CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"Technique of the thesis, its scope & subject-matter, a brief description of works of Mahadevi Verma etc."
CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Importance of the subject:

The emergence of Chhayavad in the poetic world of Hindi is really quite significant and important one. During the Dwivedi period, Hindi poetry became materialistic and dull one. There was more of intellect exercises. As a reaction of it, Chhayavad came into existence, the language of which became the language of the heart.

Four poets played very significant roles in bringing Chhayavad to the highest step of the ladder of success. They are Jayshankar Prasad, Sumitranandan Pant, Suryvakant Tripathy 'Nirala' and Mahadevi Verma. Of these four, Mahadevi Verma is the most important poetess. If Prasad is the poet of 'beauty'; Nirala of 'Splendour'; Pant of 'Nature', then Mahadevi is definitely the poet of 'agony'. While making this re-assessment of the poetic works of Mahadevi, we are glad that we place the poetic achievements of a great poet before the critics and scholars for their judgement.
Research works in numbers on the writings of Mahadevijee were completed till now; some others are also being carried on at present and still more others are expected to be carried in future. But the present monograph is a study from a different viewpoint. In most of these analyses of her poetry, there are the reflections of her ever-discussed 'agony', piety, fancies, and mysticism and there are only repetitions and repetitions only. In some other her simple and easy thought has been made loose and burdensome by ascribing it to mysticism. Here in our monograph we shall try to analyse critically the poems of Mahadevijee and therefore, the importance of this study is quite obvious.

1.2 Technique of the thesis:

This monograph - "Mahadevi Verma's poems : A critical study", has been prepared on the basis of analytical technique. All the materials and elements available in her poems are made the basis of this study.

The expression of the profound the mysterious and the agony in her poems made Mahadevijee one of the pillars of
Chhayavad. Agony is the life force of her poetry which is the inspiration and the philosophy of her life. Through agony, she feels the existence of her venerable idol — her most beloved one:

"Tumko pida mein khoj,
Tum mein khojungee pida."

In the words of Dr. Tilakraj Sharma:


She became a mystic poetess due to her excessive sympathy for Nature. The nature has been the sole aid for her

¹. Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas - Dr. Tilakraj Sharma, p. 69
whole accomplishment. The unintelligibility and profoundness of mysticism become quite easy when one goes through the poems of Mahadevijee:

"Mein Neer bhari Duhkh Ki Badli
Vistrit Nabh Ka Koye Kona
Mera Na Kabhi Apna Hona . . ."

Such songs carry the voice of her heart in which she attached outward nature with it and which is the basic stage of mysticism.

While studying through an analytical technique, we give our attention to the following points relating to the poetry of Mahadevi Verma:

To what extent was Mahadevijee successful as poetess and to what extent, was she with her poetry, successful among the Hindi poets? To what extent has she applied Chhayavad and Mysticism in her poetry? A brief discussion has also been made of her lyrical poems keeping an eye on the basic element of lyrical poetry, its symbolism, picturisation of nature and its added loveliness.
1.3 **Scope of the thesis:**

The scope of this monograph is definitely limited to the poetry of Mahadevi Verma. But from place to place when the situation demands, reference is also made to the writings of other poets also. For example, while analysing Chhayavad, other poets of this stream like Jayshankar Prasad, Sumitranandan Pant and Suryyakant Tripathy 'Nirala' are also referred to. We find manifestation, which is the central point of Chhayavad, in the writings of all these four poets. In Nirala and Prasad, the emotions are revealed in a living form, which are taken out of the worldly emotions. But Pantjee found the world in his own emotions; and Mahadevijee gave her emotions the form of Supernatural one through agony.

While discussing mysticism reference has also been made to poets who were inspired by mystical thoughts like Kabirdas, Jaysee and others; and in analysing lyrical ideals and elements, the names of great poets like Kalidas, Jaydev, Surdas, Tulsidas, Mirabal, Prasad, Ramkumar Verma etc. also are referred to.

1.4 **Subject matter of the thesis:**
1.4 **Subject Matter of the Thesis**:

Before we go to discuss the poetry and poetic genius of Mahadevi Verma in this monograph, it is meet and proper to discuss at least, briefly the life and works of Vermajee here to understand her philosophy of life and the stream of her emotions, which is necessary for critical and scientific analysis of one's writings.

The name of Mahadevi Verma as a poet of love and agony is well-known in the modern era of Hindi literature. She was born on March 24, 1907 in an established family at Farukhabad. She did her M.A. in 1933 and she joined as the Principal of the Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth in the same year.

The whole of her life was devoted to the development of education and literary works. She also edited the 'Chand', a monthly magazine published from Allahabad for several years. She was also a member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislature with a view to helping the literateurs, an organisation named the Sahitya Samsad was established at Prayag by her. The government of India honoured her by awarding the 'Padmashree'. Being
a recipient of the Jnanpith award, she not only elevated her own status but also enhanced the status of Indian women as a whole. She also received award for her 'Niraja' from the Sahitya Sammelan and the Mangal Prasad Paritoshik for the "Yama".

This great mystic poetess left us in 1987 forever for her mystic heavenly abode.

The art of poetry and realisation of heartfelt mysticism came to her since her childhood days. This quality of her come from her parents. Her mother, Mrs Hemrani was a pious lady while her father performed religious functions daily and was a philosophic minded man. Both of the parents had tremendous influence on Mahadevijee. Mahadevijee herself expressed about this influence through the following lines:

"Ek vyapak vipatti ke Samay Nirjib Samskaron Ke bojh se joribhut varn mein mujhe jann mila Hein. Parantu ek oar Sadhanaput Astik aur bhabuk mata aur dusri oar Sabprakariki Sampra-dayikata se dur Karm Nisth aur Darshanik Pita ne apne apne Samskar Dekar mere jiwan ko jaisa vikas diya usmein bhabukata buddhi ke dharatol par, Sadhana ek Vyapak Darshanikata par aur
astikata ek sakriya, par kisi varg ya sampraday mein na bandhnewali. Chetma par hee sthit Ho Sakti thi."

With the influence of them two, the mind and brain of Mahadevijee began to develop. In one side there was the faith and piousness and intuition of her mother, which gave birth to pity in the mind of the poet and on the other, the philosophic nature of his father infused mysticism in her mind and heart. Her mother had also a deep insight into Hindi poetry. From her mother she learnt to chant the melodious devotional poetry of Tulsi, Sur and Mira. She began to write poems in Brajabhasa at the beginning as she was influenced by this poetic environment at home. But gradually being influenced by the writings of Maithilisharan Gupta in Khariboli, she also began to write in Khariboli. During that time, Prasad, Nirala and Pant became quite famous in the field of Hindi poetry. After that Mahadevijee entered the world of Hindi poetry as the unrivalled devotee of mystic poetry, and began to develop her incomparable and thought-provoking ideas.

Mahadevijee entered into the world of poetry in 1924 with her first work the "Nihar".
1.5 **A brief description of works of Mahadevijee:**

The following are the poetic works of Mahadevijee:

(i) **Nihar** (1924–28);
(ii) **Rashmee** (1928–31);
(iii) **Nirja** (1931–34);
(iv) **Sandhya Geet** (1934–36);
(v) **Adhunik Kavi**;
(vi) **Yama** (1942);
(vii) **Deepsikha**;
(viii) **Saptavarna**;
(ix) **Himalaya**;
(x) **Sandhinee**;
(xi) **Agnirekha** (1942)

She also wrote some sketches (Rekha-chitra) and they are as follows:

a) **Atit Ke Chalchitra**;

b) **Smriti Ki Rekhaye**; and

c) **Path Ke Sathi**

Her collection of articles "Mahadevi Ka Vivechanatmak Gadya" is important one. Other collections are:

i) **Kshanada** and

ii) **Shrinkhal Ki Kadiya**.
1.5.1 The Nihar:

The Nihar is the first creation of the poet. The poems of her initial stage written during the period from 1924 to 1928 were all included in this collection. All the inquisitiveness towards worldly things that arises in the mind of a child is found in these poems. There is nothing of mental development, cautious thought and colourful imagination in these poems.

"Pidaka Samrajya Bas Gaya,
Us Din Dur Kshitijke par,
Mitna tha Nirvan Jahan,
Nirav Rodan tha Pahredar.
Kaise Kahti Ho Sapna Hein,
Ali Us Muk Milan Ki Bat,
Bhare Huye Ate tak Phulon Mein
Mere Ansu Unke Has."

She felt the existence of the mystic entity through nature in such a way that she did not care for what the other world thought of. All her songs and poems bear the importance of emotion and sentimentality.

The feelings and emotions in the Nihar are mixed up with inquisitive agony and child-like curiosity, which the poet

2. Nihar - Mahadevi Verma
herself realised, — "Nihar Ke Rachanakal mein meri anubhutiyan Mein Vaishihi Kutuhalmsrhit Vedna Umad Ati thi, Jayse Balak Ke Man mein Dur Dikhay Denewali Apraya Sunhohi Usha aur Sparsa Se Dur Sajal Megh Ke Pratham Darshan Se Utpana Ho Jati Hein." \(^3\)

The mystic realisation of the Nihar is of elementary stage in which the poet realised the Paramtatwa i.e. the knowledge of the divine through the knowledge of self:

— "Meri Laghutapar Ati Jis Dibya Lokko Vrida,
Uske Pranon Se Puchu Ye Pal Sakenge Pida,
Unse Kaise Chhota Hein
Mera Yah Bhikshuk Jiwan,
Unmein Anat Karuna Hein,
Ismein Asim Sanapan."

Going through her poems, it becomes evident that she studied the nature wholly and in details. Because of this, she finds the restlessness of life in the smile of a flower, and the re-emergence of the spring in the dying and shrivelled flowers.

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3. Mahadeviki Kavya Chetna - D. Mahendra Madhukar, p. 84
The title of the book 'Nihar' is quite appropriate. The nihar means 'fog'. A layer of fog covers her mystic world till now. The rays of the rising Sun in her emotional sky donot touch her songs yet. In the Nihar, mystic ideas entered in the shape of love for the beloved and fascination towards the eternal one and in addition to them, in the personification of the beauty of nature.

1.5.2 The Rashmee:

The Rashmee is the second work of Mahadevijee, which was written during the period from 1928 to 1931. As the Nihar i.e. the fog begins to melt with the Sun-rays falling on it, there is a change in the horizon of the poet's ideas now. All the inquisitiveness and curiosity of her mind began to move into a definite way, which Mahadevijee herself admitted:

"Rashmee Ko Us Samay Akar mila Jab Mujhe Anubhuti Se Adhik Uska Chinton Pradhan Ho goya Tha. Ab Ye Kautuhal Pradhan Na Hokar Chinton Pradhan Ho goyee Thi."

In another place, while analysing the cause of the creation she remarked, --
— "Hua kyo sunapan ka bhan,
   Pratham kiske om mein amlan?
   Aur kis shilpee ne anjan
   Viswa pratima kar dee nirman."

Her mind was deeply engrossed with the basic cause of the creation and as such she composed several songs on the creator.

— "Kanak se din, moti si rat, sunholi sanjh, gulabi prat,
   Mitata rangata barambar,
   Koun jagka yeh chitradhars?
   Na jisme spandan tha na vikar
   Na jiska adi na upasanghar,
   Sristi ke adi mein moun
   Akela sota tha woh kaun?

The stream of thought which flown in the mind of Mahadevijee made her a philosopher. As a result, the simple and enamoured thought became confused and complex with debatable reasoning.

The agony which pained her at the beginning now became friendly to her. To perpetuate the remembrance of her beloved, she wished that she would have eternal unsatiate feeling:

— "Mere chhote jiwan mein,
   Dena na triptika kanbhar,
   Rahne do pyasi akhein
   Bharti ansu ke sagar."
Sometimes she wanted to peep outside agony. But the decrepit life made her mind more painful. She now did not like to see a blooming flower or blooming youth.

— "Kah De Ma Ab Kya Dekho.
   Dekhon Khilti Kaliyan Ya Pyase
   Sukhe Adharon Ko,
   Teri Chir Youvan Susame Ya
   Jarjar Jivan Dekhun
   Dekhun Hein Hirak Hasnte Hilte
   Nil Kamalon Par
   Ya Murjhaye Palakon Se Jharte
   Asukon Dekhun ?"

1.5.3 The Nirja :

The nirja is the third achievement of the poetess. Its period of composition is between 1931 and 1934. As soon as the rays of the Sun hit a Nirja (a lotus), it begins to bloom. In the same manner after the 'Rashmee', the Nirja came to its revelation in the mind of the poet. The God of her Rashmee began to reflect, as if in a dream, in the Nirja. Her mystic thought began to be a matter of faith as she got the indication of the unknown in the dream. One critic aptly remarks — "The thought which got its expression in the Rashmee besides the sweetness of emotion, became more clear
and deep in the Nirja.  

In her songs, she now tried to find out the propriety of weal and woe in life. The very first song, the Nirja expresses the whole motif of her poetry:

— Priya En Nayanon Ka Ashru Neer  
  Dukh Se Abil Sukh Se Pankeel,  
  Budbud Se Swapnon Se Kenil,  
  Bahta hain Yug Yug Adhir.  
  Jiwan Path Ka Durgamatam Tol  
  Apnee Goti Se Kar Sajal Saral,  
  Shital Karta Yug Trishit Teer,  
  Esme Upja Yeh Niraj Sit  
  Komal Kamal Lajjit Milit  
  Saurabh Se Lekar Madhur Peer.  

In the midst of struggles of life when the poet moved through her Nihar and Rashme and arrived at her Nirja (the Lotus), she did not feel the pangs of life and entered in the Nirja like its fragrant pollen and kept hiding there. In these songs the depth of emotion went deeper and deeper. In comparison to her former poems, the thought and expression in the Nirja became more minute and deeper; as if she achieved 'oneness' with her beloved and expressed them in her poems:

4. Mahadevi Verma Samiksha - Dr. Deshraj Singh, Bhati, p. 21  
5. Nirja - Mahadevi Verma, p. 21
— "Been bhi Hun Main
Tumhari Raginee bhi Hun."

Kabir Dasjee, while expressing his monism, once said that he himself became the 'Lal' in course of searching the Lal. In the same manner Mahadevijee also absorbed her-self in His self in such a way that it was difficult to separate them from each other.

— "Tum mujh mein priya ! Phir
Parichoy Kya ?
+++ +++ +++
Chitrit Tu Mein Hun Rekha Kram
Madhur Rag to Mein Swar Saugam
Tu Ashim Mein Sima Ka Bhram
Kaya Chhaya Mein Rahasyamoy
Preyasi Priyatam Ka Abhinay Kya ?"

In the preface of the Nirja, an appropriate analysis of the poems has been made through the utterings of Krishnadasjee:

— "Nirja' Yadi Ashumukh Vedna Se banon Se bhigi Huyee
Hain to Sath hi Atmanand Ke Madhur Se Madhur Bhi Hain. Mano
Kaviki Vedna Kavi Ki Karuna Apne Upasya Ke Charan Sparsa Se
puta Hokar Akash Ganga Ki bhati Es Chhayamoy Jog Ko Sichne
Mein Hee Apni Sarthakata Samajh Rahi hain."
The genius of the poet reached greater perfection at the time of the Nirja. From the point of the language, ideas, and style, the Nirja is the masterpiece of the poet.

1.5.4 The Sandhya Geet:

The Sandhya Geet is the fourth composition of Mahadeviji. The period of its composition is from 1934 to 1936. As in the evening, all living creatures come back to their own residences after the day's labour, the poet also learnt many things from the life and realised about self at the evening of life. She now had the knowledge of her 'Beloved'. The Nirja carries enough evidences of such realisation of the poet:

--- "Priya ! Sandhya Gagan, Mera Jiwan, Yeh Kshitij Bona Ghughala Birag, Nav Arun Arun Mera Suhag, Chhaya See Kaya Vitrag, Sudhi Bhike Swapna Rangile Ghan Ghar Aj Chale Sukh dukh Vihag, Tam Ponchh Chala Mera Ag Jag, Chipp Aj Chala Moh Chitrit Mag."6

During the Sandhya Geet, Mahadeviji established a balance between agony and happiness. The overflow of her agony touches the heart of the readers and refreshes them. She herself wrote in the preface of the Sandhya Geet:

6. Sandhya Geet - Mahadevi Verma, p. 18
In the Sandhya geet, there is not only the co-ordination between happiness and distress but also a co-ordination has been established between destruction and creation; union and separation; hopes and hopelessness and between bondage and liberty.

Philosophical concentration emerged in her mind during the Sandhya geet which led her ideas towards a definite thoughtful way. In this book her mysticism is quite evident.

7. Sandhya geet Ki Bhumika - Mahadevi Verma
These mystic songs are the true reflection of her sorrowful life, which melt like a cloud and down come to us. She illustrates her life in a symbolic way through the natural elements. In the Sandhya geet she felt complete oneness with the nature.

1.5.5 **The Yama**:

The Yama is a compilation of one hundred and twenty five excellent songs. It was published in the year 1942. She has been honoured with the Jnanpith Award for this book.

1.5.6 **The Deepsikha**:

The Deepsikha is the creation of the poet in her later age. The poems written during 1936 to 1942 are included in this book. During this period her faith turned into self-confidence. In her 'Chintan Ke Kuchh Kshan', the poet herself expresses about the Deepsikha in the following manner:

8. *Sandhya geet* - Mahadevi Verma, p. 49

In the Deepsikha the poet not only expresses her own feeling of agony but also the feeling towards the distress of others. Here one can find oneness between her thought and emotion. Here her realisation of the beloved become deeper. But she expresses her doubt about her perfection.

— "Jo Na Priya Pehchan Pati Dourti Ky® Prati Shira Mein Pyas Vidhut Si Taral Ban Kyo Ucheton Rom Pate Chir Vyathamoy Sajag Jiwan ? Kisliye Har Sans Tam mein Safal Deepak Raag Gati ?"

The Deepsikha is the collection of fifty one songs. Her poetic genius is ever-increasing. The child-like curiosity of the 'Nihar' attained perfection in the Rashmee. The agony of the Nirja became co-existent with happiness and distress in the Sandhya geet, which ultimately became a faithful thought.
1.5.7 The Sandhinee:

The Sandhinee is the collection of some songs written during her earlier period. It is a collection of sixty five songs.

The very name Sandhinee is related to 'Sadhna' (accomplishment) and as such it hinted at unification of varied emotions here. So also it expresses that individual sensation emerges into collective sentiment of individuals. The book is full of all specialities like the 'Sandhinee' i.e. the milch cow which is quite beneficial to one. The picturisation of nature, mysticism, agony, emotion of love and sociability are the salient features of this book. The Sanghinee heralds pity, agony and eternal-prosperity of Mahadevijee's poetry.

1.5.8 The Agnirekha:

The Agnirekha has been published recently. It is a collection of poems written during her last days and is published posthumously. It is full of agony and pity, which are the cornerstone of Mahadevi's writings and which can perplex and reader. The poet who calls herself the "Neer bhari Dukh Ki Badlee" expresses her feeling like:
- "Paru Jwala Ka, Nahin Vardan Ki Vela,
Na Chandan Phul Ki Vela,
Chamtkrit Ho Na Chamkila,
Kisika Ka Rup Nirkhega,
Nithur Hokar Use Angar Par
Sau bar Parkhega
Khare Ki Khoj Hain Esko
Nahin Yah Kshar Se Khela." 

Perhaps all the age long distress and difficulties which burns her heart and emotions came out as burning fire in these poems.

Here ends the brief account of Mahadevijee's life and works, of which detail analysis would be given in appropriate places.