FOREWORD

Being born in a Vaishnabite family I have a natural tendency towards the Satriya Culture. In our 'Tikamur Chipaha Satra' (at Dipota near Tezpur), the singing of the Bargeets and the Naam Kirtan is a regular feature like those in other Satras of Assam. I also learnt to sing the Bargeets and the Naam Kirtan of our two great Saints of Assam — Shri Shankardeva and Shri Madhabdeva under the loving guidance of my late mother Devi Bhogeswari and father Hemkanta Goswami. I was very much attracted by the melody and sweetness of the Bargeets since my childhood. As a child I was much attracted by the character of 'Bai Gobala' depicted by these saints particularly by Shri Madhabdeva. When I prepared for my B.A. and M.A. examinations in Hindi literature, I found similar character of Lord Krishna in the writings of Sant Surdas. I then, wanted to go deeper into this line after my M.A. examination. When I approached my 'Gurudev' Dr. Dharmadeo Tiwari he appreciated my interest and advised me to make a comparative study of the two saints — Sant Surdas and Shri Madhabdeva, particularly in their illustration of the Vatsalya Rasa and assured me of his help in case of preparing for a doctorate degree. Immediately plans worked out and with the grace of Lord
Krishna and Guru Shankardeva, I began my studies under the able guidance and help of Tiwarijee.

Considering the similarities between the creations of Shri Madhabdeva and Shri Surdas, particularly in their expression of the Vatsalya Rasa, a humble attempt has been made here in this thesis to make a comparison between them two. Of course all the aspects of their creations are not covered under this thesis since different aspects may be studied extensively and they are sufficient for research from different stand points. Here, therefore, only one aspect viz. their dealing of the Vatsalya Rasa has been tried carefully to cover.

The whole study has been divided into nine chapters for the sake of convenience of throwing light to different aspects of the Rasa.

The first chapter begins with a general study -- the introduction. Here we try to institute a comparison between these two writers as regards to their creations as a whole. The Hindi poet of the Bhakti Kaal, Sant Surdas and the Assamese poet of the 'Nava-Vaishnabiya Kaal', Shri Madhabdeva are contemporary writers of India. Both these poets are the devotees of Lord Krishna and are illustrating the life and activities of young Krishna (Bal Gopal). While
depicting the picture of Bal Gopal, both of them frequently used the Vatsalya Rasa. Both these poets occupy unique places in their own literature.

The Second Chapter deals with the origin, development and nature of the Vatsalya Rasa. Originally only nine Rasas have been accepted in the Kavya Shastras. Later some scholars like Kavi Karnakarpur, Haripal Dev and others are of the opinion that there is a tenth Rasa namely the Vatsalya Rasa. The permanent emotion (Sthayee Bhav) of Vatsalya Rasa is the love for one's offsprings. In the writings of the Vaishnavite scholars the Vatsalya Rasa has been well depicted which led to the Bhakti Rasa for them. Moreover the Rasa has been freely used by different scholars in almost all languages of India.

The third chapters begins with the Vatsalya Rasa and we try to find out the relationship between this Rasa and human psychology. Like other hereditary instincts and emotions the Vatsalya Rasa is associated with human psychology. A comparison has also been instituted between this Rasa and other Rasas like the Shringaar etc. An attempt has also been made to classify this Rasa here.

As in the case of all religious writings the different nine Rasas merged into the Bhakti Rasa, so also the Vatsalya Rasa leads to the Bhakti Rasa. In this chapter, we try to
elaborate how did the ideas and the Vatsalya Rasa of Surdas and Shri Madhabdeva emerged into the Bhakti Rasa.

In the fourth chapter, a discussion has been made on the literary achievements of these two Saintly writers. Both of them have unique places in their respective literatures. In the case of Shri Madhabdeva his writings not only convey some Vaishnabite ideas and ideals but they have high literary value. Together with his Guru Shri Shankardeva and their other followers, Madhabdeva ushered a new era in Assamese literature. In the same manner Surdas also contributed a lot to the development of Hindi literature. An attempt has also been made to institute a comparison between the writings of these two writers in general.

The chapter fifth deals with the treatment of the sanyog (Union) Vatsalya Rasa in the writings of these two Saintly writers. Such a Sanyog Vatsalya Rasa is evident when somebody is attached to his or her 'Vatsa' - a child. There has been elaborate expressions of this Rasa in both of them, particularly when baby Krishna is with his parents. It is a scene to be enjoyed. Like a common child, baby Krishna showed all simplicity, wickedness appealing appeasements to win love and affection of his parents.

It is the Biyog Vatsalya Rasa that has been discussed in the chapter six of this book. The Vatsalya Rasa which is emerged as a result of the 'Biyog' or discussion or departure
of a child from his parents is known as the Blyog Vatsalya Rasa. From time to time Krishna was separated from his parents temporarily. Even this temporary separation could never be tolerated by his mother. In most cases the expression of the Blyog Vatsalya Rasa is more heart-rendering than the former one i.e., the Sanyog Vatsalya Rasa. It becomes very very tragic.

The expression of 'Bhakti' through the Vatsalya Rasa is the subject-matter of the chapter seven. As stated above all the different Rasas merged into the 'Bhakti Rasa' in the case of the "Bhakta Kavis." Here both the writers Surdas as well as Shri Madhabdeva led the people towards Bhakti through the expression of this Vatsalya Rasa. Like Yasoda one can attain Bhakti through love for God. Yasoda did not take up other path of Bhakti Lord as her son. She expressed everything to the Lord through the Vatsalya Rasa.

In the writings of both Surdas and Shri Madhabdeva Vatsalya Rasa led to Bhakti.

The chapter Eighth deals with human psychology. As stated earlier both Madhabdeva and Surdas were lifelong bachelor yet they understood child-psychology well.

In their writings, there have been expressions of child psychology. Bal Gopal also acted differently under different circumstances to draw the attention of the elders.
and to attract love and affection from the parents etc. like a very common child. Sometimes a child plays in such a manner in which the elders may not find any logic behind it. It may be true or reasonable in the world of a child. Sometimes the children become quite emotional and engage themselves in instinctive activities.

The last chapter deals with our conclusion. After comparing the writings of these two great writers, we carefully place our findings. We try to be very impartial in advancing our views particularly regarding the treatment of the Vatsalya Rasa in the writings of these two celebrated writers, Shri Madhabdeva in Assamese and Sant Surdas in Hindi.

It is not out of place here to mention that we have touched only one aspect of the writings of both the writers. Both of them have great personalities and we are afraid, we could not do justice to them. It is also true that all aspects of their writings could never be covered under one single study. One single aspect of their writing could easily be the subject-matter of such a thesis. So we select the things connected with our subject-matter very cautiously and try to analyse here in accordance with our own limited capacity through which we try to arrive at our conclusion at the end.
Now coming back to some personal matters, I want to express my regards and gratitude to some of my friends, advisors and well-wishers and particularly to my 'Gurudeva', which I regard as my ardent duty failing of which will be an act of ungratefulness. My research work would not have been completed without the help and advice of Dr. Dharmadeo Tiwari, professor and Head of the Hindi Department, Gauhati University, who was kind enough to give me necessary guidance in this project and helped me at any time I approached him. I remain ever grateful to this respected Guru. I am also grateful to my brother Dr. Surendra Mohan Mahanta, Professor, Post-graduate Department of Cotton College, Guwahati, and my sister Dr. Swadhinota Mahanta, Senior Lecturer of Assamese Darrang College, Tezpur, who helped me immensely in carrying on the research and writing this thesis. I must acknowledge my sincere gratefulness to the Librarians and the staffs of the different libraries from where I borrowed books for the purpose. It is not out of place here to thank Mr. Basistha Barman of Gauhati University Students' Welfare Office, who took up the boring work of typing my whole thesis although he is pre-occupied with his own official works. Last but not least, I am thankful to my husband Shri Hem Chandra Deva Gowami who helped me in all possible ways.

Any omissions and commissions, if any, or any error of fact or interpretations which may creep-up unconsciously or out of ignorance, remain mine alone.

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