p. 148.
places him between the later part of the fifteenth century and one first part of the sixteenth century A.D.\textsuperscript{171}

Bhaṭṭadeva presents the Rukmī-harāṇa legend in his \textit{Kathā-Bhāgavat} in course of the narrations of pastimes and activities of the Lord. In respect of the presentation of the incidents of the legend the influence of Śrī Saṅkaradeva’s works on Bhaṭṭadeva is obvious. Bhaṭṭadeva’s writings, it may be added, are recognised as the first specimen of Prose not only in Assamese literature but also in the history of later Indian literature.\textsuperscript{173}

\textbf{THE KĀṬHĀ-SŪTRA OF BHĀGAVAT ĀCĀRYA :}

Bhāgavat Ācārya probably lived at the period between the later part of the 16th century and the early part of the 17th century A.D.\textsuperscript{174}

The author, composed three works in Assamese Prose, viz. ‘\textit{Kathā-Sūtra}, ‘\textit{Sātvata Tantra}’ and ‘\textit{Gītāsara}’. In his prominent work, \textit{Kathā-Sūtra} the whole original Bhāgavata \textit{purāṇa} is narrated in gist in old Assamese Prose form. There, in course of the presentation of Kṛṣṇa’s activities, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{171} Bhaṭṭadeva seems to have lived in the later part of the fifteenth or the first part of sixteenth century.
\item \textsuperscript{172} H\textit{SAL.} p. 70.
\item \textsuperscript{173} \textit{Kathā-Bhāgavat. Manuscript No. 743. 52-54, pp. 59(A)-62(A).}
\item \textsuperscript{174} \textit{ASSI. p. 137.}
\item \textsuperscript{174} \textit{Ibid. p. 193.}
\end{itemize}
Rukmini-haraṇa incident is also briefly narrated after the original Bhāgavata.

**PADMA-PURĀṆ OF SUKAVI NĀRĀYĀṆ DEV:**

Sukavi Nārāyān Dev flourished about 15th century A.D. A controversy is seen regarding his actual date.¹⁷⁵ His versified work is known as Padmā-puraṇ, or 'Padmāvatī' or popularly 'Sukananni'.

There in the Sukananni the Rukmini's marriage with Kṛṣṇa is simply mentioned.¹⁷⁶

**REFERENCE TO THE LEGEND IN GURU-CARITS:**

'Guru-carits (the biographical accounts of the preceptors)' relate the biography of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva, Śrī Mādhavadeva and other Vaiṣṇava saints of Assam. References to the Rukmini-haraṇa legend are met with in some of the Guru-carits in course of the explanations of the significance of some places like Pāṭvāusī, Dhanukhandā Vil etc.

The Kathāguru-carit (the biography of Guru i.e. Śrī Śaṅkaradeva in Prose) was probably, the composition of the early part of the 10th century A.D. and it is regarded as a trust-worthy and authoritative biographical work.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 127.
¹⁷⁶ rukmini vivāha hari kariva prathama
SP. p. 52.
The Kathāguru-carit states that while Kṛṣṇa made His journey to Kuṇḍilī for Rukmīṇī on the chariot accompanied by Vedanidhi and Dāruka, then Vedanidhi became senseless due to the high speed of the chariot. Kṛṣṇa, then dug a ditch on earth by His Sāraṅga bow. Then water began to flow and Kṛṣṇa restored sense to Vedanidhi by pouring water on his head. In course of time, that ditch got transformed to a Vil (lake). As the lake was dug by the Dhanu (bow) it became famous by the name 'Dhanukhandā Vil'. It is further stated that Kṛṣṇa took bettle nut. Some portion of the bettle nut fell down on the ground and Kṛṣṇa kept the same packed with Pāṭ (leaves). That place with the packet of bettle nut was found out by the devotees of Śrī Saṅkara-deva and that is why the place came to be known as Pāṭvāusi, where Śrī Saṅkaradeva lived for long fifteen years.177 These accounts are met with in the Bardowā-Guru-carit178 also.

Again, from the Guru-carit of Rāmcaraṇ Thākur, it is learnt that while Śrī Saṅkaradeva was going on pilgrimage accompanied by his disciples headed by Sarvajaya, Rām Rāmahe Guru, Haridāsa met an old Pasārī (a sales women) on the way Śrī Saṅkaradeva introduced her to his devotees as the

177 āru kṛṣṇadev kuṇḍilaloī yānte rukmīṇīr kāryat .......
tāte gurujāne pōndhara varṣa ..............līlā kariche //
KGC. p.127.

178 dhenu khandā vīlī gonsāye ..............vil bole /
BGC.VIII. pp.111-112.
Sumalini dhāl of Rukmini in her previous birth. Such an account is found in the Bardowā-Guru-carit also. Thus the references to the Rukmini-haraṇa episode are met with in the Guru-carits.

THE RUKMINI-HARAṆA LEGEND IN POST-SĀṆKARITE VAIṢṆAVA LITERATURE IN ASSAMESE:

Some works composed on the basis of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend by some followers of Śaṅkaradeva at a much later period also have caught our notice.

THE RUKMINI-HARAṆ NAT OF ŚRĪ KRŚNA KĀNTA DEVA ADHIKĀR:

An Āṅkiyā Nāṭ in the same name Rukmini-haraṇ Nāṭ was composed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Kānta Deva Adhikār of Śrī Śrī Kamalā Bāri Satra, Majuli (in Upper Assam). The work is, however, not yet published.

Like other Āṅkiyā Nāṭs, the language of the play is Brajabuli and some Sanskrit verses are also present.

THE ŚRĪ KRŚNA KĪRTTAN:

The Śrī Kṛṣṇa Kīrttan is a poetic work composed by Hem Chandra Goswami, the former Adhikar of Śrī Śrī Āuniatiya Satra, Assam.

179 GCR. pp.405-406.
180 BGC. V. p.54.
The Rukmini-haraṇa legend is elaborately presented in the Dvārakā-Khaṇḍa of the Śrī Kṛṣṇa Kīrttan. The major incidents of the legend presented in the Śrī Kṛṣṇa Kīrttan are similar to the version of the original Bhāgavata purāṇa.

THE RUKMINI-HARANA LEGEND IN MODERN ASSAMESE LITERATURE:

The Rukmini-haraṇa legend is found to be presented in a good number of works of modern Assamese literature also.

THE RUKMINI-HARANA OF ATUL CHANDRA HAZARIKA:

Late Prof. Atul Chandra Hazarika, a prominent writer of modern Assamese literature composed a dramatic work on the themes of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend entitled 'Rukmini-haran'. It is a mythological play that consists of five acts composed with new dramatic techniques containing some elements of the Ānkiyā Nāṭs also.

THE SOURCE OF THE PLAY:

The author late Hazarika himself states that he has composed his drama on the support of the lotus feet of Mahāpuruṣa Śrī Saṅkaradeva. Again, in the Prastāvanā

182 DKK. Dvārakā Khaṇḍa. pp. 151-158
183 RHAH. 'nivedan' p. /
(Prologue) of the play it is found in the speech of Sūtradhāra with an apology that the author composes the work with devotion to Śaṅkaradeva and at the inspiration of his 'Rukmini-haran-Nāt'. So, the source of the play is undoubtedly the Rukmini-haran-Nāt of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva.

MAJOR DEVIATIONS NOTICED:

Though the original story of the Rukmini-haran of Prof. Hazarika is similar to the Nat of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva yet some deviations are noticed.

Prof. Hazarika introduces some new characters which do not figure in the Ankitā Nāṭ or the poetical work of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva. Apart from the characters of Sūtradhāra, Pāripārśka (or Saṅgī), and the Gopīes, met with in the Prastāvana, there are some other characters like Nārada, Ugratārā (the wife of Vedanidhi), Kusumvarā (the minister of Bhīṣmaka) and Mahābhārata (who is introduced as the Vidūṣaka of Śiśupāla) which do not appear in the play of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva.

Again, in respect of the presentation of some incidents also points of deviations are noticed. Thus the quarrel among the kings in the Svayamvara pavilion, the presentation of the performance of the Kāmrūpī dance in Act IV, and the sudden conversion of the statue of Goddess Bhavānī into that of Murulidhar Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa as playing the
flute) before Rukmini in the temple, the flying of the garland of Rukmini in air in the Svayamvara scene are all additions made by the author.

In respect of the merit of the play, the author himself remarks that the play gained much popularity. Jyotiprasad Agarwalla, a prominent artist and literateur of Assam also praised the art of composition of Hazarika's Rukmini-haran.

THE RUKMINI-HARAN OF J. GOSWAMI:

Another mythological dramatic composition in Assamese literature, on the basis of the Rukmini-harana legend is the Rukmini-haran-Natak of Sri Jiban Chandra Goswami. The play consists of only three Acts.

THF SOURCE OF THE PLAY:

In respect of the presentation of the main legend, the author seems to follow Sri Sankaradeva. The role of Visvaketu, the king of Kausambi is also introduced here in the play as it is presented in the Rukmini-haran-Kavya.

MAJOR POINTS OF DEVIATION:

Deviation is noticed in respect of the introduction of some characters in the play. Thus the characters like,
those of Rūpāi Tekelā, the Dvārapāla (the door keeper), Vaipatānika, the minister of Viśvaketu, Revatī, Rūpeswarī, Candrikā, Mādhurī, Nācanī (female dancer) are necessarily presented by the author from the dramatic point of view which do not appear in the works of Śrī Saṅkaradeva or in the original version of the legend. Further, Brāhmaṇa Vedanidhi appears in the play as the preceptor of princess Rukmiṇī as well as the royal priest, the worshipper of Goddess Ambikā.

Moreover, deviations are found in view of the presentation of some new incidents in the drama. Thus the visit of Śisūpāla and Jarāsandha at the city of Kundīla before the Svayamvara of Rukmiṇī, their significant talk with Rukmiṇī, Rukmiṇī's visit in the flower garden with her friends, the love episode of Rūpāi and Rūpeswarī, the role played by Revatī etc. are the incidents newly introduced by the author in his play.

THE DRAMATIC VALUE OF THE WORK:

It is learnt that the Rukmiṇī-haran-Nāṭak is the first attempt of dramatic composition of the author. The author is able to maintain an upprecciable standard in his

189 RHJ. I. 1. p.3.
190 Ibid. III.6. p.90.
work as a mythological play. Regarding the Rukmini-haran-Nātak of Sri J.C. Goswami a note of appreciation was published in the Natun Asamīyā, a daily newspaper of the time of its composition.

Apart from the dramatic works of modern Assamese writers mentioned above, we may refer to the plays like the Kundil Knuari of Dimbeswar Neog, and the Kundil Knuari of Dharmeswar Sarmah.

Furthermore, Padmanath Gohain Baruah, one of the pioneer literary persons of Assam composed a historical play, entitled 'Sādhanī'. There in the speech of Sādhanī, the heroine of the play, the author makes mention the Rukmini-haranaepisode together with the reference to king Bhīṣmaka and his Vidarbhakingdom.

The references to the Rukmini-haranalegend is met with in a good number of poetic works of modern Assamese literature.

Thus Muktinath Bordoloi, in his poetical work 'Pārvatī' (lit. the daughter of mountain) compares 'Hanlu'
(a dignified lady of Arunachal) with princess Rukmini with her royal dignity and matchless beauty in his poem entitled *Hanlu*. In another poem 'Anis'cit', the poet gives a description of the beautiful bank of the river Kundila, covered with the plants of Kāṇcana flower and on which beautiful princess Rukmini once lived. 

Again, Jatindranath Duwara, a prominent poet of Assamese literature refers to princess Rukmini in Kundila, in his poetic work *Maramar-Sur*. In a poem entitled 'Ārati', the poet compares charming Rukmini to a beautiful flower blossoming in the garden on the bank of the river Kundila and which was stolen away by the thief from the temple availing of the chance. Here in this poem the abduction of Rukmini by Kṛṣṇa from the temple of Goddess Ambikā is suggested by the poet.

Further, Ambikagiri Ray Chaudhuri, a celebrated patriotic poet of Assam in his work *Anubhūti* expresses pride by way of remembering the old traditional feats of

195 tumī rājesvarī
nahaleno kundilar rukminir
lāvanya sambhār,
rājnan 'inir ..........

196 pārvatī. 'hānlu' p.5.
kānchana phulere dhaikan luītar ghāt ......rukmini sundari
thakā kundilarpār; ................. ..............jal-thal //
Ibid. 'anis'cit' PP. 16-17.

197 kundil tirar ati senehar
phulā phul pāhi ......devamandirate harile //
Assam in a poem entitled ‘mai āchon mai āchon’. Here the poet mentions King Bhīṣmaka together with Naraka, Bālī, Bhagadatta, Bāna Lachit, Cilarai, Naranarayan, Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and others.198

Like wise, poet Padmadhar Chaliha in his work, ‘Phulani’ makes mention of Rukmīṇī in the poem ‘Assam Gaurav’199 among other chaste and honourable, ladies like Uṣā, Veulā, Sādhani, Jayā and others, who are famous in the history of Assam.

Similarly, Atul Chandra Hazarika also refers to the name of Rukmīṇī in a poem, entitled ‘Prāgjyotikā’ in his work ‘Sundarar Āradhana’.200 In the same work, in another poem ‘Tinicukīyar ring (the echoes of Tinicukīya),’ gives a description of Tinicukīya (the present town and sub-division of Tinicukīya in the Dibrugarh district of Upper Assam) of the memorable past days. In a stanza of the poem the poet describes how the river Kundīla is flowing slowly with the water from Arunachal conveying the sweet memory of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmīṇī.201 Thus the references to the episode of Kṛṣṇa and

198 prahlād narak bali bhīsmak ........................................................
Anubhuti. ‘mai āncho mai āncho’, p. 80.
199 asīm mahimā ...... kṛṣṇavimohini rukmīṇī sundarī ......
Phulani. ‘assam gaurāvī’. p. 28.
201 arunāchālar kundil pānir ........................................
punya ‘mṛtikāra kṛṣṇa rukmīnir .......... nir pir //
Ibid. Tinsukīyar ring. p. 85.
Rukmini are met with in modern poetic works of Assamese literature.

THE LEGEND IN VARIOUS FOLK-SONGS OF ASSAM:

The Rukmini-haraṇa legend is presented in some folk-songs of Assam also.

IN MĀLĪTĀ SONGS OF OJĀPĀLI NRTYA:

The Ojāpāli dance and songs are very old cultural institution of Assam, which are earlier even to Sāṅkarite culture of mediaeval Assam.\(^\text{202}\) The ojā (the chief of the dancers) generally recites some songs called 'Mālītā (ballad)'. Dr. Hemanta Kumar Sarma describes these Mālītā songs as a kind of folk-song which generally relates some mythological or traditional story.\(^\text{203}\) In some of such Mālītā songs the origin of various Rāgas (a musical mode) is narrated. For instance, it is stated in a Mālītā that the 'Cālana-rāga' was sung by Garuḍa, the mighty divine bird at the time of his flight with Lord Viṣṇu on his back.\(^\text{204}\) Again, the 'Vasanta rāga' originated from the lamentation of the Nāgpatnis (i.e. the wives of the great snake Kāli).\(^\text{205}\) Similarly,

\(^{202}\) RHNS. Preface. p.4.
\(^{203}\) SS. p. 35.
\(^{204}\) viṣṇuka kāndhata laiyā urāo karilā / urāvante garuḍa cālana rāga gāilā //
RD. 6th year. No.2. Jeth. 1375 Sak. p.86.
\(^{205}\) krṣṇaka minati kari ... vasanta rāga vailā //
Ibid. 6th year, No.2. Jeth. 1875. Sak. p.86.
there is also a particular rāga called 'Suhāi-rāga' or 'Rukmiṇī-rāga'. While Rukmiṇī, after her auspicious prayer obtained a boon from Goddess Bhavāṇī in the temple according to which she got Krṣṇa as her husband then out of joy she sang melodious songs. From her song the 'Suhāi-rāga' originated. As it was sung by Rukmiṇī, so this Rāga came to be known as 'Rukmiṇī-rāga'. Thus the Rukmiṇī-harana legend is mentioned in the Mālita songs.

THF LEGEND IN KĀMRUPI LOKA-GĪTS:

The traditional folk-songs of Kāmarūpa (the old Kāmarūpa district in lower Assam) known as the 'Kāmrūpi Loka-gīts (the folk songs of Kāmrūpa) relate the pastimes of Lord Krṣṇa, Rāma, Šiva and others. The Rukmiṇī-harana legend is also narrated in some Kāmrūpi loka-gīts. For instance, it is stated in a song, 'Oh Śisupāla, do not make any disturbance or any obstacle. Because, Gopāla (i.e. Krṣṇa) has come to abduct Rukmiṇī.'

Again, in another folk-song of Kāmarūpa, Rukmiṇī requests her Guru Vedamidhi to go to Dvārakā and bring Krṣṇa for her. It is stated in the song thus - 'Oh honourable Guru, my preceptor, you please give me life. Let you bring Krṣṇa from Dvārakā ...'

\[\text{varapāyā ānanditā rukmiṇīye āi/...rukmiṇī-rāga dākilā suhāi} \] // Ibld. 6th year.No.2. Jeth.1875. Sak. p.86.

\[\text{śisupāl rāpāta janjal} \]
\[\text{rukmiṇī hariṇā lagi āhiche gopāl} \] \text{...........etc.}
\[\text{Asāmiyā Lokagīt. p. 60.} \]
Like the Kāmrūpī folk-songs there are some particular folk-songs originating in the Goalpara district of lower Assam, which are known as Goalpariyā loka-gīts. Some Goalpariyā loka-gīts also make mention of the name of Rukmīṇī. For instance, in a song it is stated thus, 'Rukmīṇī has lived in this home taking Duni (or Dunari, a kind of earthen jar made beautifully) and a pitcher. Now, after fasting for four days she has come out taking a (mirror) in her hand.'

The marriage-songs of Assam sung in various tones in a social marriage ceremony have special attraction because of their very sweet melodious tunes. In these songs generally the brides and the bride-grooms are compared with Sītā and Rāma, Pārvatī and Hara (Mahādeva), Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, Rukmīṇī and Kṛṣṇa and Uṣā and Aniruddha etc. In many an Assamese marriage song, the love episode of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmīṇī and their marriage ceremony are narrated. For instance, in a song it is stated thus - 'In the palace:

\[\text{moke prāṇa diyā guru } \ldots \ldots \text{ kṛṣṇāik āni diyā } \ldots \ldots /\]

ALGS. p. 20.

\[\text{sehi ghar khanit āchila rukmīṇī }
\text{āge duni ghaṭ lai } \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \]

GLGS. p. 204.

ASSI. p. 29.
of king Bhīṣmaka, the bride has been offered to-day. A Daul (i.e. tamb) is built with Dharma (i.e. virtue) which is as high as a mountain.²¹¹ Again, in another marriage song it is stated how Rukmini, seated on a Pāṭi (a king of smooth mat) thinks again and again of Kṛṣṇa.²¹² Thus the Assamese marriage songs, sung in different stages of the marriage ceremony relate the love episode of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini.

THE LEGEND IN DIHĀ-NĀMS:

The Dihā-nāms (a kind of devotional songs) are also a sort of devotional folk-songs which relate the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Rāma or Mahādeva (i.e. Śiva) in order to give rise to devotion in the heart of listeners. These Dihā-songs are presented with some musical instruments like Khol, Tāl, Nāgera (a kind of drum) etc.

In some Dihā-nāms the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend is also mentioned. For instance, a Dihā-song states, 'Oh mother Rukmini, there is no lady in this world who is as lucky as you are.'²¹³ Thus the Dihā-songs also make

²¹¹ bhīṣmak rājār ghare āji kare kanyādān / dhaimere bāndhiche daula parvata samān //
Collected from some folk-artists.

²¹² pāṭit bāhi rukminīye sunā sakhi mane mane guṇe /.....
Ibid.

²¹³ 'he rukminī āt tomāsana bhāgyavāti prthivite nāi ....
Collected from Kalamani Handique, a Radio Artist, All India Radio, Dibrugarh.
ARTICLES OF MODERN WRITERS ON THE LEGEND:

Apart from the works on the history of Assamese literature, many articles of modern Assamese writers, specially on the two aforementioned works of Sri Sāṅkaradeva are found published in different magazines and newspapers of Assam. As for instance, Dr. Sibanath Barman composed an article entitled 'Srimanta Sāṅkaradeva: eti ālocaṇā' where he gives a critical and elaborate discussion specially on the Rukmiṇī-haran-Kāvya of Sri Sāṅkaradeva. The article was published in the Assamese magazine, 'Prakash'.

We have also noticed another article on the Rukmiṇī-haran-Kāvya by Dr. Purnanda Saikia, entitled 'Śreṣṭha Asamiyā Kāvya Rukmiṇī-haran', which was published in the 'Prakash'. Dr. Saikia therein makes a very exhaustive and critical discussion on the work and he concludes with the remark that the Rukmiṇī-haran-Kāvya of Sri Sāṅkaradeva is the best one in the whole sphere of poetic works in Assamese.

Further, Prof. B. Nirmalialiya has also to his credit an article by the title 'Rukmiṇī-haran nātar ras vichār'.

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published in the Duliajan College Magazine. Here, Prof. Nirmaliya discusses in respect of the treatment of *Rasa of Śrī Śāṅkara's Rukmini-haran Nāṭ.*

Moreover, a recently published article by M. Wahidur Rahman, entitled 'Dujana Gurur dukhan kāvyā (the two poetic works of the two preceptors)' and published in the Assamese newspaper, 'Agradoot', comes to our notice. Here in this article a critical discussion is made by the author on the two Kāvya, namely the *Rukmini-haran* and *Kumara-haran* of the two preceptors, Śrī Śāṅkaradeva and Śrī Mādhavadeva respectively.

Thus the Rukmini-haraṇa legend is found presented in various works and forms in the Assamese literature from the mediaeval to the modern period.

**THE RUKMINI-HARAṆA LEGEND IN BENGALI LITERATURE**

As in the Assamese literature certain literary works composed on the basis of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend are found also in Bengali literature...

The presentation of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend in Bengali literature is met with specially in the works of

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217 DCM. pp. 7-9.
218 Agradoot. 21st September, 1938. p.9.
mediaeval period. Many Vaisnavite poets composed works relating the manifold pastimes of Lord Krsna in Bengali literature during the 17th century A.D. This Vaisnavite period appears to cover a time starting from the last part of the 16th century A.D. to the earlier part of the 18th century A.D. In this period, a particular class of devotional literary works, relating the activities of Lord Krsna were composed which were commonly styled 'Krsna-Maṅgala' (benediction to Krsna) or Krsna-Maṅgal-Kavya. In such literary works called Krsna-maṅgal the Rukmini-haran legend is presented in a very attractive way together with the accounts of the other pastimes of Krsna. Few examples are given below in support of the above observation.

THE RUKMINI-HARAN LEGEND IN PARASŪRĀMA'S KṚṢṆA-MĀṅGAL:

Parasūrāma, a Vaisnavite poet of mediaeval Bengal composed his versified work Kṛṣṇa-Maṅgal. He lived, probably, in 17th century A.D. Of course, some critics

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219 sudhu saptadas' satāvditei kṛṣṇalīlā viṣayak anuvād o ākhyān kāvyer antataḥ vārojān kavir āvirbhāv hai chil/ BSIA. p. 482.
220 Ibid. p. 501.
221 dīnes bībur anumāne parasurām saptadas' satābdite bidyamān chilān / PKM. bhumikā. p. 11.
of Bengali literature like Asit Kumar Bandopadhyaya opine that there were two poets of the same name Paraśurāma who flourished at the same period. N.N. Dasgupta, however, mentions of a poet by the name Paraśurāma, an author of a Kṛṣṇamaṅgal-Kāvyā, where the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend is beautifully described.

THE SOURCE OF THE NARRATION:

The source of the narration of the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend occurred in the Kṛṣṇamaṅgal of Parasurāma seems, mainly, to be the original Bhāgavata-purāṇa. The poet himself makes mention of the name of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa in some places, specially in some concluding stanzas of the narration of the legend. Yet some points of deviations as well as the influence of some other puranic versions in respect of the legend are noticed.

DEVIATIONS FROM THE BHĀGAVATA-PURĀNA: INFLUENCE OF OTHER PURĀNAS:

Though Parasurāma, the author of the poem follows the Bhāgavata purāṇa version of the legend in his narration, yet he presents the same in a slightly different form with deviation from the original in some places. For instance,

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222 BSIA. p.487.
223 PKM. pp.417-427.
224 bhāgavata kṛṣṇa kathā purānera sāra //.....................
   Ibid. pp.418,421,422.
bhāgabata kṛṣṇa kathā.....................birachila //
   Ibid. p.420.
unlike the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, he refers to the marriage of Balarama and Revati in the beginning. Here the influence of the Brahmavaivarta-purāṇa is noticed, wherein also the marriage of Balarama and Revati is described in the beginning, in course of the narration of the Rukmini-harana legend. Furthermore, in the description of the battle, the influence of the Harivamśa-purāṇa is noticed. Like the Harivamśa-purāṇa, it is stated here that the fights ensued of the chariots against the chariots, of the elephants against the elephants and of the army against the army etc. Thus in Parasurama's Kṛśnanaṅgal, though the Rukmini-harana legend is narrated primarily based on the Bhāgavata-purāṇa yet the influence of the Brahma-Vaivarta-purāṇa as well as of the Harivamśa-purāṇa is also conspicuous.

In some places of the narration, it is, however, noticed that the author presents some descriptions with his own genius. For instance, Parasurama describes Bhīṣmaka as a pious and devoted king, who always remembered the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Again, the punishment inflicted on

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225 rebati karilā bhīhā ruhini nandan / ......................
Ibid. p.417.

226 Vide. HVP. 59. 65-68. p.301.

227 madhe patha mahājudha haila mahāraṇa/ ....bāhute bāhute//
PKM. p.425.

228 rukkinira pitā se bhīsmaka narapati / ..............
Ibid. p.418.

kṛṣṇa guṇa gathā / ........
Rukmi by Kṛṣṇa is also described in an interesting way. It is described that Kṛṣṇa shaved Rukmi's hairs and painted his one cheek with Cūna (i.e. lime) and the other with Kāli (ashes or, black coloured paint).\(^229\) This manner of giving punishment on Rukmini, is, however, similar to the same found in the Rukmini-haran Nāt of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva in Assam. This similarity is also observed by N. Dasgupta also.\(^230\) Such are the points of deviation, found in the Kṛṣṇamaṅgal version of Parasurāma in respect of the Rukmini-harana legend from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the legend.

**LITERARY VALUE:**

It is already stated above that the Rukmini-harana legend is presented in the Kṛṣṇamaṅgal of Parasurāma in course of the description of the manifold pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Like other Vaiṣṇava poets, Parasurāma's purpose of the composition of the poem was also to popularise the Kṛṣṇa cult, or the Viṣṇubhakti cult (the cult of devotion to Viṣṇu) in the society. Therefore, the poet requests others to hear the important story of Bhāgavata-purāṇa, and there by to get rid of sin and sorrow.\(^231\) Yet the poem

\(^{229}\) pacatāi khopa tāra rākhila banamāli / 
eka gāle cuna dīlā āra gāle kāli // 
Ibid. p. 427.

\(^{230}\) Ibid. bhūmikā. p. 9.1v.

\(^{231}\) bhāgavata kṛṣṇa kathā ... 
sunāre baiṣṇava pārāyana / ... ... parasūrāma bira chila// 
Ibid. p.420.
occupies a good position in the Vaiṣṇavite literature, specially among the Kṛṣṇamaṅgals of mediaeval period. In this respect, N. Dasgupta remarks that among all other Kṛṣṇamaṅgal-Kāvyas, composed in mediaeval period, Parasurāma’s Kṛṣṇamaṅgal is noteworthy one. 232

METRICAL USE IN THE VERSION:

In the version of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend, in the poem Kṛṣṇamaṅgal of Parasurāma, two types of metres seem to be used by the poet, e.g. the Pada 233 and the Dirgha Tripādi (i.e. Chavi in Assamese). 234

USE OF RĀGAS AND DHUYĀ:

The author uses different types of Rāgas (a musical mode) viz. 'Sindhurā', 'Dhānsi', 'Sui' and Srigandhāra. 238

Again, the poet uses 'Dhuyā (a particular mode of singing', specially in two places in the introductory lines

232 Ibid. bhūmiḵā, p. 1c
234 Ibid. pp. 419-420.
236 Ibid. pp.419-420.
of the poems. According to Dr. Sukumar Sen, that Pada or rhyme is called Dhuya which is composed with two or four Chatras. Vidyapati composed many a such Dhuya Pada. This Dhuyas may be compared to the Ghoṣas used by Śrī Saṅkaradeva of Assam in his devotional lyric poem 'Kīrttan'.

Parasūrāma uses suitable Rāgas and Dhuyas in his versified work Kṛṣṇamaṅgal and also in the version of the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend, he narrates. Thus the legend is beautifully presented in the Kṛṣṇamaṅgal of Parasūrāma.

THE LEGEND IN OTHER KṚṢṆA-MĀṆΓAL KĀṆYĀS:

The Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend is described in some other Kṛṣṇamaṅgal Kāvyas in course of the delineation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. In this respect, the works of Mālādhara Vasu, Mādhavacārya, Duhkhīśyāmādāsa, Raghunāth Bhāgavata Ācārya, Kṛṣṇa Kiṅkara, and Kṛṣṇadāsa may be referred to.

THE LEGEND IN SOME WORKS ON THE BHĀGAVATA:

In mediaeval period, specially, during 17th century A.D. some more Vaiṣṇavite poets translated the original

239 'hari more tārāyā neha'/dhuya //
    Ibid. p.421.
'vinodini kanaka mukura kāntī' / dhuya //</n
    Ibid. p.424.
240 eman duchatrer vā cār chartrer padake valata
'Dhuyāpad'/ vidyāpati vahu dhuyāpad likhichilen /
    V. Pad. bhumikā. p.6.
241 Vide PKM. bhūmikā Kṛṣṇa Maṅgal sāhityer vivaran. pp, 9V–9IY.
Bhāgavata-purāṇa into the Bengali language, and thus delineated the life and lilas (i.e. pastimes) of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The delineation of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend is also found in course of the description of Kṛṣṇa's manifold activities. They were like, Sanātana Vidyāvagīśa (1679 A.D.) three poets of the same name of Kṛṣṇadāsa (17th century A.D.), and Govindadāsa (1616 A.D.). One of the poets by the name of Kṛṣṇadāsa translated the whole of the tenth Skandha of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, probably in 17th century A.D. He was a pupil of Śrī Nivāsa Ācārya who lived on the bank of the Ganges.242 Again, the work of Govindadāsa (who is mentioned above), on the Bhāgavata-purāṇa was very popular. He was called second Vidyāpati for his genius.243 According to Dr. Biman Bihari Majunder, Govindadāsa was present up to the early part of the 17th century A.D.244 Apart from these, mentioned above, there were some other devoted Vaiṣṇava poets who related the Rukmini-haraṇa legend together with other pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. To refer to their names were, - Dvija haridāsa, Abhirāma Dutta, Durullabhānanda and Kavicandra.

A NOTeworthy DIFFERENCE IN PRESENTATION OF THE LEGEND:

It is already stated in chapter-II of the present work that the Harivamśa describes the Rukmini-haraṇa story in

242 BSIA. p.433.
243 Ibid. p.560.
244 Ibid. p.555.
two parts. The first part delineates the Svayamvara of Rukmini, coronation of Kṛṣṇa in the city of Kaisikā, controversial conversation between Kṛṣṇa and Bhīṣmaka and also the dismissal of Rukmini's Svayamvara (i.e. the first Svayamvara). The second narration describes the Rukmini-harana portion which is similar to the Rukmini-harana account found in the Viṣṇu-purāṇa as well as in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. Factually, the Viṣṇu-purāṇa and the Bhāgavata-purāṇa avoid the first narration of the legend appearing in the Harivaṃśa.

Now, it is noticed that in respect of depiction of the life and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, specially based on the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, the Vaiśṇavite poets of mediaeval Bengal seem to be alike up to the narration of the story of slaying of Kesī and Vyomasura by Kṛṣṇa (before the pastime of Rukmini-harana). But in respect of delineation of the Rukmini-harana legend in particular, there appear to be two groups of poets. One group presents the legend combining the two narrations, i.e. the Harivaṃśa version and the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version. Of course, the cancelation of the first Svayamvara of Rukmini does not occur here. Kṛṣṇa's coronation ceremony in Kaisikā's coronation ceremony in Kaisikā's city on the way to Kuṇḍina is simply described and added to the narration of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. This combination, of course, gives
the legend a newer look. Thus the poets like Mālādhara Vasu, Mādhavācārya, and Duḥkhi Śyāmadāsa composed their works combining the versions of the legend found in both the purāṇas. The other group of poets, on the other hand, presented the story simply after the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version. Thus poets like, Raghunātha Bhāgavata Ācārya, Kṛṣṇa Kiṅkara Kṛṣṇadāsa, Kṛṣṇadāsa, and Parasurāma dealt with the legend almost according to the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version. Nalini Nath Dasgupta also refers to these two groups of Vaiṣṇavite poets of mediaeval period in Bengali literature.²⁴⁵ It is to be noted that Śrī Saṅkaradeva of Assam, as stated earlier, combines both the purānic versions in his poetic work Rukmīnī-harana-Kāvya like the Bengali poets of the first group mentioned above. Thus the Rukmīnī-harana legend has received a special treatment in the hands of the Bengali poets.

LOCAL COLOUR IN PRESENTATION OF THE LEGEND: ITS IMPACT:

Like Assamese literature, in Bengali literature also the legend is presented in local colour. According to N.N. Dasgupta this picture in local colour is vividly noticed in some works of Bengali poets, specially, in the delineation of the marriage ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmīnī.²⁴⁶ It naturally suggests the popularity of the legend in mediaeval Bengali society.

²⁴⁵ P.K.M. bhūmikā pp. 9⁻⁻ 9⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻skirts
²⁴⁶ Ibid. bhūmikā p. 9⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻~-~-
THE LEGEND IN LATER LITERARY WORKS:

Besides in the works of mediaeval Bengali literature mentioned above, the Rukmini-harana legend is found in some later literary works, particularly in the works of the early period of modern Bengali literature. As for illustration, some of them are mentioned below.

THE LEGEND IN KRṣṆA-CARITRA OF BANKIMCHANDRA:

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya (later half of the 19th century A.D.), a prominent scholar of Bengal composes his famous prose work Krṣṇa-Caritra, which was first published in 1886 A.D. In the Krṣṇa-Caritra the author describes the life, activities and teachings of Lord Krṣṇa in a scientific way. He depicts Krṣṇa, not primarily as a God but as a historical figure. In this respect, the remarks of celebrated scholar Rabindra Nath Tagore is noteworthy.247

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya relates the Rukmini-harana legend very briefly in his Krṣṇa-Caritra.248 It appears that the author relates the legend after the versions of both Hariyamśa and the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. Thus Krṣṇa's approach to Bhīṣmaka with the proposal of wedding with Rukmini, reference to Jarāsandha’s suggestion to Bhīṣmaka to

247 yakhan āmader décor śikṣit lokerao ātma viṣmrta haiyā... takhan bankim candra vīrdarpa.....kariyā diachen // BSIS. p.232.

arrange the marriage of Rukmini with Sisupala indicate the influence of the Harivamsa version. The other portion of the narration is similar to the Bhagavata purana as well as the Vishnu purana version of the legend.

THE RUKMINI-HARAN DRAMA OF RAMNARAYAN:

One of the prominent literary works in Bengali literature on the basis of the Rukmini-harana legend is the drama 'Rukmini-harana' of Ramnarayan Tarka Ratna (1822-36 AD). Ramnarayan composes three mythological plays, viz. - the 'Rukmini-harana', 'Kamsavadha (a play on slaying of Kamsa)', and the 'Dharmavijaya (a play on the victory of Virtue)'.

Different scholars remark that Ramnarayan composed his play Rukmini-harana in 1971 AD.250

THE PLAY: A CRITICAL APPRECIATION:

Ramnarayan composed his play Rukmini-harana on the basis of the Rukmini-harana legend, related in the Bhagavata-purana. It is a dramatic work of five Acts. The Acts of the drama contain not more than two scenes each. Further, some Acts contain only one scene.251

249 tina atisay rupavati ekan gunavati suniya krshna bhishmaker nikat rukminihe...nimantran karilen / Ibid. 3.4. Krsner vivah. p.121.
250 BSIS. p.52 Vide also BSSI. p.239.
251 sir krsna karftk rukmini-haraner suparicit bisay bastu abalamvan kariyaa ramnarayan rukmini-haranana........ sampurna hai ache / BNSI. p. 197.
LANGUAGE OF THE PLAY:

In the prelude of the Rukmini-haran drama of Ramnarayan, there is a Nāndī (a benedictory verse) as in Sanskrit dramas. The language is quite similar to that used by Jayadeva. On the other hand, the language used in other portion of the drama is appropriate to a mythological play. The author shows his ability in maintaining the same standard from the beginning to the end. In this regard, the remarks of Sri Asutos Bhattacharyya are noteworthy.

THE RASA IN THE PLAY:

The predominant sentiment of the play is apparently the Śrīngāra (the erotic sentiment). But yet the suggestion of the devotional sentiment (Bhaktirasa) is maintained by the author. Other sentiments, like Vīra (the heroic sentiment) are also successfully delineated by the author as the sub-ordinate sentiments of the play.

THE CHARACTERIZATION IN THE PLAY:

In the play Rukmini-haran there is no characters, whatsoever of Grāmya (rustic) or low (Adhama) type. The characters viz. Bhīṣmaka, Rukmī, Śīsupāla, Kṛṣṇa and others

252 BSIS. p.53.
253 BNSI. p.197.
254 Ibid. p.197.
as depicted in the play appear to be of the same status. Therefore, it is remarked by A. Bhattacharya that almost all the characters in the drama Rukmini-haran of Ramnarayan, are of equal standard.  

Ramnarayan Tarka Ratna's play on the Rukmini-haran legend passed as a mythological play. Thus the Rukmini-haran legend is presented in Bengali literature through different works from the mediaeval to the modern period. Of course, it should be noted that due to the overwhelming popularity of Sri Caitanya-deva's Radha-Krsna cult, Krsna's pastimes with Rukmini could not catch much popularity in Bengal.  

THE RUKMINI-HARANA LEGEND IN HINDI LITERATURE:  

A good number of literary works, based on the Rukmini-haran legend are, found in Hindi literature of the mediaeval and modern period. An attempt is made below to introduce the numerous works in Hindi literature, relating the Rukmini-haran legend.  

THE LEGEND IN RAJASTHANI-LITERATURE:  

Some poetic works on the basis of the Rukmini-haran legend are found in Rajasthani literature, as mentioned

255 grāmya kīmva itar caritra ihāte nāi .................  
Ibid. p.197.  

256 rādhār abhyūdayer pēr rukmini,satyabhāmā............  
kṛṣṇa lilāi rādhāi......................... lāgilen /  
PKM. bhumikā. p. /c/.
below, specially, in mediaeval period.

KRISAN RUKMANI RI VELI OF PRTHVIRAJ:

*Krisan-Rukmanī-Ri-Veli* or *Veli-Krisan-Rukmanī-Ri* of Rathaud Prthviraj is one of the prominent versified works in Rājasthānī (Dīṅgal) literature composed on the theme of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend. In this work the life of Rukmini, the heroine, is described since her child-hood up to her postmarital sports with Kṛṣṇa.

SOURCE OF THE WORK:

It appears that the author of the *Krisan-Rukmanī-Ri-Veli* takes the main theme of the Kāvya from the original Bhāgavata-purāṇa. It is, however, noticed that the author simply borrows the skeleton from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the legend, and he makes the work more lively by way of supplying flesh and blood to it with his own genius.

DEVIATIONS FROM THE BHĀGAVATA PURĀNA VERSIONS:

Though Prthviraj, takes the theme from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version yet he deviates from the original story in some places in respect of presentation. First, unlike the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, the *Krisan-Rukmanī-Ri-Veli* presents an elaborate description of Rukmini's child-hood, youth, and her education.²⁵⁷ Again, according to the *Veli*, Rukmini

having heard the manifold qualities of Kṛṣaṇa worshipped
Lord Śiva and Goddess Gaurī with the intention of getting
Kṛṣaṇa as her husband. Such a description is not found
in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. Unlike the Bhāgavata and like
some other works (e.g. the work of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva), the
Veli also makes mention of a letter from Rukmini to Kṛṣṇa.
Further, it is stated in the Veli that at the arrival of
Śīṣupāla the city of Kuṇḍīna was decorated to welcome him
at Rukmi's command. But such a picture is not found
in the Bhāgavata. Again, the description of the marriage
ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini at Dvārakā is more elaborat­
ely presented in the Veli in comparison to the Bhāgavata-
purāṇa version. Furthermore, the description of the
sports of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini after marriage ceremony is in
brief in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, where as in the Veli it is
found in a very elaborate manner. In this respect, we can
refer to the description of the morning, of the
seasons, and of the amorous sports of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini.

258 Vide Ibid. 100-108. pp.52-56.
259 Ibid. 59-66. pp.31-34.
261 Ibid. 147-155. pp.78-82.
These pictures are not found in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the Rukmini-harana legend.

On the other hand, it is also found that some incidents narrated in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the legend are absent in the work Krisan-Rukminī-Rī-Veli. For instance, the arrangement of the marriage of Rukmini by the king and also that of Śisupāla by king Damaghoṣa are not found in the Veli. Another important point to be noted is that the Veli does not mention the fierce vow, and the establishment of the new city of Bhojakāṭa by Rukmi, which occur in most of the purānic versions including that of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. Thus the author presents the legend in his work 'Krisan-Rukmini-Rī-Veli' with much deviations from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa.

LITERARY VALUE:

As a literary work, the 'Krisan-Rukmani-Rī-Veli' occupies a good place in the domain of Rājasthāni literature of mediaeval period. Prthvīrāj, an inhabitant of Yodhpur was a poet known for his love for the mother land. Therefore, the poem is presented in local colour. As is pointed out by Shri R.C. Sukla, the poet shows his maturity in composing the work which has attracted readers of all
categories. The description of Rukmini's childhood and her youth, of the city of Dwārakā, and also of the battle are really full of high literary beauty. Further, nature has been attractively shown in the descriptions of the six seasons. Moreover, in the description of the profound feelings of love in Rukmini's heart on hearing the extraordinary qualities of Kṛṣṇa, and also in the depiction of the erotic sports of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini at their happy union there is nice delineation of the erotic sentiment. Thus the work of Prthvīrāj shows worth mentioning literary value.

THE RUKMINI-HARANĀ OF JHULĀ-SĀYĀ:

Another important poetical work found in Rajasthānī literature of mediaeval period is the Rukmini-haranā of Jhulā Sāyā. This Jhulā Sāyā, a famous Cāraṇa Kavi (i.e. a wandering singer, a bard) was contemporary to Prthvīrāj, mentioned above. The legend is related in his work after the version of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa.

HARI-JI-RĪ VYANVRALO OF PADAM BHAGAT:

One of the popular poems of Rajasthānī literature is the Hari-Ji-Rī-Vyanvralo or, the Rukmani-Maṅgal of Padum

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266 Ibid. p.214.
270 iski racna jhula sakhā ke caraṇ sāyā ne ki /
Ibid, p.20.
Bhagat. The author Bhagat was a poet of Telicaste and his time was probably the 17th century A.D. 271

THE STORY OF THE WORK:

It appears that Bhagat also borrowed the theme from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version. The life of Rukmīṇī is described in the poem beginning from her child-hood up to the marriage with Kṛṣṇa some portions of the original poem are, however, lost and as the poem was collected at different times so at present the work is found in various forms. Siva Karna Ram Ratan Darak edited and published the work in print. 272

LITERARY MERIT:

As a literary work, the Hari-Jī-Rī-Vyanvralo is a valuable composition of the poet. Here, the life and society of the common people of Rājasthāna are successfully depicted. 273 The language of the poem is very simple and attractive. 274

271 Ibid. p. 20.
272 savse pichalā udhār dīdvānāke sīva karna rām ratan darak ne kiyā aur use chapāyā / 
Ibid. p.20
273 kavitā kī dṛṣṭise yah bādi sundar racanā hai /..... 
...........................sājīv citraṇ isme huyā hai /
Ibid. p.20.
274 bhāṣā vilkul saral aur bol cāl kī hai / 
Ibid. p.20.
KRISANJI-RI-VELI OF KARASAMI RUNECA:

The Krisanjī-Rī-Veli is another poem composed by Saṅkhala Karasamī Ruṇecā. A manuscript copy of the poem was found in 1634 A.D. Thus it appears that the Rajasthānī literature presents a good number of works, relating the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend, and hence the popularity of the legend in the society is surely to be admitted.

THE RUKMIŅĪ-MANGAL OF KĀLICHARAN MUDGAL:

An important Rukmiṇī-Nangal Kāvya is the Rukmiṇī-Maṅgal of Kālīcharan Mudgal. It is a small devotional versified work, relating the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend.

THE SOURCE:

It appears that the author takes the main story from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version. The poet, however, presents the legend in his work in new colour by way of making certain new additions to the original story.

DEVIATIONS FROM THE BHĀGAVATA-PURĀNA:

Some points of deviation from the original version are noticed in some places of the work as pointed out below.

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sanākhala karasāmī ruṇecā kṛt - krisanjī-ri-vel hai /
iski hasta likhit prāṭilipi 1634 kī prāpta but hai //
Ibid., p. 20.
Rukmini is described here in the Rukminī-Maṅgal of Kalicaran as the incarnation of Lakṣmī and Cītā and in this respect the slaying of Rāvaṇa is also referred to.276 This reference of Rāvaṇa is not found in the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa version. Again, it is stated that king Bhiṣmaka intended to give Rukmini, in marriage with Kṛṣṇa. In this respect, he referred to the marriage of Vaidehi with Rāma, and that of Gaṅgā with Lord Śiva. Further, at the time, when king Bhiṣmaka advised proud Rukmini not to stand against Kṛṣṇa then in order to stress on his divine power, the king referred to some pastimes of the Lord like, the slaying of Kaṁsa, Kuvalaya, offering grace to Nalakuvera, Gajendra and Grāha,277 which are not to be found in the Bhāgavata version of the legend. Again, the Rukminī Maṅgal states that Rukmini invited Śisunāla to the Svayamvara of Rukmini by way of sending a messenger with a letter.278 But the puranic versions make no mention of such a letter.

Furthermore, in the work a description of Śisunāla is met with. In course of description, Śisunāla's (who was originally the door-keeper of Lord Viṣṇu) previous births as Hiranyakāśipu and Rāvaṇa are also referred to.279 Such references are not found in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa version of the legend. Again, according to the Rukminī-Maṅgal

276 RMKM. p.3.
277 Ibid. p.6.
278 Ibid. p.4.
279 Ibid. p.13.
version the divine sage Nārada visited the palace of Bhīṣmaka and the sage sang a song relating the mani-fold past-times of Kṛṣṇa like Putanā Vadha (the slaying of Putanā), Kālidamana (the subjugation of Kāli), Govardhana Dhārana (the lifting up of mount Govardhana) before Rukmini. In the song of Nārada it was also related how Draupadī was blessed by Lord Kṛṣṇa presenting more clothes at the time when she was sought to be disrobed by Dūḥsāsana, and the reference to the grace shown by the Lord on Draupadī, Prahlāda, Dhruva and Hariścandra is also made. Moreover, in the letter of Rukmini, the beautiful and long description of the city of Dvārakā, the references to Rāma’s acceptance of Sītā in Svayāmvara by breaking the Haradhanu (the bow of Lord Śiva), and to the victory of Rāma over Parasūrāma which are met with in the Rukmini-Mangal are not in the original version of the legend.

Furthermore, the establishment of the city of Bhojakata by Rukmi is not mentioned in Mudgala’s work. Moreover, the celebration of the marriage of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini is simply referred to in the poem.

281 Ibid. p.16.
283 Ibid. pp.24-25.
284 Ibid. p.29.
285 śrī kṛṣṇa rukmini vyāh huā/-........... 
Ibid. p. 40.
The Mangala Kavyas are generally devotional works. The Rukmini-Maṅgal of Kalīcaraṇ Mudgal is also devotional. In the beginning of the work, there is a salutation to God Gonesa. The principal story begins with a benedictory verse called Dohā (i.e. an auspicious verse that occurs in the beginning of a poem), dedicated to Pavana Tanaya (i.e. the son of God Pavana who might probably be Hanumat). Salutation to this Pavana Tanaya is made towards the end of the work also. The whole work is divided into eight Khandaś (divisions). Different Khandaś are introduced in some significant sentences indicating the incidents to be narrated gradually.

Though the poem may be regarded as a devotional work, yet it does not lack in literary merit altogether. Four types of melodious metres are used in the poem, viz. the metres used in the Dohās, in the Gajals, in the poem entitled as Savya, and those used in the general portion of the poem. The work, however, cannot be

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236 śrī ganeśāya namah. Ibid. p.1.
237 pavan tanay baladhān ke, caraṇ kamal ādhār/.............
238 śrī pavana tanay ki jay bolo... .............
Ibid. p.40.
239 Ibid. pp.1,3,4,5,7,8-40.
241 Ibid. p.6.
regarded as a literary work of high order.

**RUJKMINI-MANGAL OF NANDADAS:**

Another notable Maṅgala poem is the *Rukmini-Maṅgal* of Nandadāś. Nandadāś flourished about 1625 Saṁvat and is said to be contemporary to Suradāś. 293

Nandadāś's *Rukmini-Maṅgal* consists of 133 stanzas composed in the metre known as 'Rolā metre'. 294 The poem is regarded as a beautiful Laghu Kāvya (light poem). The poem of Nandadāś is very attractive with its lucid language. 295

**THF RUKMINI-MAŃGAL OF NARAHARI VANDIJAN:**

Mahāpātra Narahari Vandijan (Saṁvat 1562-1667) was another famous Hindi poet who composed a work by the title 'Rukmini-Maṅgal'. He was in the court of Akbar and had also his title 'Mahāpātra' was given by that Mughal emperor. 296

The poem was a famous work of the poet. 297 The story is related after the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* version and thus the

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293 HSI. p.160.
294 yah 133 rolāchanda me likhā huyā sumadhur laghu kāvya hai / KRRV. p.20.
296 Ibid. p.184.
297 Ibid. p.184.
work attained its popularity.

In addition to these Rukmini-Maṅgal Kāvyas mentioned above, some other poetic works also of the same title are met with. The Rukmini-Maṅgal of Novalsing, and that of some Jaina poets may be mentioned to in this context.

THE LEGEND IN SOME OTHER KĀVYAS:

In some other versified works also in Hindī literature of the mediaeval period, the story of the abduction of Rukmini is found together with accounts of other pestimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. These works generally depict the life and teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In this respect the works like the Haricarit and the Bhāgavata-Daśama-Skandha-Bhāṣā of Lālacdās (Samvat about 1585), Kṛṣṇa Kāvya and Ānand Maṅgal of Maṇirām Miśra (probably Samvat 1829) may be referred to.

THE PROSE WORKS ON THE LEGEND:

Apart from the poetic works, mentioned above, the Rukmini-harana legend is found presented in some Hindī prose works of mediaeval period.

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298 Ibid. ritikāl anya kavi. p. 356.
299 KRRV. p. 20.
300 HSI. bhaktikal. sagundhārā p. 183.
301 Ibid. ritikāl. p. 273.
THE RUKMINI-PARINAY OF MAHARAJ RAGHURAJ SINHA:

The Rukmini-Parinay of Maharaj Raghuraj Sinha (Samvat 1830-1936) is one of the famous prose work relating the Rukmini-haraṇa legend. Raghuraj also presents the legend in his work according to the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version.

THE LEGEND IN THE WORKS OF MODERN WRITERS:

Some modern works also composed on the theme of the Rukmini-haraṇa are met with in the Hindi literature. In this context, some dramatic works are being mentioned below.

THE RUKMINI-PARINAY OF AYODHYA SINHA UPADHYAY:

Ayodhya Sinha Upadhyay composed a dramatic work 'Rukmini-Parinay' (1894 A.D.) on the basis of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend. It is a famous mythological play in Hindi literature containing nine Acts.

THE SOURCE OF THE PLAY:

The Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend appears to be the source of the play Rukmini-Parinay of Ayodhyāsinha Upadhyay. The author has, however, amply added to the original story.

302 rām svayaṁvarke atirikta rukmini pariṇay .........
Ibid. p. 532.
DEVIATIONS NOTICED:

Though the plot of Rukmini-Parinay is taken from the Bhagavata-purana as mentioned above, yet some important deviations are noticed in the play as noted below.

In Act. I, of the play, the heroine Rukmini appears in the flower garden being accompanied by her friends. At that time, her mind was full of feelings of deep love for Krishna. Such a scene is innovation of the author of the play. Again, in the Act. V, of the play, it is shown that Rukmini was prepared to commit suicide due to the unbearable pang of separation from Krishna. At that critical moment, some Brahmana messenger from Dwarka appeared there and intimated Rukmini that Krishna and Balarama were marching there for sake of her with a huge army of soldiers. Having heard this Rukmini came to have ease and joy in mind. But according to the Bhagavata-purana version of the legend, as stated earlier, Krishna alone came to Kundina by his chariot driven by Druka. Balarama, being accompanied by other Yadava heroes followed Krishna to Kundina after words. Moreover, the Bhagavata-purana does not make any mention of another Brahmana from Dwarka. According to the Purana, the same Brahmana messenger who was sent earlier by Rukmini to Krishna with the message of love returned with Krishna and informed Rukmini of His arrival at Kundina.

Again, it is found in the play that while Rukmini, accompanied by her friends was going out to pray Goddess in
the temple then a troop of soldiers guarded Rukminī at the
command of Śisupāla. But according to the Bhāgavata-
purāṇa version, as stated earlier, the security guards fol-
lowed the bride Rukminī, at the command of Rukmi, her
brother.

Furthermore, deviations are noticed in respect of
characterization also. For instance, unlike in the
Bhāgavata, play Rukminī-Parinaya gives the names of the
two friends of Rukminī, viz. Anāmā and Anabhidhānā are
found, the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the legend. These are
the major deviations in the play Rukminī-Parinay from the
original version of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa.

THE RUKMINĪ PARINAY, AS A PLAY:

It is known that the Rukminī-Parinay is the first
attempt of the author to compose dramatic work. His other
work is the Pradyumna-Vijay (the victory of Pradyumna),
relating the story of Pradyumna, the son of Kṛṣṇa and
Rukminī. Yet the play does not lack in dramatic art although
it was the author's first attempt at dramatic composition.

THE RUKMINĪ-MANĪGAL OF RĀDHEŚYĀM KATHĀVĀCAK:

Another important dramatic work on the Rukminī-
haranā legend composed by a modern dramatist is the Rukminī-
Manīgal of Rādheśyām Kathāvācak (1928 A.D.). This

303 HSI. adhunik kāl. gadyasāhityake prasar. p. 455.
mythological drama is the second part of the play, "Kṛṣṇa-vaṁśa-vatār" (the Kṛṣṇa incarnation of the Lord). In the play Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, from the incident of Kaṁsavādha (the slaying of Kaṁsa) up to the marriage with Rukmiṇī are beautifully presented.

The play Rukmiṇī-Māṇgaṇa consists of three Acts. These three acts contain eight, seven, and three scenes respectively. The play has twenty characters among whom there are twelve male and eight female characters.

The Śrī Kṛṣṇa Nāṭak:

The Śrī Kṛṣṇanāṭak is also another mythological dramatic work in modern Hindī literature composed by Caturbhūj in 1951 A.D. In this play consisting of three Acts, Kṛṣṇa’s heroic activities beginning from the fight with Jarāsandha up to the slaying of Śī Śūpāla are presented. Therefore, the work includes the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend, which appears in the Act II. of the play. The source of the play Śrī Kṛṣṇa Nāṭakā appears to be Bhāgavata-purāṇa version.

The Legend in Modern Prose Works in Hindī:

The Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend is found to be presented in some prose works, and dealt with in dissertations and research articles in Hindī.
Some thesis have been also done in Hindi on the Rukmini-harana legend, by some modern scholars. In this respect, the research work, entitled 'Rukmini-harana' of Dr. Laksmi Sankar Guota (Lecturer, Kashi Vidyanith) done in 1966 may be referred to.

THE LEGEND IN HINDI MAGAZINE:

Some articles on the legend are seen published in certain Hindi magazine as mentioned below:

Articles relating the story of Rukmini are found published in Hindi, 'Kalyān', published from Gorakhpur. In one of its issues, an article is met with in which the Rukmini-harana legend is narrated very beautifully and a picture denoting the conversation and reception of the Prāhmana messenger at Kṛṣṇa's place is also presented. The legend, in the article is presented after the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa version of the legend.

Again, in another issue of the same magazine, an episode of Rukmini is referred to. The article 'Adarśa Atithya (ideal hospitality)', presents some stories from the Indian Mythology as examples of ideal hospitality. In this

respect, the episode of Rukmini, carrying the sage Durvasa by a chariot is illustrated.

Thus, as we find, Hindi literature from the medi-
aeval to the modern period presents a considerable number of writings based on the Rukmini-harana legend.

THE LEGEND IN MĀRĀTHĪ LITERATURE:

The Rukmini-harana legend is met with in some works of Mārāthī literature also. In mediaeval period, the Vaiśnava saint poets of Maharastra, like, Jnānesvāra, Eknāth and their followers preached and popularised the sports and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Some literary works were however, composed by such Vaiśnavite poets of Maharastra as mentioned below:

THE RUKMINĪ-SVAYAMVAR OF EKNĀTH:

Eknāth (16th century A.D.), the saint Vaiśnavite poet of Maharastra composed a poem 'Rukmini-Svayamvar' relating the Rukmini-harana legend very beautifully. It is a famous poetic work attaining much popularity in Maharastra. 305

THE LEGEND IN THE EKNĀTHĪ BHĀGAVAT:

The Vaiśnava saint Eknāth expounded the Bhāgavata-purāṇa in Mārāthī and described the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

305 mārāthī me eknāth mahārāj kā rukmaṇī-svayamvar vahut prasidha hai / KRRV. p.20.
This Bhāgavata in Mārāṭhi literature is popularly known as the 'Eknāthi-Bhāgavata' (i.e. the Bhāgavat compiled by Eknāth) in Maharastra. The Rukmini-harana legend is related in this work together with accounts of other pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Though the main story is similar to that in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa yet the author describes it very attractively so that he can arrest the minds of the common people.

It is found that there is an interesting story connecting the episode of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini with the life history of Eknāth, the prominent saint poet of Maharastra. The story goes as follows:

Once, a pious Brāhmaṇa dreamt a dream, in which he saw that he had been to Dvaraka for the Darsana of Lord Kṛṣṇa. There he was told by Rukmini devi, Kṛṣṇa's consort that Kṛṣṇa was serving saint Eknāth as an ordinary servant by the name Śrī Khaṇḍya. Therefore, he should go to Eknātha's castle to meet the Lord. The Brāhmaṇa awoke with wonder. But on the next morning he went to Eknāth. On way, he met a man who was going to fetch water and who directed the Brāhmaṇa to the Eknath's castle in Paithana. Then the Brāhmaṇa met Eknath and enquired him of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

A Brahmin having come to Dwaraka to have the darshan of Shri Krishna was told by Rukmini Devi, Sri Krishnas consort, in a dream.............

Eknāth replied to the Brāhmaṇa, "God is everywhere. But how can you expect to see Him here?" Then the Brāhmaṇa told Eknāth about the presence of Śrī Khaṇḍya there. Then Eknāth said, "Yes Śrī Khaṇḍya is here, and he is just going to fetch water." Then the Brāhmaṇa recollected the dream he dreamt and came to know that the man who showed him the house of Eknāth was none other than Lord Himself in the form of Śrī Khaṇḍya. Then the Brāhmaṇa disclosed to Eknāth that Lord Kṛṣṇa was there serving him as Śrī Khaṇḍya. Eknāth was also surprised to know this mystery. He called out again and again for Śrī Khaṇḍya but none responded. Then Eknāth could release what happened. He took that Brāhmaṇa guest to the place of worship and prayed the Lord in deep meditation. Gradually, the room came to shine with divine light, and at one stage Lord Kṛṣṇa made his appearance before them. The Brāhmaṇa and Eknāth shed tears of joy, and the Lord bestowing bliss upon them disappeared. The Brāhmaṇa then honoured Eknāth and returned to Dwārakā.

308 Then the Brāhmaṇa recollected that he was the very man he had met and who had showed him the house. Then he turned to Eknāth, a significant look in his eyes, God is here as Śrī Khaṇḍya! .........

309 Eknath understood and took the Brāhmaṇa into the worship room and prayed ....... appeared before them.

310 The Brāhmaṇa thanked Eknath profusely and then left for Dwārakā.
suggests a keen connection between the sports of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmīṇī and the celebrated saint of Maharastra. Such incidents obviously indicate that the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmīṇī made a profound impact on the society of Maharastra.

THE RUKMĪṆĪ-HARAN OF SĀMRĀJ:

'The Rukmīṇī-haran' is another important work in Mārāthī literature. The author of this poetic work on the Rukmīṇī-haraṇa legend was Sāmrāj.

This work 'Rukmīṇī-haran' was of high literary merit.311

THE RUKMĪṆĪ-HARAN OF VITHAL DAS:

Another poetic work on the legend found in Mārāthī literature is the Rukmīṇī-haran of Vithal Das. In this work also the Rukmīṇī-haraṇa legend is presented according to the Bhāgavata-puraṇa version. Vithal's poem contains only 260 stanzas.312

It is learnt from the life history of Eknāth that Vithal flourished at a period prior to Eknāth. Because, it is known that Eknāth visited the temple of Vithal and on the way to Devagad (i.e. Devagiri or present Daulatabad).311

311 काव्यकी द्रष्टिसे साम्राजकेरूरुक्मिनी-हरान वहुत उत्क्रष्टा कोतिकी रचना है। KRRV. p.21.
312 Ibid. p. 20.
he remembered the name of Vithal. Vithal's poem was much popular among the Vaiṣṇavite devotees. Thus, it is noticed that the Marāṭhī literature presents a considerable number of works on the theme of the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend.

THE LEGEND IN GUJRATI LITERATURE:

Some works, relating the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend are met with in Gujrati literature also. Two versified works of the same title 'Rukmiṇī-haraṇa' may be referred to in this context. One of these poems was composed by Mahākavi Premānanda and the other was the composition of Devidāsa. These works popularised the legend in the society of Gujrat.

THE RUKMIŅĪ-HARANA LEGEND IN MAITHILĪ LITERATURE:

Some works based on the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend are met with in the Maithilī literature also as stated below. The works of Maithilī literature are found in two groups being produced from two different areas especially in mediaeval period, i.e. the Maithilī works in Nepal and those in Mithilā.

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Then without anyone's knowledge, he left for Devagad, taking Vithal's name all the way, and reached the fort on the third day.


KRRV. p.20.
SPREAD OF RUKMINĪ-HARAṆA LEGEND TO NEPAL:

It is learnt that about 1324 A.D. Harisinhadeva, king of Mithilā had his defeat in the hands of some Muslim hero and having fled to Nepal, he established a new kingdom there. Many a poet composed literary works under the patronage of king Harisinhadeva in Nepal. King Bhūpatindramalla was one of the descendants of that Harisinhadeva. He was fond of music and literature. A dramatic work 'Rukminī-Parinay' is found composed on the basis of the Rukminī-haraṇa legend during his time. This play contains a benediction in the name of Bhūpatindra as found in other Maithili works like, the Vidyāvilāpa, Gaurī-Vivāha, and Mahābhārata composed in his period. Such evidences, obviously indicate the popularity of the Rukminī-haraṇa legend, that spread even up to Nepal.

THE RUKMINĪ-PARIṆAY OF RAMĀPATI UPĀDHYAṆ:

The Rukminī-Parinay of Ramāpati Upādhyāy is one of the prominent dramatic works composed in the 13th century A.D. in Maithili literature. The drama was composed by the author under the patronage of king Mahārāj Narendra Sinha (1744-61 A.D.) of Cuvā Bihār.

315 Vide. PPN. Maithili Nāṭya Sāhitya. p. 118.
316 Ibid. Maithili Nāṭya Sāhitya. p.120.
317 Ibid. Maithili Nāṭya Sāhitya. p.137.
SOURCE OF THE PLAY:

It appears that the plot of the play is borrowed from the Harivamśa version of the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend. Because, the main story presented in the play is quite similar to the Harivamśa narration of the legend.

CONTENTS OF THE PLAY:

The play Rukmini-Parinay of Ramāpati Upādhyāy consists of six Acts. Like other Maithili plays it begins with Nāndī verses in the Prastāvanā (Prelude) and ends with a Bharatavākyām as found in Sanskrit dramas. There occur two Nāndī verses (benedictory verses) dedicated to Lord Śiva, and Naṭarāja (another form of Śiva). Again, in the prastāvanā of the play, two other stutigitas (benedictory songs) composed in Maithili language are also met with through one of which Lord Naṭarāja is prayed and the other is the prayer to Goddess Bhagavatī. The incidents presented in different Acts of the play, to state in brief, are as follows:

The Act I opens with a scene of the main story where king Bhīṣmaka had a talk with the queen regarding the Svayaṁvara of princess Rukmini. In Act II, a Ghaṭaka (a particular messenger), Kalahavardhana by name, and another...

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318 naṭarāja hara, naṭarāja hara ..........sasādhara tilaka virājita bhāl //
Ibid. Maithili Nāţva Sāhitya. p. 137.
Hariyallabha by name came from Sisupala and Kṛṣṇa respectively to Kuṇḍina carrying the proposals of marriage with Rukminī. When king Bhīṣmaka wanted to accept the proposal from Kṛṣṇa and explained His mani-fold qualities in support of his view, Rukminī strongly opposed it forwarding arguments against acceptability of Kṛṣṇa. He wanted to accept Sisupala's proposal for marriage with Rukminī. Ultimately, the decision was made so as to invite both Kṛṣṇa and Sisupala to the Svayaṁvara of Rukminī. 

The Act III, is presented with the scene of Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and king Upgrasena at Dvārakā. In the meantime, a Brāhmaṇa messenger arrived there from Kuṇḍina with the message inviting Kṛṣṇa to the Svayaṁvara of Rukminī. The Brāhmaṇa messenger, further, gave a description of the matchless beauty and good qualities of princess Rukminī through an attractive song. Having heard of the beauty and qualities of princess Rukminī, Kṛṣṇa was deeply moved. He entertained the Brāhmaṇa very cordially, and got prepared to start his journey for Kuṇḍina accompanied by the Yādava heroes. On the other hand, Rukminī, in company of her friends Suśobhanā and Sudakṣiṇā was awaiting Kṛṣṇas arrival with a restless mind. As soon as she came to know of the arrival of Kṛṣṇa at Kuṇḍina, her heart was filled with joy.

320 rāja kumāri dekhali hame vidhi vale sakhī saṣāne //
.........................rukminī guṇa gāve //
The IVth Act of the play presents the picture, how Kṛṣṇa was honoured by king Kratha and Kaśikā offering the royal throne to Him in a coronation ceremony. King Bhīṣmaka also attended the coronation ceremony there and he asked Kṛṣṇa for forgiveness as he could not entertained Him properly. He further intimated Kṛṣṇa regarding the animosity of the rival kings headed by Jarāsandha and Śiśuṇḍa against Kṛṣṇa. Then king Bhīṣmaka dismissed the Svayāṁvara ceremony of Rukmiṇī according to Kṛṣṇa's suggestion.  

In the Vth Act, divine sage Nārada visited Kuṇḍina conveying the message from Kṛṣṇa to arrange the Svayāṁvara ceremony of Rukmiṇī again. Śiśuṇḍa was also invited to the Svayāṁvara ceremony according to the earlier decision. At this Rukmiṇī was perturbed and shocked. But Nārada consoled saying that Kṛṣṇa would come to take her away in order to accept her as His beloved wife.  

The VIth Act of the play, presents a scene of Svayāṁvara. Śiśuṇḍa arrived at Kuṇḍina accompanied by other rival kings headed by Jarāsandha. In the mean time, Kṛṣṇa also arrived there at Kuṇḍina. This good news was intimated to bride Rukmiṇī, by sage Nārada. Kṛṣṇa was entertained

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321 Ibid. Maithili Nāṭya Sāhitya. p.139.
322 Ibid. Maithili Nāṭya Sāhitya. pp.139-140.
well. After a while princess Rukmīṇī went out to the temple, being accompanied by her friends to worship the Goddess. Kṛṣṇa then availed the opportunity and abducted her. A fierce battle took place of the rival kings and their troops with the Yādava heroes headed by Balarāma. The kings got defeated and fled away. Kṛṣṇa, further vanquished proud Rukmi in a terrible fight and then He started for Dvāraka. After having arrived at Dvāraka Kṛṣṇa accepted Rukmiṇī as His wife in a wedding celebrated in the prevalent manner. 323

A CRITICAL APPRACIATION OF THE PLAY :

As a mythological Maithili play of mediaeval period, the Rukminī-Parinay of Ramāpati-Upādhyāy attains a special position. Though the theme of the play was taken from the Harivaṃśa-purāṇa as mentioned earlier, yet the incidents are presented in an attractive manner with the genius of the author.

Generally, the Maithili dramas reveal more musical features than the dramatic by way of presenting sufficient Maithili songs. 324 The work Rukminī-Parinay contains sixty-six such songs throughout the drama. Like Aṅkīyā Nāṭs in Assamese literature some songs in Maithili dramas describe the entrance of a character, and others present the

323 Ibid. Maithili Nāṭya Sāhitya. p. 140.
324 Ibid. Maithili Nāṭya Sāhitya. p. 130.
description of the hero or the heroine, battles etc. Thus the entrance of Rukmini is beautifully described in a song of the play Rukmini-Parinay. 325 Again, an attractive description of the heroine Rukmini was presented by the Brähmana messenger at Dvāraka, which occurs in the Act III, of the play through three Maithili songs. 326 A picture of princess Rukmini is presented very beautifully through these songs.

Moreover, the author successfully delineates different Rasas (sentiments) in the drama, among which the sentiment of love appears to be the primary one. In this context the delineation of the happy love resulting from the union of the hero Kṛṣṇa and the heroine Rukmini at the end deserves notice. Further, the heroic sentiment is also delineated brilliantly in the fights of the Yādava heroes and Kṛṣṇa against the rival kings headed by Śisūpālā and Rukmi as well.

The play of Ramāpati Upadhya.y succeeds in maintaining properly the individuality of the characters as found in the original puranic versions of the legend. Thus the character of king Bhīṣma is delineated as devoted to

325 rukuma kumara dela paravesā .................

........... .................................. sahodara sātha / etc.

326 vide rajakumāri dékhali hamc vidhibale sakhi.....

................. rukmini guna gāve //
Ibid. Maithili Nātya Sāhitya pp. 133-139.
Kṛṣṇa; Rukmiṇī is depicted, on the other hand, as a prince full of pride and with animosity towards Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, Śiśupāla and Jarāsandha maintained their purāṇic character noted for pride and also for enviousness towards Kṛṣṇa. The character of sage Nārada played an important part in the episode by way of bringing about the happy union between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī. Princess Rukmiṇī, the delicate and devoted lady love of Kṛṣṇa remained the same as in the Bhāgavata.

The two Ghaṭakas, Kalavārdhana and Harivallabha, who visited Kundina, carrying proposals of marriage from Śiśupāla of Cedi and Kṛṣṇa of Dvārakā respectively are the additions of the author. Further, the names of the two friends of Rukmiṇī Susobhanā and Sudakṣinā are also innovations of author Ramāpati himself.

Like other Maithili plays of mediaeval period three languages viz. Sanskrit, Prākrit and Maithili are used in the Rukmiṇī-Parinay Nāṭ. It may be maintained that the work of Ramāpati Upādhyāy appears as one of the prominent dramatic works composed on the basis of the Rukmiṇī-harana legend in Maithili literature of mediaeval period.

THE LEGEND IN THE LYRIC POEMS OF VIDYĀPATI:

Vidyāpati was a famous Vaiṣṇava poet of mediaeval period in Mithila. He flourished towards the closing part of the 14th century A.D. and was contemporary to
Madhava Kandali in Assam. He composed many works and one of his prominent works was 'Gorakṣavijaya', a Maithili play.

Through the lyric poems Vidyāpati narrated manifold pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In course of these pastimes, the poet related the Rukmini-haraṇa legend also.

Thus there can be no denying the fact that important works on the basis of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend are presented in the Maithili literature.

THE LEGEND IN ORIYĀ LITERATURE:

A few works based on the Rukmini-haraṇa legend are found in Oriyā literature also as noted below:

THE RUKMINĪ-BIBHA OF KĀRTIKADĀSA:

The Rukmini Bibha of Kārtika is the only important poetical work based on the Rukmini-haraṇa legend in Oriyā literature of mediaeval period.

327 vidyāpati kṛṣṭīya caturdāś satīkār sesārdhar kavi, āmār mādhav kandalir samaśāmayik /
Ibid. Maithili Nātya Sāhitya. p.132.
328 Ibid. Maithili Nātya Sāhitya. p. 132.
329 'ke patīa la a jāyjetare morā piatama pāsa' / etc.
Vide. RHNS. Tīkā. p.62.
330 Materials from Dr. K.C. Sahoo, Prof. and Head, Dept. of Oriya, Utkal University.
Besides the work of Kārtika Dāsa, the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend is found in the purānic works appearing in the Oriyā language. Many a religious work came to be composed in Oriyā during 14th and 15th century A.D., specially during the rule of the kings of Solar dynasty. From the time onward, different puranic works rendered, into Oriyā from Sanskrit are met with. As for illustrations, the Oriyā works, like, Harivamsa of Bipra Nārāyaṇa Dāsa, the Harivamsa of Acyuta-tananda Dāsa and the Oriyā Bhāgavata of Jagannātha Dāsa can be cited.

All these purānic works mentioned above, present the life and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa after the original versions. The Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend also is also narrated in these Oriyā works.

THE RUKMIŅĪ-HARAṆA LEGEND IN TELUGU LITERATURE:

Telugu literature also presents few works on the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend of which mention is made below.

THE RUKMIŅĪ-KALYĀṆA OF BAMMERA POTHANA:

The Rukmiṇī-Kalyāṇa is a poetic work composed by Bammera Pothana (1400-75 A.D.) in Telugu on the basis of the cultural and historical background of the evolution of the Oriyā language and literature is unique. During the rule of the Solar dynasty in the 14th and 15th centuries, epic poetry and religious literature was written on a grand scale.

LCI. p.183.
Rukmini-harana legend. It appears that the poet, in his work followed the original Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the legend. Poet Pothana was a poor man. Further, he was not a scholarly educated person. But he was very devoted one. Therefore, the poet tried to delineate devotional sentiment through his work Rukmini-Kalyan.

The Legend in the Bhāgavata of Pothana:

Bammera Pothana translated the original Bhāgavata-purāṇa into Telugu language. His work is more voluminous than the original work. By way of presenting vivid description and the attractive narration the Bhāgavata of Bammera attains much popularity.

The Rukmini-harana legend is also narrated in this Bhāgavata very attractively in course of the description of other heroic activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Reference to the Legend in the Uttara Harivamśa of Nachana Somanātha:

Another important puranic work in Telugu literature is the Uttara-Harivamśa of Nachana Somanātha (1355-77 A.D.).

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332 Potana lived and died a poor man, he had no scholarly education, and his poetry, the result of inspiration born of an intense devotion. AHSI. p.410.

333 The Bhagavata of Potana is more voluminous than the original, and its easy diction, vivid descriptions, and narrative power together with intense spiritual. Ibid. p. 410.
where the Rukmini-harana legend is also referred to alone with the accounts of other pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The poet successfully created the work with his genius.

Thus the presentation of the Rukmini-harana legend is found, though not in a much scale in Telugu literature.

**THE RUKMINI-HARANA LEGEND IN MĀLAYĀLAM LITERATURE:**

The Rukmini-harana legend is also found presented through few works of Mālāyālam literature also.

**THE KṛṢṆA-GĀTHĀ OF CHERUSSERI NAMBUDIRI:**

A controversy is noticed regarding the date of Cherusseri Nambudiri, a prominent scholar of Mālāyālam literature. According to some scholars he flourished in the middle part of the 15th century A.D. Others opine, on the other hand, that Nambudiri flourished in the early part of the 16th century A.D. Charusseri Nambudiri is, however, a poet of mediaeval Mālāyālam literature.

Nambudiri composed his famous work *Krṣṇagāthā* relating the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Here the life and activities of Kṛṣṇa are described beginning from His very birth.

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335 pravandhātmak gitākavyomē sarvāṭhā pramukh hai ....... *MS.*, p. 18.

336 Cherusseri Nambudiri (early sixteenth century) author of the Krishn-gatha, may be said to close the middle Malayalam period........... *AHSI.*, p. 419.
up to the Svargārohana or Vaikunṭha Prayāna (return journey to Heaven). The very pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa are narrated on the basis of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa.

The Rukmini-harana legend is also narrated in the Kṛṣṇagāthā after the Bhāgavata-purāṇa version of the legend.

The Kṛṣṇagāthā of Nambudiri is known for its popularity because of its presentation and the work is regarded by the Malayalam critics as a marvellous one. It should also be noted that the modern stream of Malayalam poetry began from the work Kṛṣṇagāthā of Nambudiri. Narāyana Pillāi has made valuable criticism on the Kṛṣṇagāthā of Cherusseri Nambudiri.

THE LEGEND IN OTHER WORKS ON BHĀGAVATA PURĀNA:

Apart from the Kṛṣṇagāthā of Nambudiri the Rukmini haraṇa legend is related in some other works composed on the

337 kṛṣṇagāthā me bhagavān kṛṣṇa ke jārna se likar ...........
               ............. hrdayāhari vārnan hai /
                      MS. p.18.

338 Ibid. p.18

339 ...Cherusseri's Gatha is hailed by critics as a marvellous work of art which captivates the mind of the reader by the wealth of its imagery ...

340 Ibid. p.419

341 Then he (Narayana Pillai) wrote on Krishnagatha, discussing the poetic excellence and the difficult questions of authorship, date etc.

LCI. p.146.
basis of the Bhāgavata-puṇāṇa in Malayalam literature. Thus, in this respect, the Bhāgavata of Eluttaccan, the Bhāgavata of Śaṅkar Panikar, the Bhāgavata of Rām Panikara may be referred to.

THE LEGEND IN MODERN POEM OF VALLATHOL NARAYAN MENON:

Vallathol Narayan Mehon is a celebrated modern poet of Malayalam literature in whose poems the purāṇic themes are handled successfully with poetic genius. In his poem the Rukmini-harana legend is found in connection with a letter of Prince Rukmini, which was sent to Rukmini, his sister at Dvārakā, after her marriage and after the birth of valiant Pradyumna. In this letter Rukmini expressed his repentance for the mistake he did earlier in connection with Rukmini’s marriage with Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, he forwarded a proposal for his daughter’s marriage with beautiful Pradyumna.

An English rendering of the poem, entitled ‘Rukmini’s Repentance’ by Dr. S. Velayadhan is also met with.

342 Vide AHSI. p. 420.
343 MS. p. 16.
344 Ibid. p. 16.
345 This is one of the celebrated pieces of Vallathol Narayana Menon, one of the three modern poets in Malayalam, whose poetic genius was at its best when it handled puranic themes and characters.
In the English version, it is stated that Rukmi repented in his letter to his sister Rukmini, consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa for his harsh behaviour made towards her as when Rukmi tried to make Rukmini's mind incline towards Śiśupāla, the king of Cedi instead of Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd. In his long letter, Rukmi asked Rukmini for forgiveness for his earlier ill-treatment and forwarded a proposal of the marriage of his beloved daughter with the beloved son of Rukmini (i.e. Pradyumna). Further, in conclusion, Rukmi asked his beloved sister Rukmini to realise and consider the repentance of Rukmi, her elder brother.

This poetic work of writers Vallathol Harayana Menon, and also the English rendering of the poem by Dr. S. Velayudhan indirectly indicate the popularity of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend in Mālayālam literature of Kerela.

The Rukmini-haraṇa legend is met with in different works of Kannada literature also. No creative work, however, composed particularly on the theme of the legend

349 This is Rukmi's petition, sister ..... you are intelligent. Ibid. Vol. XXIV. No. 24. July, 2. 1978. p. 17.
is found in Kannâda language. We mention below some of the Kannâda works of early and mediaeval period, based on the original purânic works in which the legend gets a reference.

**THE LEGEND IN THE NEMINÂTHA-PURÂNA:**

The 'Neminâtha-purâna,' relating the story of Kṛṣṇa and the Mahâbhârata was composed by Karnapârya (about 1145 A.D.). In this work, (of fourteen Asvasas) of Karnapârya the life of twenty-second Tîrthânkara is also related.350

In course of the description of Kṛṣṇa's life and activities, the Rukmini-harana episode of Kṛṣṇa is also referred to.

**REFERENCE TO THE LEGEND IN SOME OTHER VAIŚṆAVA WORKS:**

Some other Vaiśṇavite works are found in Kannâda literature, in which the Rukmini-harana legend is referred to along with other activities of Kṛṣṇa. In this respect the 'Harivânsâbhyûdaya' of Bandhuvarma,351 'Harikathâmrtasâra'

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350 Round about 1145, Karnapârya wrote the life of the twenty-second Tîrthânkara in his Neminatha-purâna, a campu in fourteen aswasas in which the story of Kṛṣṇa and the Mahâbhârata are also cleverly worked in. AHSI, p. 396. Vide KSNI, p. 55.

351 Vide Ibid. p. 93.
of Viṣṇu-kṣaṇa, 352 Kṛṣṇacaritāmṛta of Lākṣmīśa, 353 Kṛṣṇacarita or Mohana-Taraṅgini (River of delight), a lyric poem of Kanakadāsa, 354 and the Harikathāmṛtasāra of Jagannātha dāsa 355 may be mentioned.

THE LEGEND IN SOME TRANSLATED VERSIONS OF PURANIC WORKS:

Apart from the works mentioned above, the Rukmini harana legend occurs in some Kannada translations of the original puranic works. Such works are the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa of Cikunadhyaya, 356 and the Bhāgavata of Catuvitthalanatha, who flourished under Kṛṣṇadeva Raya and his successor Achyuta 357 (1564 A.D.) etc.

Thus the presentation of the Rukmini-harana legend is met with in Kannada literature of early and mediaeval period.

352 Vide Ibid. p. 110.
353 Vide Ibid. p. 124.
354 Vide Ibid. p. 132.
355 *vide Ibid. p. 132.
357 The Bhāgavata found its translator is Catu Vītthala-nātha who flourished under Kṛṣṇadēva Raya and his successor Achyuta (1564).