CHAPTER FOUR

LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TWO SANTS — SURDAS & RADHADEVA; A BRIEF COMPARISON OF THEIR WRITINGS.
In the first Chapter of this thesis we have made a brief reference to the works and achievements of both Sant Surdas and Shri Madhabdeva. Now we propose to make some more elaborate discussion on the works of both of them for the sake of convenience of a comparison.

During the medieval ages, the Indo-Aryan languages began to flourish and to develop separately in different regions of India, particularly in the North and East India, with some local variations. Although there had been development in literature it was mainly for religious purposes; and therefore, almost all the writings related to some religion. It may be assumed that literature was first used mostly for carrying out some 'Vashastriya' outlook and it grew side by side with other folk-literature. In most cases new and newer 'hymns' were written in local languages to touch the heart of the local people. In the Northern India Maithali, Bhājpuri and such other literature began to grow while in the Eastern part of India i.e., in Assam, the Neo-Vaishnabite writers used to 'Brajewali', a language closely identical to the Braja Bhasa.

Coming to our subject-matter of the thesis, there were two renowned 'Bhakta Kavis' (Saintly poets) namely, Sant Surdas and Shri Madhabdeva during this Mediaeval period of which the former was from the North India and the latter from the Eastern part of India. Both Sant Surdas and Shri Madhabdeva were great writers of the period and had contributed a lot to Indian literature. Both of them being 'Krishna Bhaktas', their writings
contain Krishna Vandan, Krishna Smaran and mostly devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna. Strangely enough both of them being life-long bachelors, they describe the childlike nature of Lord Krishna more lucidly than any other aspect of His nature. This was rather the best achievement for both.

4.1 Literary achievement of Sant Surdas (1478-1583 a.D.):

Sant Surdas (1478-1583) was the first writer to spread the 'Krishna Kavya-Dhara' throughout India in Hindi after Vidyapati who began this 'Dhara' in Hindi. According to Dr. R.K. Varma, the 'Maithil-kokil' Vidyapati is the first man to introduce the 'Krishna-kavya' in literature; butJoydev is the first writer to introduce it in Hindi literature. On the other hand Surdas did not follow the tradition of Vidyapati but followed the tradition of the Braja-folk-songs which was quite popular in Braja. In this connection Acharyya Ram Chandra Shukla remarked,

"Sur-Sagar Kisi Chali Sati Huye Seeti-Kavya Paramapara Ka - Chahe woh moukhik Hi Rohi Ho — Purn Vikas-se Pratit Hota Hai."\(^2\)

Therefore, Surdas has been regarded as the 'Purn-Vikasit Lok-Seetikar (the celebrated writer of Folk songs), as the

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1. Dr. R.K. Varma, Hindi Sahitya Ka Alochanatmak Itihas, p. 500.
2. Acharyya R.C. Shukla, Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas, p. 165
Acharyya remarked —


Suras enriched Hindi literature with his writings. As shown earlier in the introductory chapter that since there is no written evidence about the date of birth as well as the number of books he wrote, there are controversies regarding both. Under such circumstances we have to rely on the traditional stories about him. In the mean time there had been some manipulations and interpolations in his writings also. As these problems do not touch the subject matter of our thesis directly, we have taken a working hypothesis about both his life and works. About his life and other related things, we have referred everything in the first chapter of this monograph. As many as twenty five books are found, which are also accepted by the Kasi Nagari Pracharini Sabha, as the writings of Surdas. They are —

1) Sur-Jagar;
2) Sur-Jarawali;
3) Bhagwat Bhasya;
4) Sur Ramayan;
5) Gobardhan Leela;

3. Ibid, p. 166
vi) Bhanwar Geet;

vii) Pran Pyari;

viii) Sur-Sathi;

ix) Surdas Ke Vinay Adike Jphut Pad;

x) Ekadasi Mahatma;

xi) Sahitya Lohori;

xii) Rasam Scandh Bhasha;

xiii) Maan Leela;

xiv) Naag Leela;

xv) Drishti Kut Ke Pad;

xvi) Sur-Pachisi;

XVII) Nal Damayanti or Nal Daman;

xviii) Sur-Jagar Jair;

xix) Radha Ras Keli Kutuhal;

xx) Daan Leela;

xxi) Vyahalo;

xxii) Sur-Sahatak;

xxiii) Sewaphal;

xxiv) Hari Vansh Tika (Sanskrit) and

xxv) Ram Janm.

But nobody is definite that all these are from the pen of Surdas or not. There had been doubt about the authenticity or their authorship. This controversy arises because there are several writers with the name 'Surdas' for example, Namandji Surdas, Gayak Surdas, Saket Niwasi Surdas, Banares Niwasi Surdas,
Lakhnow: Kishwar Surdas, and the like. Many critics therefore believed that only the following books are from the pen of Sant Surdas:

i) Sur Sagar;  
ii) Sur Sarawali;  
iii) Sahitya Lahari;  
iv) Sur Sahith;  
v) Sur Pachisi;  
vi) Sewa Phal; and  
vii) Surdas Ke Vinay Adike Sphut Pad;

But according to Dr. Brajeswar Sharma the Sur Sagar is the only book written by Sant Surdas, while some other scholars including Dr. Munshi Rap Sharma regard only three books viz., the Sur Sagar, the Sur Sarawali and the Sahitya Lahari as the creation of Surdas and others are interpolation. Again, there are some other scholars for whom the Sur Sarawali is nothing but the epilogue of Sur Sagar.

Under such circumstances without going through the controversy which may constitute subject matters of several such theses, we decide to take the uncontroversial books of Surdas into consideration here and leave the others to scholars to decide. Even in the case of Sur Sagar and the 'Surdas Ke Vinay Adike Sphut Pad', there are certain controversial 'padas', we have also decided to leave them aside for our purpose.
Of all the creations of Surdas, the Sur Sagar has been recognised as the masterpiece. The Sur Sagar put Surdas at the zenith of his name and fame. It consists of several hundreds of 'padas' the number of which is yet to decide. Some scholars including Hari Ray referred the number of 'padas' to one lakh and twenty-five thousands (Lawa lakh). While the 'hauras' Vaishnavan Ki Katha pointed it to be 'Vahesrawadi'. But the 'padas' actually available till now numbered about ten thousand only.

The Sur Sagar would have made Surdas immortal even if he would not have written a single like after it. The Sur Sagar is the exposition of his devotion to Lord Krishna. Almost all incidents of Lord Krishna's life here in this world are depicted in the Sur Sagar and that too in a close affinity to the Shrimad Bhagavata. Even the Sur Sagar has been divided into twelve 'anta (Dwadash Scanddh) following the Bhagawat. But one thing is clear that the Sur Sagar is not the translation of the Bhagawat. He got inspiration from the Krishna Leela depicted in the Bhagawat and then composed his Sur Sagar in his own way. The whole book gives expression to different Rasas in addition to his favourite Vatsalya Rasa. It is very interesting to note that Surdas is superb in his 'Alamkar Yojna' in the Sur Sagar. At the same time his 'Soundaryyabhuti' (aesthetic sense) controlled very skilfully his 'Alamkar Yojna'. Here one example may be cited:

-- "Dekhi Sakhi Adharan Ki Lali, 
Moni Barakat Tai Subhag Relewar, 
Ase Hai Banmali. 
Manau Prat Ki Ghota Sanwari 
Taper Arun Pnakas, 
Jyon Damini Bich Chamki Kahat Hai 
Farhat Pit Subas."  

Here while describing the beautiful lips of Lord Krishna, he used all his aesthetic senses and there is a happy mixture of the aesthetic sense and the 'Alumkar Yojna'.

As stated above, the capacity of Surdas to give expression to the Vatsalya Hasa is superb here in the Sur Jagar. He expressed it through several activities of Bal Krishna like -- 
Krishna Janma, Palna-Jhulna, Shuntono and Keiron Chalna, Saxron ke sath Khelna, Makkhan Chori etc. etc. Practically speaking, Sur-Jagar is really a 'Jagar' (a see) with various bases for the readers. According to Dr. Surajk SAXENA:

-- Sur Ne Ohri Krishna Ke Dal Jiwan Se Lekar Vishnu-

wastha Tak Ki Sampurn Kriason, Chestaon, Vyaparon Hai 

hare Chitron Karke 'Sur Jagar' Ke Aup Klein Ke Anubhuti Navya 

Shristi Ki Hai Jisme Vatsalya Abom Vipralamoh Sampandhini 

varbopari Hai Aur Jo Sur Ki Alankarik Matibha, Tirba Nelaare 

Abom Anubhuti Ke Parichayak Hai."  

Since it is a 'Jagar', it needs study from various viewpoints. But we have to avoid such a comprehensive study here.

5. Surdas, Sur-Jagar
6. Dr. J.P. Saxena, Hindi Ke Prachin Pratishthi Kavi, p. 198
in fear of increase in the volume if the thesis as well as of going out of the scope of it. Our study related to one aspect namely the exposition of the Rasalya Rasa.

Now coming to the sur-sarawali, it is found that it has been also written taking Lord Krishna as the Central figure. It is composed of 1107 'dohas', which give illustration to the activities of Lord Krishna. As stated earlier in the case of the sur-sagar that it was not the translation of the Bhagawat, so is the case with the sur-sarawali. Even there are certain vital differences between the Bhagawat and Surdas's creation. e.g., the reference to one 'Radha' as a lover of Krishna is nowhere in the Bhagawat; but Surdas has given elaborate description of love between Krishna and Radha. Although this book has written with the same subjectmatter and style of the sur-sagar yet it is not regarded as a Mahakavya (but a 'khanc r.avya') and at the same time not very popular one.

The Sahitya Lahari is consisted of 118 padas, it is most highly controversial about its authorship. The controversy arises out of the subjectmatter since it related mostly to the Shringa

Rasa. It can never be believed that a 'Krishna bhakt' like Surdas, who was lifelong bachelor may elaborate 'Shringaer' in such an explicit manner. Moreover in the age of Surdas the discussion on classification of heroines particularly in the 'shaktyavyas was not in vogue. There are many critics, who doubted the authenticity of this book, and who wanted to say that some other Surdas
i.e., other than Sant Surdas, composed it and ascribed it to the Sant. It happened to many ancient writers where there was no question of copy-right and where people used the names of famous personalities to make their writings popular. It also happened in case of Shri Madhavdeva and other great writers of East India. Some critics point out that this book might be the composition of his old age. It deals with 'Kavya Shastriya' and 'Shringaari' subject matters. It also contains somerist-shot pada's. The Vamshawali of Surdas which is found in one pada of this book has also been rejected on the basis of other evidences. So majority of critics remark that it was not composed by Sant Surdas.

Throughout all his writings, Surdas did not care for the 'Vastu-Vinyas' in his kavyas. He depicted nothing except the illustration of the beauty of Radha and Krishna, the Yamuna, the Gops and Gopies, the Vrindaban, the trees and creepers, the Braja-Bipin etc. But the ample use of Shubdhalangkar in the Sahitya Lahari made it quite enjoyable. In this connection Dr. Saxena remarks:


7. ibid., p. 205
Only one Pada is enough to show the capacity of Surdas in using various Alamkaras:

—"Haisti Dasan Ek Jobha Upjati,
Upama Jadapi Lajai;
Manav Nilmoni-prut Mukuta-gon
Badan Bhari Bagarai."

In addition to all these, Surdas was well-versed in using all the nine Rasas — Shringar, Hasya, Sarun, Sadra, Veer, Bhayanak, Vibhats, Adhbut and Shant; and the tenth i.e., the Vatsalya Rasa as well. His poetry, therefore, attracted the attention of all types of readers. It may be easily concluded that Surdas with his colourful, sweet and musical verses enriched the treasure of the Braja Bhasa. In his Kavyas there is the happy mixture of 'Bhav' and 'Rasa'. Of all the Rasas, his use of the Vatsalya and the Shringar Rasas is quite remarkable. At the same time there is the 'Shant Bhakti Rasa' in his Verses in which there is the Premamoyee Bhakti through Vatsalya, Samaptiya and Sakhya. Above all his poetry is full of 'Music' and 'Joy' which made his 'Bohas' very popular among the mass people. Here a remark from Acharyya Hazari Prasad Swivedi in praise of Surdas is most appropriate:


S. Acharyya H.P. Swivedi,
Gurdas is undoubtedly the superiormost poet of Braja Literature.

4.2 Of Madhabdeva (1489-1596 A.D.)

Shri Madhabdeva (1489-1596) is one of the great saints, a philosopher, a poet and a preacher of the Neo-Vaishnabite religion in the Eastern part of India. He is at the same time the greatest poet of the East India to give exposition to Vatsalya Rasa. He is the worthy disciple of the worthy Guru Shri Shri Shankardeva, who had been addressed by his 'Guru' as the 'Pranar Bandhab' (the Blossom friend) in love and affection and who was also selected to be successor to the 'Religious kingdom' after his Guru even when the latter had a number of sons of his own. But of course it was not without reason; and in the most simple analysis one can find that the reason was none but wisdom, devotion and a good knowledge of the Shastras of Shri Madhabdeva. Shri Madhabdeva is at once a poet, a dramatist, a lyricist, a preacher and above all an allround litterateur per excellence. Following his 'Guru' he composed many 'Bargeets' (some devotional songs of high excellence) and a number of one-act plays known as the Jhumuras; and above all some philosophical books like the Naam Ghosa with high spiritual and ethical truth.

Like that in the case of Surdas, there is also controversy about the total number of Shri Madhabdeva's creations. As stated in the introductory chapter, the following are found in the name of Shri Madhabdeva:
1) Naam Ghosa;
2) Raj-Suya;
3) Adi Kand Ramayana;
4) Jann-Rahasya;
5) Bhakti Ratnavali;
6) Naam Malika;
7) Bargeets (157 numbers);
8) The Jhumuras:
   a) Arjun Bhanjan;
   b) Pimpara Goochowa;
   c) Bhojan Vihar;
   d) Bhumi Letowa;
   e) Gobardhan Yatra;
   f) Nrisingha Yatra;
   g) Ram Yatra;
   h) Kotor Khela;
   i) Bhusan Herowa;
   j) Ras Jhumura, and
   k) Brahna Mohan.

Of the Jhumuras the Gobardhan Yatra, the Nrisingha Yatra and
the Ras Yatra are not available now although their names ap-pear
red in the 'Charit Puthis'. And of the last mentioned four of
the list, there are controversies about their authorship con-"dering the subjectmatter, style and language of them. The onl
book which can be regarded as Madhabdeva's writing is the 'Nrisingha
Herowa'. Dr. Satyendra Nath Sarma remarked:
In addition to above there are a good number of Bargeets and equal number of 'Deh Vichar Geets' found in the name of Madhabdeva. But scholars reject them as interpolations basing on the subject-matter and style of expression. He also got the Kirtan of his 'Guru' Shri Shankardeva edited which was completely scattered in different places of Assam up to Madhupur in Behar by his cousin, where one 'Kirtan' is also available with Shri Madhabdeva's name in the Colophon (Bhanita).

Almost all the writings of Shri Madhabdeva are in the praise of Lord Krishna. Excepting the Bar게ets and the Sahumuras (a special type of one-act plays), all the other books are translations from Hindu Scriptures most of which are taken from the Shrimad Bhagawat, the Vishnu and the Garuda Puranas the Ramayana and the Bhakti Ratnakali. But in the case of his translations also, his writings bear the image of his personality and wisdom rather he made it his own creations.

The Naam Ghosa is the master piece of Shri Madhabdeva. It contains about one thousand Padas for which it is also known as the Hejari Ghosa. It is written in 6 different metres namely Pada, Chhabi, Dulari, Lechari, Ghosa Chand and Naam Chand, of
which the last two are his own creations. In most cases the reader cannot just imagine that it was a translation. Here are two examples from his 'Naam Ghosa':

— "Muktito Nrispriha Jito
    Sehi Bhakataka Namo
    Rasamoyee Magoho Bhakati;
    Jamamostoka Moni
    Nij Bhakatara Vaishya
    Bhajo mana Deva Jadupati."
    (Naam Ghosa)

Original: "Ye Muktamwapi Nispriha
    Pratipadpronmiladanandang,
    Yamasthaya Samastamastakamoning
    Kurbanti Swe Nashe,
    Tan Bhaktanapitanch Bhaktapitong
    Bhakta Priyang ShriHaring
    Bande Santamarthayenudivasang
    Nityang Sharang Bhaje."  

"Ekanta Bhakatasaab Nirguna Krishnara Guna
    Gawe Sada Basiya Jathata.
    Vaikunthako Parihari Jogiro Hridayari
    Thaka Hari Sakshate Tathato."

Original: "Nahang Tisthami Vaikunthe,
    Yoginang Hridaye Nacha, Madhakata
    Yatra Gayanti Tatra Tisthami, Narada !

The Naam Ghosa is quite spiritual and with high devotion towards the Lord. It is full of philosophical ideals, but they are all directed towards proving the omnipotence of Lord Krishna.

— "Krishna Ekadava DukkhHari
    Kala Mayadiro Adhikari,
    Krishna Bine Shresthadeva Nahi, Nahi ara;"
The Bargeets are in the praise of Lord Krishna, and in some cases the theme is quite spiritual. He composed 167 Bargeets in total. Of course there are some more geets ascribed to him. But considering the subjectmatter and the style of expression, scholars rejected them as interpolations. His Bargeets may be classified into following three types —

a) Humble prayers;
b) illustration of beauty of Lord Krishna; and
c) depiction of Krishna Leela.

Under the first group we can place as many as 60, while in the other two classes 35 and 87 respectively totalling 162 of which some geets which are included in plays are also considered here. It is a fact that all these three categories constitute the subjectmatter of the Bargeets. As regards to the subjectmatter of his Bargeets Dr. Banikanta Kakati remarked:


Here one example of Madhabdeva's description of Lord Krishna may be cited:

10. Dr. B.K. Kakati, Purani Asamiya Sahitya, p. 13
As stated earlier, although Krishna is the incarnation yet he behaves like a common human child in the writings of Madhabdeva. But one thing is clear that his Krishna whether acted like a man or a superman, is the 'Purna Brahma' (the omnipotent Lord).

"Jahara Prakashe Charachara Prakashay,
Gopbesha Kache Dekho Sehi Kripamoy."\(^{12}\)

And at the same time the Lord is quite submissive (vatsyaya) to his devotee (Bhakata) and the Lord fulfills all their desires:

"Janilo kebal Tumi Bhakatir Bashya,
Sakale Nigame Prabhu E Bara Mahasya."\(^{13}\)

Therefore He took the shape of a human being only to satisfy Nanda and Jasoda and at the same time to remove the 'Evils' from this earth. Under all these circumstances the Bargeets are also the true samples of a high class literature and colourful language.

Shri Madhabdeva prefers the activities of young Krishna (Bal Gopal) to those of the adult Krishna; and therefore, he depicted mostly of young Krishna's activities — his childlike nature, His games and sports; His dealings with his parents and other Gop-Gopis. Such activities are very vividly expressed:

12. ibid, p. 108
13. ibid, p. 128
Since the Bargeets are written in praise of young Krishna, most of them are full of Vatsalya Rasa. His Bhakti is through Vatsalya Rasa gets more expression here. He also indicated the appropriate 'Raagas' for the Bargeet very much like Surdas in his poems, which shows that both of them were wellversed in music also. Another thing is also clear here in the Bargeets, so also in other writings that his Krishna acted as a common human child with all its liking and disliking and particularly with all simple cunningness in it. His mother also behaved like a common mother and even she thought of punishing him for his mischief. But at every moment Shri Madhabdeva does not forget that Krishna is the Lord of the universe.

--" Baikunthara pati prabhu  
Bane chehe Dhenu,  
Kahaya Madhaba Goti  
Kanu Pada Renu."  

(Bargeet).

Shri Madhabdeva also composed some Geets for his plays. They are also equally sweet and beautiful. Here in the Bargeets there
there is a mixture of Bhakti with Vatsalya.

In the case of his one act plays i.e. the Jhunuras, there are certain innovations although they were created following his Guru's style of Ankiya Naat which was the first of its type in Eastern India. The subject matter of Jhunuras show that they are some incidents and not stories e.g., in the Arjun Bhanjan, the incident of uprooting two Arjun trees by Bal Krishna has been dramatised while in the 'Chor Bhora', Krishna was caught red-handed while stealing 'Labanu'. In all the Jhunuras Lord Krishna is undoubtedly the hero. These plays were written in the Brajwali language. The subject matter of the plays can be divided into six categories:

i) Sanskrit slokas;  
ii) Geets;  
iii) Padas;  
iv) Nritya;  
v) Dialogue; and  
vi) the Sutradhara.

There are as many as 14 slokas, 1 Bhatima, 25 Geets, 21 Padas, 88 dialogues and 66 descriptions and interpretations by the Sutradhara.14 Along with verse lines, he also introduced prose in his dramas. These lines in prose give us the specimen of prose of the time. But his prose is quite musical. According to Dr. Birinchi Kumar Baruah — "The dialogue which

is introduced mainly to elaborate the lyrical sentiments in prose is very thin, though extremely musical." Here is an example of his musical prose:

(Pada) - Janilo Asiila Tumi Ghar Najania
Labanu Kalase Kene Acha Hat Diya?

Gopi - He Krishna, Tuhu Ghar Nahi
Jani Awala, Ehata Kon Josh

Nai. Hamara Labaru Kalas Bhitare Kaichana Haste Nibeshiya Thik."15

Shri Madhabdeva, being a preacher of Vaishnabism, he did never forget to prove the omnipotence of Lord Krishna in all his Jhumuras. Everywhere he proved the omnipresence and omnipotence of the Lord, who is now in the shape of human being. At the same time there is a good exposition of Vatsalya Rasa in most of them. He used freely the 'tatsam' and 'tadbhav' words along with local words which added to the beauty of his language. One example is enough to show his use of such words:

— "He Loka, Dekhu Dekhu, Parama Eshvara Puropsottama
Triguna Niyanta Gunatita Paramadevata Jibaka Tarana mitte
Apune Saxat Bekat Huwa Kapat Manush Chesta Dekhaya RibichLeele
Bistara Kayala."

(Arjun Bhanjan — Madhabdeva). Considering the style and language of Madhabdeva, the Jhumuras can easily be considered both as dramas and lyrical ballads at the same time, Dr. Bhusan

15. Madhabdeva, Pimpara Guchowa (ed. by H. Dutta Barua)
remarks:


There are the elements of humour in the plays of Shri Madhabdeva. Considering this element Dr. B.K. Bhattacharyya remarked, — "The childish trickery of Krishna does not effect our sense of justice but evoke our sense of laughter." 17

In this connection, one may refer to the incident depicted in the 'Chordhora' Jhumura in which Krishna was caught red handed while stealing 'Labanu' in certain Gopi's house. He with all his presence of mind blamed the Gopis that they themselves had eaten the Labanu and wanted to shift the crime to him in fear of their husbands. In the same manner in the Pimpara Guchowa humour of Shri Madhabdeva expressed through young Krishna is quite superb:

"Gopi — Ohe Balaka, Hamara Chandire Tihu Ke?

Gopi — O child, who are you in my house?

Shrikrishna — Ah, Hamaka Nahi Chinaha?

Hamu Balobhadra Kanistha Bhai.

Shri Krishna — Ah, don't you know me?

I am the younger brother of Balobhadra._7

Gopi — Ah Janala, Janala, Ki Niritte

Atha Awali Thik ?

16. Dr. Birinchi Kumar Baruah, Assamiya Katha Sahitya, p. 5

17. Dr. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, Humour and Satire in Assamese literature, p. 78.
Gopi — Yes we know, but what for you have come here? 7
Shri Krishna — O, Gopi, Hamo Hamara Kandira Bullawala.
    Hata Kon Dosha Nahi.
Gopi — Yes we know, but what for you have come here? 7
Shri Krishna — O, Gopi, I mistook it to be my own house.
    There is no fault. 7
Gopi — Hamara Labanu Kalas Bhitarae Kaichan Haste Vibeshiya
    Thika?
Gopi — But why are you thrusting your hands into the
    Labanu Pot?
Shri Krishna — Ah Hamak Bara dosha Pawala. Chi Pipilika Jabe
    Labanu Nasha Karala. Chak Bura Karite Hata Liya
    Achi.18
Shri Krishna — Ah is it a great fault of mine? Don't you see
    these ants have been spoiling the Labanu? I am
    thrusting my hands only to remove the ants from
    here. 7

Briefly speaking the Jhumuras reflect the capacity of
Shri Madhavdeva as a playwright. He used various Rasaas and parti-
cularly the Batsalya Rasa in his plays. From the plays he selected
Lord Krishna as the hero in all of them.

In the 'Bhakti Ratnawali' Shri Madhavdeva illustrated the
physical beauty and spiritual treasure of the Lord. There is no
comparison to the beauty of the Lord:

18. Madhavdeva, Pimpara Guchowa (ed. by P.C. Joswami),
    p. 40
With the advice of his Guru, Shri Madhabdeva also translated the 1st Canto of the Ramayana of Valmiki. But Shri Madhabdeva made it not the simple translation of Ramayana but an independent creation with his individual qualities. He narrated everything here centring the young Rama who for him is the incarnation of the Lord. Here he used his own celebrated language and introduced all local elements in it and made it an original book. Again the Jann Rahasya is the translation of the Jann Purana. Here also the hero is the Lord Krishna, who incarnate himself into ten major forms. In the same manner the Naam Malika is also translation from different sources where greatness of 'Naam dharma' has been sought to establish. Adding to that there has been the expression of the 'Four elements of the Naam dharma i.e., the Guru, Dev, Naam and the Bhakta in his writings.

Considering the writings of Shri Madhabdeva from the point of literary value it can be easily be concluded that Shri Madhabdeva occupies a unique place among the neo-Vaishnavite writers after his Guru Shri Shankardeva. His style of writing, his poetic genius, his dramatic excellence and above all his devotion to Lord Krishna and Guru Shri Shankardeva made him immortal.

19. Sri Madhabdeva, Bhakti Ratnavali, p. 47
4.3 | Brief comparison between Sant Surdas and Shri Madhabdeva:

There has been a considerable similarity between the works of Sant Surdas and Shri Madhabdeva. Both of them are the staunch devotees of Lord Krishna. They do not forget even a moment about their Lord:

"Sur-prabhu Hai Neep kai Tor, 
jis Share Sikhand." 
(Sur Sagar = Surdas).

"Tua pad Sumari Rahok Jan Nir, 
Tohari Charan Bandi Raho Hera Shir." 
(Bargeet = Madhabdeva)

In most cases their Lord is the young Krishna, both of them described the activities of Lord Krishna in his human form. Interestingly Surdas began to write about Krishna after he came in contact with Vallabhaacharya while the Shri Madhabdeva turned into a Vaishnabite preacher after meeting Shri Shankardeva and then only he began to write about Krishna.

Both the saints mostly wrote in verse forms and indicated the 'Tal' and 'Rag' to be used in their lyrics. Surdas in his Sur Sagar, Sur Sarawali and the Bhamar Geet indicated the 'Rag' while Shri Madhabdeva did it in his Bargeets and other geets incorporated in his plays, namely the Jhumuras.

Surdas as well as Shri Madhabdeva used freely all the nine Rasas and in addition to them the tenth Rasa viz., the Vatsalya Rasa. Both of them used Bruja Shasa in their writings.
Surdas used this language i.e., Braja Bhasa directly while Shri Madhavdeva following his Guru Shri Shankardeva wrote in the Brajawali which is very much similar to Braja Bhasa, a mixture of Braja Bhasa and local language. Both of them contributed a lot to their literature. In their personal life also there was a similarity as both of them were life-long bachelors. Shri Madhavdeva did not enter into a family life even when his guru had requested him to marry. He rejected humbly the offer of his guru and told him that he would devote his life for the service of the Lord only.

Although there were certain similarities yet there were differences also. The first and foremost difference between them is that Surdas is simply a devotee of Lord Krishna and had no connection with any religious preaching while Shri Madhavdeva is not only a 'Krishna Bhakta' but a preacher of Vaishnavism also. He established 'Satras' - some type of Vaishnavite monastery and preached Vaishnavism as shown by his guru Shri Shankardeva. There is another difference between them. Shri Madhavdeva faithfully followed the Shrimadbhagawat where there is no mention of Radha as the sweetheart of Lord Krishna. Although Surdas was also inspired by the Bhagawat, yet he depicted love stories between Lord Krishna and Radha. So, in this case Surdas came away from the Bhagawat tradition. Again in the cases of using 'Rasas' in their writings, Surdas used almost all the Rasas. He laid more stress on the Vatsalya and the Shringar Rasas.
But, although Shri Madhabdeva also used several 'rasas' yet he seldom uses the Shringaar Rasa in his writings. He used the Vatsalya Rasa abundantly in his writings.

In case of expression of 'Bhakti', Surdas expressed it through the Vatsalya, Dampatyia and the Sakhya while Shri Madhabdeva did it through the Dasya Bhava. At the same time he also used Vatsalya as a part of his Bhakti.

Shri Madhabdeva is a versatile genius. He not only wrote in verse form but he was a good dramatist who wrote a number of one-act plays known as the 'Jhumuras'. On the other hand, Surdas never penned any drama. At the same time Shri Madhabdeva wrote in prose also while writing the dialogues of his plays. Hence, therefore, the second prose writer in Assam after his Guru Shri Shankardeva who also used prose in his plays. Above all, Shri Madhabdeva was a preacher of the Neo-Vaisnavism who had to hold the ruin of the whole religious kingdom of his guru after the latter's death Surdas did never preach any religion; he was simply a staunch devotee of Lord Krishna and wrote a number of lyrical poems in praise of Him. Shri Madhabdeva established number of 'gatras' for spreading 'ek sharan Naam Bherma' after his Guru Shri Shankardeva. These 'gatras' are something like 'monasteries' but with much wider scope for spreading the religion. They are also engaged in some social and cultural functions in addition to the religious functions, Shri Madhabdeva composed some other books like the Bhakti Ratnavali which are full of spiritual matters and praises of the Lord.
Now, however, it is seen that although there are certain differences between these two saintly writers, Sant Surdas and Shri Madhavdeva yet their similarities are much striking and remarkable. But we donot want to make an elaborate comparison between them in all their resemblances and differences and in all their viewpoints and subjectmatter, they deal in this thesis. As a matter of fact such dealings would take more than one thesis and our intention is only to study one aspect i.e., the use of the Vatsalya Hasa and similarities and dis-similarities between them in this point only. From the above discussion on their works, it reveals that there is a scope of comparison, even in one point, between these two celebrated writers.

So, attempts have been made in the following chapters of this monograph to make a comprehensive study of the use of Vatsalya Hasa in the writings of Sant Surdas and Shri Madhavdeva and to find out similarities and dis-similarities, if any. Finally we tried to come to some reasonable conclusion on the subject in the last chapter of the thesis.