ABSTRACT

WOMAN IN GURU GRANTH SAHIB AND CONTEMPORANEOUS BRAJ LITERATURE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

This study is an attempt to highlight the portrayal of woman in the devotional literature of the Bhakti period. The attempt for the present research work cannot be substituted for the studies based on official sources but might provide help in giving direction to arrive at a more comprehensive idea of the condition of woman in different regions of India during the period under study. Devotional literature of the Bhakti period contains the writings specifically poetry of Nirguna and Saguna devotees (Bhakts). Nirguna devotees (Bhakts) believe in one formless God and have no faith in Avtarvad whereas Saguna devotees (Bhakts) worship the incarnations of God like Vishnu, Rama and Krishna and they considered Lord Krishna as of Avtar of God on earth. These Bhakts (devotees) wrote devotional poetry in praise of God in the vernacular languages instead of Sanskrit. Though they did not write purposely on material matters yet their writings by employing allegory throw valuable light on life around them.

For the understanding of the Nirguna exposition Guru Granth Sahib has been undertaken as the greatest unaltered and undiluted Text pertaining to medieval India. And for Saguna understanding contemporaneous Braj literature is useful. Braj literature contains the literary works of Braj Bhasha. Braj Bhasha was the richest form of Hindi in the medieval age. On the basis of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature this work compares the two famous categories of Bhakti (Nirguna and Saguna) to explore the feminine dimension pertaining to them. For this purpose, this study passes through two phases, spiritual and social. Spiritual phase is further divided into two parts. In first part, an attempt has been made to explore how Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature relate the feminine imagery on the Divine level and second part makes it clear that why feminine imagery is used? Social phase clarify, whether their spiritual dimension is equally relevant in social sphere or not, whether both ideologies advocated for the equality of woman in society too.

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