CHAPTER TWO

MAHADEVI VERMA AS A POET & HER PLACE AMONG THE POETS

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2.1 Mahadevi as a poet & her place among the poets:

During certain age or period of time in every literature there are several poets. Of these poets one may be the superb in one's own field. In a healthy criticism we may just consider the special features of some poets or compare between the poets having similar thoughts and ideals. But it is not meet and proper to single out somebody among them as the best one. It is a fact that each and every poet has his or her greatness in the field of literature and it is an ardent duty for a critic to find out properly and evaluate the works of the poets to make them understandable by the readers.

We shall study and evaluate the works of Mahadevi Verma to find out the place of Verma among the poets. All the poets produce their different thoughts and ideals in accordance with their own likings and dislikings. While one discusses about the place of Mahadevi Verma, one has to find out the different thoughts and ideas to which Mahadevi Verma was attached to.

2.1.2 Mahadevi as a successful poet:

Mahadevi Verma is known as the poet of agony and pity. Her whole field of poetry is full with the thought of agony and pity. Although her entrance into the field of poetry was as a Romantic one; yet we find a tinge of
mysticism in her writings. All her compositions are in the shape of lyrics only. She was, of course, a very successful composer of songs. There are three salient features in her poetry: agony, mysticism and lyricism for which she can be regarded as one of the successful poets.

2.2 The idea of Agony in the poetry of Mahadevi Verma:

There is an important place of agony in the diffusive existence of the life and the world. It is only for pity that the first piece of poetry came into existence from the Sage Vaimiki:

"Maa Nishadang Pratisthang
Twamagamah Shashwatih Samah
Yatkrouncha Mithunadeka, avadhi
Kamamohitam."

This the first line of the first poem written in this world. Poetry comes out of emotion. Agony can be regarded as the mother of all poetry. Right from the very beginning, agony has been regarded as the lifeforce of poetry, which changes colour according to change of time and individual traits. The origin of agony varies from time to time.

In the ancient literature like the Vedas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata etc., the source of agony was violence, injustice, tyranny, oppression etc. In the Buddhist literature the basis of agony was the piteous condition of living

1. Sage Valmiki
creatures, and the perishability of the world. During the 'Bhaktikal' agony gave expression through indifference to love and separation, 'Lokpida' i.e. oppression of the masses self-lassitude, relinquishment and disgust etc. In modern times, the very idea of agony has clearly been expressed in the writings of Mahadevi Verma.

There is a living expression of agony in the poetry of Mahadevi. She herself said, —


Mahadevijee has been quite fanciful in her thought since her childhood. Sometimes she was overcome by imaginary agony and sometimes by pity to see the restlessness of life.

— "Kah de Maa Kya Ab Dekhun Dekhun Khiltee Kaliyan Ya Pyase Sukhe Adhon Ko. Teri chir yauvan Sushama Ya Jarjar Jiwan Dekhun."  

2. Sandhinee - Mahadevi Verma
3. Sandhini - Mahadevi Verma
The 'Mahakaruna' (the Great Pity) of the Buddhists influenced her so much that pity becomes a 'Devi' (Goddess) for her. A partial influence of the 'Duhkhawad' of the Buddhist philosophy is also evident in her writings. The distressful world and the transitoriness of life produce a feeling of pity in the sensitive mind of the poet. The Buddhist philosophy accepts craving for the worldly things as the cause of distress while Nahadewijee believes that the acceptance and not the removal of the 'Duhkha' (distress) is the 'Nirvana'.

She has deeply gone through the preachings of Buddhism and the influence of the preachings are quite evident in her 'Kshanik wad Vichardhara' i.e. in her thought:

— "Vikasate Murjhane ko phul,
    Uday Hota Chhipne ko chand,
    Shunya Hone ko Bharte Megh
    Deep Jalta Hona ko Mand,
    Yahan Kiska Anant Yauvan
    Are Asthin chhote Jiwan."  

The world full of sufferings and the transitoriness of life make the emotional heart of the poet overflown with eternal pity and endless agony. But she does not like to run away from the 'Dukh' (from sufferings). The sense of agony keeps the feeling for the Beloved living.

Some-times 'Duhkh' becomes the best means for the appearance of her idol and as such the 'Duhkh' itself becomes her

5. Yama - Mahadevi Verma
idol. In some of her poems, the Duhkhwad becomes so insignificant from the worldly point of view that she began to believe in the co-ordination of happiness and sufferings:

— "Sab Akhon Ke Ansu uzle
Sabke Sapno Mein Satya Pula
Jisne Usko Jwala Saupee
Usne Eske Makarand Bhara
Alok lutata Woh Dhul Dhul
Deta Jhar Yah Saurabh Bikhar."

In her poetry, agony is not only a fanciful imagination nor it becomes pity under the influence of the Buddhist philosophy, but gives birth to the idea of service. At the base of her emotion of agony there is the pitiful life which is dedicated to service with all its difficulties and sufferings. Her whole life was the life of accomplishment. She did not want to go away from life out of sufferings but want to accept them with a smile. Mahadevijee wants to realise the Eternal Self through her service (Sewa). The 'Dukkh' is such a means by which one can keep the idea of the God living. Whenever we are satisfied with the means of happiness, we generally forget about our Lord. But absence of these means keeps us nearer to him. The attainment is easier through the pitiful way.

During the time of writing her Deepsikha, her emotions are filled up with universal feeling of pity. She now does not dedicate her tearful thought to the Supernatural being but to

6. Sandhinee - Mahadevi Verma, p. 142
the service of humanity only. Her pity towards the supernatural now attained universal and eternal basis and therefore, it came out of its limits and mingled up with the illustrious eternal pity. Her emotion coming out of the distress suffered by the humanity became so sharp that even divinity became passive for her.

Mahadevi gave up her own ego and established a relation with the whole world and became happy. But when she witnesses the distress of others, she becomes unhappy.

— "Mere Baudhan A1 Nahin Priya
Sansriti Ki Kadiyan Dekho
Mere Gile Palak Chhuo Mat
Murjhaee Kaliyan Dekho."7

The life-force emanating from the idea of sacrifice and dedication and the feeling for others' troubles and distress is illustrated in her poems. Her compassionate mind was impatient to sprinkle happiness over the distress, of the people. She felt pity for the other living creatures also. She even expresses her touching feelings to tiny flowers also:

— "Kar diya Madhu aur Saurabh
Dan Sara Ek din
Kintu Rota Kaun Hai
Tere Liye dani Suman ?"8

7. Nirja - Mahadevi Verma, p. 41
In the analysis of Vedna (agony) in the complete poetical works of Mahadevijee it is evident that there are fanciful imaginations, the influence of the 'Dhamkhwad' of the Buddhism and ideals of her own active life which were dedicated to service only.

2.3 The Idea and Nature of Mysticism in Mahadevi's Poetry:

Mahadevijee spent her whole life in the worship of the 'Aroop' — the formless Brahma. Her love for that 'Unknown' has been coloured with mystic shades. To express her mystic feeling she first of all, established a 'Tadatmya' (owning other's self or feeling other's self as one's own) relationship with nature of men. She feels the existence of the 'Beloved' in the grains of nature and is anxious of having a lock on 'Him'. It has been narrated in the Upanisnad that when the 'Param Brahma' felt tedious at His own loneliness, He created the whole creation with His own power. Mahadevijee owned this idea as it is an expressed in her own words:

— "Huwa Yao Sunepan Ka Bhan,  
Pratham Kiske Dar Mein Amlan,  
Aur Kis Shilpine Anjan  
Viswa Pratima Kar di Nirman." ⁹

She expresses her mysticism by ascribing sensation on the beauty of nature. First of all, her desire to know began

⁹. Mahadevi Verma.
when she experienced the influence of the divine things. She became more and more curious to find out the great artist, the Creator. She, now began to feel the existence of the divine power in the smallest ingredient of the world like a mystic poet. The picture of the Divine is reflected through all these worldly things. Her mind now became restless to know the whereabouts of the transcendental beloved:

--- "Kaun tum Mere Hriday Mein
Kaun Meri Kasak Mein Nit
Madhurata Bharata Alaksjita'?
Kaun Vyase Lochanon Mein
Dhumad Dhir Jharta Aparichit
Swarn Swapnon Ka Chitera
Need Ke Sune Nilay Mein
Kaun Tum Mere Hriday Mein." 10

Her romanticism came out of the totality of the nature. While she imagined about the eternal beauty of the Beloved, she became more and more attracted towards His great sweet personality. She ascribed His glimpse on the natural objects and expressed it in verse.

--- "Chitvan Tam Shyam Rang
Indradhanus Bhrikuti Bhang
Vidhut Ka Angraj
Dipit Mridu Ang Ang
Udta Nabh mein Achhor
Tera Nav Nil chir." 11

10. Nirja — Mahadevi Verma, p. 21
11. Dipsikha — Mahadevi Verma, p. 104
She ascribed a sweet personality to the Eternal Self and surrendered her 'Self' to 'It'. She had a great faith in the existence of the Eternal Self. When she felt the spirit of faith in the objects of nature, it becomes firmer and firmer.

— "Chhipa Mein Janani Ka Astitur
Rudan Mein Shishu Ke Arth vihin
Milega Chitrakar Ka Jnan
Chitra Ki Jadta Mein leen."12

The study of the Vedas, intercourse with the pious, the renunciation and feeling of the Almighty in the nature makes the firm faith on the Param Satta, the Eternal Soul on the

Param Satta
— "Kaise Kahti Ho Sapna hein,
Oh Us Muk Milan Ki Bat,
Bhare Huya Ab Tak Phulon Mein
Mere Ansu Unke Has."13

After realising the knowledge of the Param Satta, the Eternal Soul in heart of hearts, she made others realised 'It' (the Eternal Soul). She brought forth the realisation of the existence of the Lord in this world through the following words:

— "Jo Na Priya Pahchan Pati,
Daudtee Kyon Prati Shira Mein Pyas
Vidhut See Taral Ban,
Kyon Achaton Rom Pate Chir Vyatha'—
—Moy Sajag Jiwan."14

12. Sandhinee - Mahadevi Verma, p. 64
13. Ibid, p. 47
For her there are the reflections of the Eternal soul everywhere in this world. She finds this glimpse of the Lord in the Sun, the Moon and even in the lightenings.


Through those natural objects she also receives the news of the coming of her Beloved.


Her whole life was filled up with 'Vedna' in the expectation of her 'Beloved'. His remembrance. This remembrance made her tearful eyes dry. But this agony gave the throbbing of her heart a new life every day which became the life-force for the poet.

— "En Lolochaye Ankhon Par Pahra tha Jab Vrida Ka, Samrajya Mujhe De dala Us Chitwan Ne Pida Ka, Us Soneke Swapne Ko dekhe Kitue Yug Bite. Ankhon Ke Kosh Huye Hain Moti Barsakar Rite."17

15. Nirja - Mahadevi Verma, p. 104
16. Sandhinee - Mahadevi Verma, p. 74
17. 
In some places the poet expresses 'oneness' with her beloved and that the Lord has been absorbed in her self and in some other, she has been waiting eagerly for the union with her beloved. But she did not like to annihilate her 'Self' in the Self of the beloved.

— "Main Tumse Hun Ek Ek Hain,
Jaise Rashmee Prakash
Main Tumse Hun Bhinn Bhinn Jyon
aham Mein Tarit Vilas."\(^\text{18}\)

After passing the various steps of mysticism the poet finds her Beloved in her own soul. In the state of her self-realisation she greets her Beloved. She herself became the image of her Beloved; and the agony in the garb of the priest worship with adoration of sharp pain and the 'Arghya' of tears. The poet realised that Self-surrender is the only way to meet the Beloved beyond the other end.

— Visarjan Hee Hain Karudhar,
Vahin Pahuncha Dega Us par."\(^\text{19}\)

Through her own life, she has shown the path of Karmayoga i.e., path of right Action and of welfare of the people. She wanted to dedicate her life in the service of the humanity and experienced the existence of Him in all creatures. How much is it divine to melt oneself like a candle at the way through which one's beloved would visit!

\(^{18}\) Sandhini - Mahadevi Verma, p. 71

\(^{19}\) Nihar - Mahadevi Verma, p. 31
She not only wanted to serve others like a lamp but also wanted to teach others the way of love. There is an important place of Karuna (pity) in the mystic worship of Mahadevijee. Pity come out of the appreciation of other's distress. In many of her songs a worldwide deep ocean of Karuna is seen shining and quavering. Her tender heart weeps when she finds the social discriminations.

Mahadevijee expressed not only of mysticism but also of her own realisation in life. While reaching her high state of mind, she was overpowered with the idea of self-renunciation of the Badal (clouds), Deepak (Lamps), Phul (flower), Sarita (streams) etc. for the sake of people's welfare.

After feeling oneness with the 'Divine', she fancied the sweet union with the 'Anant Satta'. She believed that the Beloved resides in one's soul and therefore, needs no introduction. Under such circumstances, we find a similarity between

20. Nirja - Mahadevi Verma, p. 35
21. Sandhinee - Mahadevi Verma, p. 63
2.4 Mahadevi as successful composer of songs; (a lyrical poet):

The contemporary poets of Mahadevi's time accepted different styles of poetry and expressed their thought through them. But the speciality of Mahadevi is that she used a lyrical style in her poetry from the beginning to the end. Dr. Manju Gupta in her book — 'Adhunik Geetikavya Ka Shilpa Vidhan', says,

"Anubhutiyon Se rup, Kalpana Se
Hang aur Bhavjagat Se Saundaryyya
Bator Kar Mahadevi ne Apne
Kavya Devta Kee Murti Gadi hain."

The whole of her poetry springs out of the depth of her heart and as such it can easily touch the heart of all readers. In her poetry fanciful imagination, fine emotion, music and beauty are quite evident. Her poetry is the expression of the emotion of her heart. She was overhead and ears in pity and as such major part of her poetry deeps in agony.

For a lyrical style a poem needs to be full of music. Mahadevijee had full knowledge of the music. Therefore, in most of her poetry there is the natural expression of this element. The emotion coming out of the depth of the heart takes the shape of a music. The whole of her poetry has been written in her thoughtful mood. As poetry springs naturally out of the heart, it tends to contain musical qualities. In most of her
poetry there is literary beauty and flow of musical emotion as they are the result of the strong flow of her ideas and emotions.

In her poetry there is more expression of her self-realisation. From this point of view all her poetry is based on her self-realisation. All her poetry is quite subjective and she generally used the term "I" in her writing.

— "Mein Kiske Muk Chhaya Hun
Na Kyon Pahchan Pata,
Umadta Mere Hagomein Barasta
Ghanashyam Mein Jo
Adhar mein mere khila Nava
Indradhanu Abhram mein Jo,
Bolta Mujh mein Wahi Jag Maun
Men Jisko Bulata." 23

In the poems generally the poet expresses her personal feeling of happiness and distress. This fact is evident from the Nihar and the Rashmee. But in her later poems she did not allow her personal feelings to come to the fore-front and tried to keep them hidden from the readers.

— "Ve Sunese Nayan Nehi,
Jisme Bante Ansun Moti,
Woh Pranon Ki Sej
Nahin Jisme Besudh Pida Soti,
Aisa Tera Lok Vedna Nahin
Nahin Jisme Awasad
Jalna Jana Nehin Nehin
Jisne Jana Mitnaka Swad." 24

23. Sandhyageet - Mahadevi Verma, p. 43
24. Ibid, p. 35
In poetry or lyrical poem it is necessary that it should be in accordance with emotion. Mahadevijee herself said, —
Sadharanatah Geet Vyaktigot Seema mein Tribh Sukh-Dekhatmak Anubhuti Ka Woh Sabda Rup Hain, jo Apni Dhwanjatmakata Mein Geya Ho Sake.

A song is composed in the estacy of emotion; and therefore, there is a flow of emotion. Although there is sentimentalism or excessive sentiment yet one is not swept away by the flow but one can remain grave to consider and judge as she writes them with wakeful consciousness.

— Kaise Kahti Ho Sapna Hai,
Oli! Us Muk Milan K Bat,
Bhare Huwe Ab tak Phulon Mein
Unke Ansoo Mere Has."

It is necessary that a song should be brief and short as it contains excessive emotions. Brevity is also required for its estacy of emotion and musical performances. For want of brevity, an idea diffuses and as such emotion becomes less effective. When emotion is spread widely it effects its effectiveness. To arrange the boundless emotions within limited words is an important characteristic of success. Mahadevi Verma's lyrical poetry is a success from this point of view. Most of her songs are of six metres. Nowhere in her songs unnecessary elaboration is evident. She tries to contain boundless emotions in a single line and therefore, looseness

25. Nihar - Mahadevi Verma, p. 20
of emotion is not found in them.

She gives expression to the afflictions of life through her songs, which are narrated in a very effective way. She expresses the transitoriness of life in a very artistic way:

— "Vikaste Murjhane Ko Phool,
    Udit Hota Chhipne Ko Chand,
    Shunya Honeko Bharte Megh,
    Yahan Kiska Anant Youvan." 26

The language of Varmajee is quite favourable to her emotions. Her songs being the expression of tender emotions, the language in the songs is full of sweetness. The sweetness of the 'Tatsam' words (Sanskrit words which are used in vernacular in an unaltered form) can be enjoyed throughout her poetry.

— "Ur Ka Deepak Chir Sneh
    Anal ..... etc.

Due to excessive symbolism or use of symbols, grandeur and greatness begin to take expression in her portraiture. For the extensive use of the 'Anuswarant' terms her language everywhere becomes very musical and rhythmical. Her emotions also add to the beauty of the language. In this manner Mahadevijee braided her ideas and emotions in one garland and expresses them in the songs. Most of her songs are a treasure for Hindi Literature and she is quite successful in this style

of writing. In her composition the depth of her expression and the mysteriousness and mysticism in her expression are quite evident. She added much to the growth of lyrical poetry. Her songs are quite artistic and express the natural love and effection of a womanlike tender heart.

Here we conclude the discussion as to what extent Mahadevijee is successful as a poet. Besides we indicate the elements and the ways on which she laid more stress also. Now we shall proceed to see to what extent she is successful among the poets of 'agony', 'Romanticism' and lyrical poems and shall try to find out her place among them.

2.5 Place of Mahadevijee as a poet of Agony i.e. 'Vedna':

Agony is the life-force of poetry. Pity was the cause of the first poem man has ever written which was uttered by Valmiki. The element of agony differs from person to person, time to time and according to differences in individual emotions and therefore takes different forms.

To assess the status of Mahadevijee as a poet of agony, we shall carry a brief study of agony as revealed in the writings since the days of Sanskrit literature.

In Sanskrit Literature, the emotion of agony is diffusive and quite extensive, the examples of which are found in abundances in each and every writing of Kalidas whether it is the Shakuntalam or the Meghdutam. The Virah of the Yaksha touches
the heart of every reader. Mahadevijee's emotion of agony is evident in a major form springing out of Karuna (Pity) and spiritual effections. Her Vedna is expressed through active sense of service to humanity. Therefore she wanted to make her life a piece of cloud to satisfy all and sometimes to make it a lamp to give light to the world so that not a single creature including the smallest one may not miss its way. While comparing the expression of agony in the ancient Sanskrit literature with that of Varmajee, it is evident that her 'Vedna' is not only confined to her writings but it becomes her devotion also.

There are some influences of the Buddhist literature over her idea of agony. The transitoriness of life and the world which she expresses in her poetry is definitely influenced by the Buddhust idea of the Mahakaruna. But the buddhist does not believe in the existence of God while Varmajee is quite anxious to have union with the 'Beloved'.

The emotion of Vedna in the poetry Lord Ram during the Bhaktikal is the result of indifference and disgust. The expression of Virah here in those literature is due to love for the supernatural. Sant Tulsidas gives a very beautiful description of the love of the people of Ayodhya for Ram, the agony of Dasarath and the departure of Sita from Ayodhya. But Varmajee's 'Vedna' springs out of the pity towards the people sufferings from disgust and distress. There is distaste towards the love for the supernatural and she composed
her poetry by using timely symbols of accomplished emotion of agony like those of the romantic poets. Unlike that in the Ram-kavyas, her Vedna is not only a literary 'Vedanabhuti'.

The Krishna-kavya, which comes after the Ram-kavya, also contains the emotion of Vedna. In these kavyas the Vedna has been expressed through "Madhuryya-Bhavna". We can reckon Sant Sudras along with the writers of the Krishna-kavya. The 'Virah Vedna' (agony for departure) of the Gopis at the departure of Krishna to Mathura reached the highest point and they began to proffer their 'Vedna' to him.

There is also profference of 'Virah Vedna' to the beloved in case of Mahadevi. But in her agony as there is the idea of service along with pity, it is mixed up with mystic emotions. In the Krishna-kavya, there is overwhelming of emotion in the heart of a devotee while in case of Mahadevijee, there is pity in the worshipper.

A comparison may also be instituted between Mirabai and Mahadevi on their ideas of Vedna. Mahadevi is known as the 'modern Mirabai', as the critics find some similarities between them. But there are some differences although some similarities are found between them due to their individual peculiarities and differences in their environments of the time. Mahadevi is the worshipper of the 'Formless' while Mira is of the 'Corporeal'. The distractedness, absorption in emotion, trance and un Concealed love are the elements of
Mira's Vedna which are not found in the Vedna of Mahadevi.

In the latter's emotion of Vedna there is the idea of service to humanity. There is also a difference in their life-style and philosophy of life and their ideas and emotions. In case of Mahadevi her 'Vedna-wad' is a 'Sewa-wad' while in Mira it is devotional 'Virah-wad'. But it can be easily said that both of them are quite successful in their respective fields.

After Mira, the expression of agony is found in the writings of the Sant poets. In the Sant poetry, there is 'Virah-Nivedan' for the eternal Beloved. The same idea is also found in Mahadevi's writings. Kabir also expresses his symbolic love for his Beloved. But in Mahadevi there is the 'Dukkh-wad' of the Buddhists' mixed up with real spiritual emotion while the emotion of agony of the Sants emerges out of spiritual causes alone. From this viewpoint there is of course of difference between Mahadevi and the Sant-poets.

In the description of Virah in the Ritikal writings there is distractedness for union with worldly beloved, while Mahadevi's love is only for the spiritual one. Therefore, there is a considerable difference between them. Through her selfless service, Mahadevi wanted to serve the suffering humanity. From this point of view the poetry of Mahadevi is superior to that of the Ritikal.

In the modern period 'Vedna' has been given expression to in many of the writings of Mahadevi contemporary Chhayawadi
poets, of whom Pant, Prasad and Nirala are important ones. Panditjee is a lover of nature and as such he expresses emotion of Vedna through the nature. But whatever is expressed by Mahadevi, there is full of heartful emotion and therefore, is full of beauty of the soul. Nirala is a philosopher. In his Vedna, there is mystic distress of separation which is expressed in accordance with the existing political and social environment. Pantjee's Vedna is very much similar to that of Mahadevijee. There is element of good and welfare of the people. In the Kamayanee what Manu witnessed after the great deluge of the universe a 'Karun Vikal Kahani Si', — he did also witness the same 'Kahani' in the world.

In the poetry of Mahadevi, her feeling of 'Vedna' is full of the emotion of 'Karuna' which is also full of devotion to determination of and emotion for the good of the people. She expresses her agony through symbols appropriate for her age. But it will not be proper to jump to the conclusion that she is the greatest of all poets from the point of expressing the emotion of agony; yet it can be easily said that she has a high place among the poets of agony. Her poetry of agony a treasure for Hindi literature.

2.6 Place of Mahadevi among the Hindi lyricists:

While studying the lyrics of Mahadevijee, it is meet and proper to ascertain her place among the lyrical poets of Hindi literature.
The tradition of Hindi lyrics dates back to composing of the 'Padas' of the Siddh literature. The Padas originated about the Seventh century A.D. During those days, songs were presented through language of the masses i.e., folk-languages only to popularise certain ideology or religious faith and to make them accessible to the masses.

In the words of Dr. B. Bhattacharyya: "Kavya shilpabidhi kee dristi se yah Bhasha Pratik Shailee Ke Antargot Atee hain Kintu charyya jadon mein Aye Pratik Kisi Sahityik Shilpa Kaushal Ka Pratinidhitwa Nahin Karte Bakki Ye Pratik dharmee Prabritiyon Tatha Yougik Kriyayon Ke Ullorch Ka Madhyam Bankar Adhikatar Aspast Kintu Guda Arthon Ki Abhivyanjana Karte Jan Parte hain. Man Ki En Samast sthitiyon Ko Jinhe Sthul rup Be Spast Nahin Kar Sakti Duyarthak Shailee Mein Vyakt Karna Es Yug Ki Kaviyon Ki Visheshata hain."27

In their language, there was the primacy of the Shringaar and the Shant Rasa; and they were well-versed in music. They played on the Veena (lyre) while singing and therefore, their songs came to be known as the 'Veenapaa'. But these songs were quite communal and as such if we can compare them with those of Mahadevi at all; we can find similarity between them only in one aspect, that is, their lyrical aspect only. No other similarity can be found in them.

27. Buddhist Esoterism - Dr. Binoyatosh Bhattacharyya, p. 25
After the Siddhi literature came the 'Nath literature'. Like the former one, Nath literature is also concerned with making their advice available to the mass people through their songs. After it, the Jain literature also tried to spread their ideology with the help of the songs. In their poetry, one can find all the qualities of a lyric. But these were all composed in the 'Apabhransh' language.

Some lyrical elements are found in the writings of Prithviraj Raso of Chandbardaye and Narapati Nath during the Birgatha Era. Most of the writings of this period are full of heroic adventures. Whatever was written during this Birgatha period on heroic adventures, can never be regarded as lyrical poetry from the point of the 'Khand Kavya' in real form.

The 'Bhaktikaal' began after the Birgatha kaal. This period can be regarded as the Golden Era of lyrical poetry. The songs of the jewels of this period like Sur, Tulsi and Mira are still quite popular.

Dr. Manju Gupta makes an appropriate remark on this:


28. Adhunik Geetikavya Ka Shilpa Vidhan - Dr. Manju Gupta, p. 83
The name of Vidyapati comes first when we discuss about the poets of the 'Bhakti' Yuga. In his 'Padawali', there is a balanced mixture of elegant Shringar with quiet Bhakti Rasa. The heart of the readers cannot but melt away when they go through his 'Padas' of self-sacrifice. As he was well-versed in music, there is melody and musical mode in his poetry in abundance. Vidyapati is the first powerful lyric poet. He may be regarded as the forerunner of Hindi lyricism. A host of Hindi lyrical poets like Kabir, Dadu, Raidas, Malukdas, Nanak, Surdas and Mira of the later period followed him in connection with ideas, metres, style and music in their writings.

There is a difference in the aim of writing of poetry between Mahadevi and Sur, Tulsi and Mira of the Bhakti era. In the writings of Sur, Tulsi and others there is an expression of pleasant veneration for the corporeal shelter, while Mahadevijee offers the flowers of her emotion for the unknown Beloved. There is also a difference of environments and circumstances of the both eras. There are some similarities only in their emotional expression.

The lyrical writings of Tulsidas are collected in the Gitawali, the Krishna-Getawali and the Vinay Patrika. A devotion to servitude to the Param Satta is quite evident in his songs. All his 'Padas' are composed under the strict 'Shastriya' principles of music. These 'Padas' are full of musical modes favourable and suitable to his emotion and language.
Surdas worshipped Lord Krishna through the way of friendship and amity. He put forward all his feeling and devotion towards Lord Krishna in his songs and placed them before the readers. There is an unrestricted flow of emotion in the songs, which depict the supernatural through the wings of music like the rainbow. His sweet songs are composed in Braj-bhasa.

According to Dr. Manju Gupta, — "Abhutpurv Bimba Yojna Sukshma Chitrankan Sashakta Sabda Chayan Dwanyatmak Raspurna Padawali Sangeet Ki madhur Jhankrity Aur Pragarh Anubhution Ka Abiral Rasasrot Sab Kuchh Milakar Sursagar Geeti Rachanyon Mein Sirmour Ho gaya Hai."\(^{29}\)

Another speciality of the songs of Surdas that they are composed on psychological basis. His songs or the lyrical poetry is sweet and quite attractive as they are written in different musical modes.

Mirabai is another important name in the Bhakti Era of Hindi after Surdas. From the point of lyricism the poetry of Mira is ideal one. It flows like a stream in her heart and gives expression to in proper places. She was an ideal female ascetic of love (i.e., Prem-Yogini). All her devotional songs are sung in the temples as *Kirtan*. Music in them is naturally added to touch the heart of the mass people.

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\(^{29}\) ibid, p. 86
Both Mahadevi and Mirabai dedicated their thought to the supernatural. But for Mirabai the basis of the supernatural is in some form while it is formless for Mahadevijee. Like Mira, most of Mahadevi's agony has been dedicated to the supernatural. Mahadevi also expresses her firm and honest feeling towards her adorable like Mira did.

From the point of lyrical art of the Bhakti Era the poetry of Mahadevi and other poets are superb. But the basis of Mahadevi's love is for the Formless while for other poets of the era it is in some form or other a form as given in the Puranas.

While discussing from the point of modern lyrical poets, the names of Prasad, Pant, Nirala and Bacchan come as the important ones. In the lyrics of Jayshankar Prasad, there is an incessant flow of love, youthfulness and beauty. From the point of lyrical poetry his Jharna, Lahar, and Ansoo are important creations. He did not write lyrical poems only for compilation of such poems but incorporated songs in his dramas also in which there is full of patriotic feelings.

Among the Chhayawadi poets Niralaji is important next to Prasad. Niralaji is considered among such poets whose personality is in many cases greater than their artistic creations. He is regarded as the greatest lyricist of Hindi as not only he wrote a huge number of songs but wrote a variety of songs with different ideas and metres. The Anamika,
the Parimal, the Geetika, the Tulsidas, the Kukurmuta, the Anima, the Apara, the Naye-patte, the bela, the Archana, the Aradhana, the Geetagunj, the Kavishree are his main poetic creations. From the point of internal qualities of a poem his poetry is full of love-effection, humble-agony, national affliction, philosophical mystic humour and progressive ideas. So, from the point of variety of subjectmatter and theme, he may easily be regarded as the best among the mystic poets of Hindi.

The name of Sumitra Nandan Pant comes after Niralajee. He is the soft melodious song-bird of Hindi. whatever soft lovely, melodious and sweet are found in the creation, are all tuned in his lyre and are presented them in his songs. The Veena, the Granthi, the Pallavi, the Gunjan, the Yugant, the Yug-vani, the Gramya, the Swarn-kiran, the Swarn-Dhuli, the Utara, the Yug Path, the Anima, the Vani, the Kola aur Buda Chand and the Lokayatan are his major creations. According to Manju Gupta,— "Progeet Shailee Ke Samast gun -- Har-dilata, Bhavatmakata, Sphuranshilata, Prabahmayata, adi Pantjee Ki Kavita mein Vidyaman hain. Par Geetitatwa Ke Samast Gun Unke Prarambhik Rachanayonmein hi Paye Jate hain. Bad Ki Rachanaye Madhur Abong Bhavpurn Avasya hain Parantu Geetitatwa Badki Rachanaon mein Kom hi Paya Goya."30

The worldly life of Pantjee was full of pomp and grandeur and he did not even feel the least touch of poverty. As such

30. ibid, p. 149
when he had to describe anything about the untouchables in the society, he had to take resort completely to imagination only. As his poetry was lacking in the touching emotions, it cannot touch the heart of the readers. Yet, he can be regarded as the 'Sabd-Shilpi' i.e., craftsman of words because he could change the form of words in accordance with the change of ideas and emotions. He expresses his own emotions of the mind indirectly in his poetry. In his poetry there is the depiction of soft corner for women but was lacking in vividity of description. In most of his poems he selected symbols from the nature and expressed his feeling through them.

Harivansh Ray Bacchan is the unrivalled poet in Hindi from the point of pure lyrical poetry. His Madhushala, which can touch the heart of any reader at any time, is the example of his best creation. His each and every throbbing of the heart, his excitement and emotions find expression in every line:

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"Es paar priye Tum Ho,
Madhu Hain,
Us paar Na Jane Kya Hoga." 31

His songs are popular for his simple and clear expression.

We have already discussed in details about Mahadevi Verma. Here it can be mentioned again in brief that gravity, mystery and mystic feelings are found in the expression of Mahadevi- jee like that in the poetry of the Chhayavadi poets. The

31. Harivansh Ray Bacchan
feeling of agony is given expression to in her poetry. Her poetry is full of mystic feeling for the Parambrahma, i.e., the Eternal Soul. Since she had deep interest in music, lyricism is another quality of her poems, in which the worldly feelings were polished and expressed in a womanlike spirit. From the point of eternal values of literature, the songs of Mahadevijee are priceless treasures, which are immortal and everlasting from the point of colourful expression and symbolism. Considering the lyrical art in her poetry, Dr. Ramchandra Shukla well-said:


Considering all the lyric poets of Hindi literature, it can easily be assumed that Mahadevijee has an important place among them, who composed whole of her poetry in a lyrical form which expresses itself before the readers in a soft and sweet form.

2.7 Place of Mahadevijee from the point of mysticism:

The mystic thought in Hindi poetry is quite old one. Bharat is a land of divine meditation where different sages meditated to know the mystery of the Param Brahma. A literature
was born as soon as the people had the inquisitiveness about the mystery of nature. So, meditation on the mystery of nature became the first basis of literature.

In the Hindi world, the literature of the Naths and the Siddhos, who made the mystic viewpoint the basis of literature, there is the description of the devotion for the union with the Lord through symbols. Their devotion is based on internal accomplishment which is full of mystic feeling but without any touch of agony. Such a mystic feeling is found in the poetry of Luipa:

-- "Kaya Tarubar Panch Vidal
Chanchal Choye Paitho Kal,
Dit Kario Mahasuh Pariman,
Mormoi Guru Pucchi Ajan." 32

In the same manner, mysticism is revealed in the writings of Sorhapa who was another writer of this style.

-- "Nad na bindu Na Ravi Na
Shashi Mandal,
Chiya Raya Sahaye Mukal,
Uzoore U Chhadi Ma Lehu re Bank
Niyahi Bohima Jahu re Lank
Hathere Kankan Ma Layo Dapon
Apne Apa Bujhatu Niyanmon."
(Sorhapa)

After the Naths and the Siddhos a glimpse of mysticism is found in the writings of the Sant poets. The poets of the

32. Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas - Dr. Nagendra.
Nirgun Kavyadhara of the medieval age illustrated the mystic feeling of union between the Atma (i.e., the Soul) and the Param Atma (i.e., the Eternal Soul) while speaking of the medieval Nirgun Kavyadhara literature, the name of Sant Kabirdas comes first, who called the Nirgun Brahma his 'Swamy' (i.e., his Lord). In the poetry of Kabirdas, the mystic love of the Sufis is also found along with the Indian devotional mysticism. He was also influenced by the monism of Shankaracharyya. Kabirdas regarded love and agony as the medium of realisation of emotion of the Lord. He also regarded himself as 'a woman' and the Brahma as the lover. His internal vision is always very much eager to have union with his beloved Brahma. In Kabir’s mysticism, a high place is given to a Guru (i.e., a preceptor) who can make one see the light of the Param Brahma and can make the intention of union with Him fulfilled. Kabirdasjee believed in Monism and therefore, he absorbed his self in the Paramtatwa. His whole worldly love and emotions ended in the feeling of 'Visarjan' — abandonment of 'self' before the Lord. Under such circumstances he plunged in the Paramanda (eternal Happiness) and became a part of the Param Prabhu (the eternal Lord) and thereby emersion of self into the Param Brahma. Kabirdasjee took up mystic symbols to express the union of souls with the Param Brahma.

— "Kabir mon Madhukar Bhoya
Rahaya Nirantar Vas,
Kanwal Joo Phulya Jalah Binu Ko
Dekhe Nij DAS."
(Kabirdas)
After the Sant literature, we find mysticism in the Jain literature. The Jain poets express their mysticism through worldly love. The Jain poets speak of uniting the 'Self' with the eternal soul which is out-spread in all the particles of nature, and experience the feeling of 'Tatamya' rather than to unite the 'Jyoti' of one's soul with the 'Akhand jyoti', the Eternal Soul.

The Sufi sect of the love-creed is another creed of the Nirgun Bhaktidhara, who took the subject matter of their poetry from the Indian love lore. They gave the Indian love stories a mystic colour and made them more interesting in their poetry. Although they spoke of worldly love yet their main aim was the revelation of the Brahma. For the Sufi poets love is the life-force of poetry. They believe that the union of the Atma and the Paramatma is possible only through love. The special feature of the Sufi mysticism is that the tinge of the supernatural is latent in worldly love. Here reference may be made to Malik Muhammad Jayse's unsurpassable 'Padmawat'. The Sufi thinkers take the Brahma as the 'Noor' i.e., the Divine light and the Ruh (the Creatures) are its parts. For them the Brahma is a female. These Sufi mystic poets believe that the worldly body of a man is always a barrier to the union of the Brahma and the human beings. Love is the only way for this union.

After the Sufis, mystic thoughts are abundantly found in the poetry of the Chhayavadi writers of modern Hindi
literature. The emotion of love, personality, symbolic language and the vastness and greatness of nature are some of the features of the Chhayavadi poetry. Although their thought is based on worldly affairs yet it tell the tale of Heaven. So, the Chhayavad itself become mystic one. Of all the modern Hindi poetry, Mahadevi's poetry carries maximum mystic emotions. She ascribes a pleasing personality on the Nature and surrenders her Self to it.

Although mystic thought and feelings are available in the writings of all the poets referred to above, yet the era which is known as the Mystic Era, is quite a new trend in modern Hindi literature. Unlike the medieval mysticism, it is purely and clearly based on love. Here the nature is regarded as the means to union with the Lord and has quite confidence on the mundane affairs. While considering in totality, mysticism contains a conglomeration of the high intellectual thoughts of the Vedas, the monotheistic ideals of the Vedants, the deep love and the mystic feelings of the Sant poets of the Nirgun School.

Prasad, Pant, Nirala and Mahadevi are regarded as the pillars of the Chhayavad. But the bases of their mysticism are quite different to each other. The basis of Pant's mysticism is 'Beauty' while it is 'Intellect' in case of Nirala; and in case of Mahadevi it is 'Love' and 'Agony'.
Pantjee is primarily a poet of Nature. The eternal beauty of Nature made him a lover of Beauty. So, whenever he speaks of mystic feeling, he does it through natural objects. He depicted his unique imagination through natural objects. Here mention may be made of the description of the Ganga in her 'Nouka Vihar' in the following lines:

— "Shant Snigdh Jyotsna Ujjwal
Apalak Anant Nirvan Bhutol
Saikol Shayya Par Dugdh Dhwai
Tanvagi Ganga Grisma Virol
Leti Hai Shrant Klant Nishchal." 32

Niralaji was greatly influenced by Swami Vivekanand. Therefore, monotheism was the voice of his mysticism. Intellectual elements are available in her poetry since she expresses her mystic feeling through philosophical approach in her poetry. As most of her poems are full of philosophical ideas they become quite burdensome for the readers to understand.

After Pant and Nirala the name that strikes any reader of Hindi mystic literature is of Mahadevijee. The main inspiration of her poetry is love and agony (Prem aur Vedna). She has dedicated all her mystic feeling to her unknown Beloved. One of the special features of her mystic poetry is that there is no expectation for union with the Beloved. Agony and distress are dearer to her since they keep the

32. Rashmibandh - Sumitranandan Pant
feeling for the beloved living and that feeling consoles her in her weal and woe. It is that agony which made her a mystic poet. This Vedna is her living and heartfelt expression of mystic feeling.

After studying all about the mystic poets it can be easily assumed that different mystic poets expresses their feeling in different ways. The mystic thought of Mahadevijee is quite vast one. Although her mystic feeling and expression is quite traditional yet it carries modern elements also. She has selected a mystic way in accordance with the nature of her heart; and has followed the way very faithfully upto the end of her life. So, her poetry is full of mystic thoughts and ideas. In her poems the mystic thoughts got its perfection. One can very easily and proudly count Mahadevijee among all the mystic poets of the world.