

## **Chapter - 3**

### **Reflection of Vaishnavism on Education and Entertainment**

**3.1 Women's Education and Vaishnavism**

**3.2 Music Education and Vaishnavism**

**3.3 Relation between Baul and Vaishnav in Bengal**

**3.4 Kirtan of Bengal and Bangalees**

### 3.1 Women's Education and Vaishnavism

Education is the first step to awaken the power of women. However, in the nineteenth century, women's education was limited to the noble family. Gaurishankar Tarkabagish, editor of 'Sambad Vaskar' magazine, mentioned the name of Harasundari Dasi, grand daughter of King Sukhamoi Bahadur. She was well educated in Sanskrit, Bangla, and Hindi. In this writing the names of Sursundari Devi, the eldest daughter of Prasanna Kumar Tagore and the daughter of Ashutos Deb are mentioned. Those two daughters are well educated in Gaudiyo language, Urdu Brajabhasha and scholars also praised her for reading and writing Debnagariscript.<sup>1</sup> However, there was no provision of education for the women of ordinary families. In the nineteenth century, education was given in the 'Pathshala' of rural Bengal; women got little scope for education even there.

If we look back little bit, we will see that women's education have always been neglected. Although Alawol a poet said about Rajbala's education in 'Padmabati', he has also mentioned the limitations of women education. Although he said about the education of Daulat, Wazir and Laila-Maznubut he has also mentioned of Laila's mother's reluctance to teach her daughter. He wrote that Laila's mother said to her daughter that “আজি হোন্তে তেজহ চোয়াড়ি পাঠশালা। কুলের মহিমা রাখহ আপনাত”<sup>2</sup> Higher education of girls was considered as a scandal. From this, the attitude of the society about women education is reflected. That is why in 1819, Rammohon Roy said to the ancient hindu dictators that “If you do no give education to women or give them advice then how do you confirm that they are unintelligent?”

We know form Gopichandra's songs written in the twelfth and thirteen centuries what his mother Mainamoti learnt from Guru's home,

---

<sup>1</sup> Kalidas Nag, *Sahitye Banga Mahila*, ed., by Sri Brajendranath Bandhyopadhyaya, Bethun College & School Centenary Volume, Kolkata: Saraswaty Press, 1850, p. 195

<sup>2</sup> Parames Acharya, *Banglar Desaja Shikhsadhara*, Kolikata: Anustup Prakashani, 1989, p. 124

বালক অবধি আর নাহি কাম আন।  
সর্বক্ষণ শুনি আমি ভাগবত পুরাণ।।  
এতেক করিয়া, পিতা আপনার মনে  
পড়িবার দিল আমাক দ্বিজ গুরুর স্থানে।।  
প্রাতঃকালে স্নান করি হস্তে লইলাম খড়ি।  
পড়িবার কারণে যাই দ্বিজ গুরুরবাড়ী।।  
এই রূপে শাস্ত্র পড়ি গুরু পাঠশালে।<sup>3</sup>

And it is known from the seventeenth century poet Alawol's *Padmavati*

পঞ্চম বৎসর যদি হৈলা রাজবালা  
পড়িতে গুরুর স্থানে দিল ছাত্র শাল  
মহান পন্ডিত হৈল কন্যা গুণবান।<sup>4</sup>

It is known from Gopichandra's songs, Dakhsinaranjan Mitra Majumder's "Thakumar Jhuli", Alawol's *Padmavati*, Danagazi Chowdhury's *Saipul Muluk Badiuzamal*, *Chandimangal* of Mukundaram, *Sarada Mangal* of Dayaram, Bharatchandra's *Annadamangal* and Ramprasad Sen's *Vidyasundar* that despite some special obstacles in the way of women's education, education among Hindu girls of medieval Bengal was in circulation. A woman named Madhabi, a contemporary of Chaitannyadeva, was appointed as an accountant in Puri's Jagannath Temple for her depth of knowledge. She was the disciple of Chitannyadeb. She has written many poems in Bengali. Her writings have been compiled in the collection of 'Vaishnavpad' named *Padakalpataru*. Jahnabi Devi, Hemlata Thakurani, Seeta Devi, and Iswari Thakurani were among those notable women who led the Bengal society in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. After the death of Nityananda, Jahnabi Devi influenced the Vaishnava society of Khardaha. Jahnabi Devi was the first who was known as 'Iswari' or

<sup>3</sup> Ashutas Bhattacharya ed., *Gopichandrer Gaan*, Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1959. pp. 370-371

<sup>4</sup> Ahammad Sharif, *Madhya Juger Sahitye Samaj O Sanaskritir Rup*, Dhaka: Muktaadhara 1976, p. 303

‘Goswamini’. She tried to overcome the caste system of Bengal. In that era, there was no marital relationship between the Brahmins classes of Rari and Varendri. She helped Nityananda Pravu specially to break this tradition. She gave her own daughter Gangadevi’s marriage with Madhavacharya who belonged to the class of Barendribrahmin. Following her examples many marital relationship were established between Rari and Varendri Brahmins during that time and later. The evidence is found in Nityananda Das’s *Prembilas*. It was written that

রাঢ়ী বরেন্দ্রে বিয়ে হৈয়াছে অনেক।

দেশ ভেদে নাম ভেদ এই পরতেক।।

The promotion of Vaishnava religion in Bengal resulted in the the emergence of a particular community or ‘Bairagi sampraday’. About this Bairagi Sampraday, it is known from the Bevariz’s Census Report of 1872 that at that time their numbers in different districts were as follows

<b><u>District</u></b>	<b><u>Number of Bairagi(1872)</u></b>
Burdwan	37,372
Bankura	10,250
Birbhum	23,243
Mednipur	96,378
Hoogly	23,373
Nadia	16,888 <sup>5</sup>

From Jadunandan Das’s *Karnananda* we know a lot about Hemlata Thakurani, daughter of Srinivas Acharya. He also wrote a book named *Manabi Bilas*. Along with making many woman disciple she spreaded education among them. On page 315 of Maniklal Singh’s book *Paschim Rar Tatha Bankura Sanskriti*, he mentioned that Hemlata Thakurani and her descendants carried the responsibility of educating women of King’s inner house of

<sup>5</sup> Goutam Chattopadhyaya ed., *History Research 5*, Kolkata: K.P.Bagchi 1990, p. 137

Bishnupur. The educated Vaishnava women of Kings inner house were known as ‘Maa Gosai’. In their education, women of King’s inner house became progressive, established temples and even they gave themselves the title of ‘Unnatashya’.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of the *akhra* or *math* which were set up by Jannhabi Debi and Hemlata Thakurani was established idol and obtained the *debattar* and *vaishnavattar*<sup>7</sup> property from the King and transformed it into a cultural centre along with religion. Some of the *akhras* in the Bishnupur region which were established under the leadership of Hemlata Thakurani and her disciples included Abantika, Mebala, Darika, and Kotha Jannhabi Debi's *akhras* were situated at Borakuli, Chunakhali, and Bajitpur. These 'akhras' were under the control of Goswamini. Besides worshipping the God, and reading scriptures, teaching was also carried on in those akhras. During festival serious renowned person read scriptures and discussed its meaning. Thus, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Bengali Vaishnava women played an important role in spreading the education.<sup>7</sup>

Literacy, education, study habit were inevitable in Vaishnava religion which was introduced by Chaitanyadev. An absolute Vaishnava was not only educated but also had the skill in music and musical instruments. The practice of scripture of Vaishnav family normally and inevitably touched women<sup>8</sup>. Some of the special educated Vaishnavi of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were Shachidevi, Gangamata, Goswamini, and Shyamapriya. Shyamapriya's a famous *pada* is

কান্দিতে কান্দিতে হিয়া বিদরে উল্লাসে

দশ দিক শূন্য হৈল শ্যাম প্রিয়া ভাষে।

Apart from these famous Vaishnavi gurus there were many anonymous Vaishnavis who practiced education regularly. Beginning from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, and then in nineteenth century the number of literate Vaishnavis grew more and more. During this

<sup>6</sup> Bishnupur Goala Paray Abashita Madan Gopal Mandirer Silalipi.

<sup>7</sup> Goutam Chattopadhyaya ed., *History Research 5*, Kolkata: K.P. Bagchi 1990, p. 38

<sup>8</sup> Sukumar Sen, M. Bhattacharya and S. Sen, *Literary Education of the Bengal Female in the Past*, Bethune College Centenary Volume, p. 130

time the promotion of *kirtan* was a special aspect of the Bengali culture. Vaishnavis also acquired a special place in this *kirtan*. In the 18th century, almost all the women of Mallaraj family of Bishnupur had written the *puthi*, because *puthi* writing was considered as a part of religion of that time. The famous *Chaitanya Charitamrita* 'puthi' was written by Dhvajamony Pattamahadevi, wife of Mallaraj Chaitanya Singh. This name is found on that book. Many women from lower and middle class families took the job of writing *puthi* as a source of earning money. Lalmoni was the author of such a famous manuscript. Lalmoni's one manuscript is present in the collection of Asiatic Society.<sup>9</sup> Tarini Brahmani and Madhabilata are among those famous educated *pada* writers whose names were found at the juncture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Another educated woman of the nineteenth century is Maharani Brindeswari Debi (Died in 1881) of Coochbehar. She wrote a book named *Beharodanda* in which her personal life and accounts of contemporary royal court of Coochbehar are found. That is at the juncture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Bengal, even in Kolkata, the responsibility of teaching the wives of the noble and middle class families were in the hands of Vaishnavis. It is found in the newspaper of that time that the educated Vaishnavis used to give primary education to the girls of the inner house. At the end of the eighteenth century in Kolkata, Harasundari Dasi, the daughter of Shibchandra Bahadur, King of Postar, was educated with the help of a teenager Vaishnavi. Even in Jorasanko's Tagore family, there was an arrangement for educating women by keeping 'Bostomi'. In this context, Reverend James Long's observation in the middle of the nineteenth century is notable. He wrote, 'many of the Vaishanava women can read and write. We know the case of a Vaishanava widow in Calcutta, who not only reads and writes Bengali well, but is also acquainted with Sanskrit and supports herself by copying Sanskrit works'.<sup>10</sup> The first two decades of the nineteenth century, the emergence of woman's consciousness and the strong expression of woman's voice are noticed. Household work, blockade of the inner house and various restrictions could not prevent women from studying. In this context,

---

<sup>9</sup>*Bethun School O Nari Sikshar Derso Bachor* (1849-1999), Bethun School Praktani Samiti, Kolkata, p. 22

<sup>10</sup>*Bethun School O Nari Sikshar Derso Bachor* (1849-1999), Bethun School Praktani Samiti Kolkata, p. 23

Parichand Mitra wrote in his spiritual book, 'I was born in the year 1814 corresponding with the Bengali era 1221, while a pupil of the pathshala, at home. I found my grandmother and aunts reading Bengali books. They could write in Bengali and keep accounts. There was no female school then'.

In 1890, in an article in *Tattwabodhini* journal, a list of new needs of newly-taught Bengali young men was highlighted. In this way the new generation wants that their wives know Bengali very well, and can also speak in English. If she can read Shelley and Byron then there is nothing better than that. She can play piano, she has the skill of painting, and she involves herself in scriptural discussion with her friends. If there are such qualities in wife then her husband feel proud and he feels satisfaction in his heart.<sup>11</sup> That is these reformists people want to make their own world somewhat modern. Actually they wanted to make their wife 'desi mam'. Bimala, the heroine of Rabindranath Tagore's novel, *Ghare Baire* is the best example. Nineteenth century woman's education movement not only influenced the woman from noble families but also independent women from lower caste. Those women who adopted profession, played a significant role in the city culture of that time. They delivered the outside culture to the women of noble family. Among them Vaishnavis were the first to claim the existence in the discussion. In 1830s, the schools, which were established by the missionaries, were stopped by the protest of the conservative Hindus. Then a handful of educated gentlemen from the rich families spent their money on the education of their wives and daughters and employed educated Vaishnavis and missionary women. This system is known as 'Jenana Shiksha'.<sup>12</sup> Prasanna Kumar Thakur's wife and the eldest daughter Sarada Sundari were part of this education system. In her *Amader Grihe Antapur Shiksha O Tahar Sanskar* Swarnakumari Devi mentioned that every day in the morning after getting ready and wearing clean dress Gouri Vaishnavi Thakurani arrived in the inner house for giving education. She was a highly educated woman. She has the ability to describe thing beautifully. She also has the ability to mesmerize people with her words. They not only

---

<sup>11</sup> Binoy Ghosh, *Samayek Patre Banglar Samaj Chitra*, Volume 4, 1980, Kolkata, p. 363

<sup>12</sup> Goutam Chattopadhyaya ed., *History Research 5*, Kolkata: K P Bagchi, 1990, p. 261

taught in the inner house, but like men they also used to sing *kabigaan* with their poet groups. On 22 Nov in 1828 it is known from a letter transcript of a vagabond 'muche' 'dom' poet, which was published in *Samachar Darpan* that how Vaishnavi groups violated them.<sup>13</sup> From this discussion it appears that in the nineteenth century Vaishnavis played an important role in education system, especially in the field of woman education.

Nati Binodini is one among those courtesans who were educated themselves by their own effort in the 19th century Bengal. She said in an aggressive manner in her autobiography, *Amar Katha* that a courtesan leads as scandalous life. But how is she tarnished? It is a matter of thinking that who has stigmatized this life. Many people forget the deceit of man and trust them and bear the burden of eternal scandal with endless torment. Who are those men? Are they not the respected people of the society?<sup>14</sup> Her guru Girishchandra did not take her allegations against the prominent people of the society as good. Girishchandra wrote in the introduction of *Amar Katha* that it was better not to have written such a strict writing in the autobiography.<sup>15</sup> In 1873, when the magazine *Hindu Patriot* criticized *Jamini Kalanka*, an autobiography of a courtesan, then Keshab Sen's magazine *Indian Mirror* criticised it in a harsh tone.

Again, in 1874, when an actress married a gentleman named Gopal Gostabihari, it was strongly opposed. On this issue a song was printed in Manomahan Basu's 'Madhyastha' magazine. After marriage this woman is known as Sukumari Dutta and wrote a good drama, named *Apurbamati*. It is the first drama written by woman.<sup>16</sup> The so called gentlemen of that time did all the arrangements so that women from lower class could not be educated. In the Introduction of *Amar Katha* Girish Chandra wrote that I have heard from Binodini that she gave birth to a girl child. Binodini had a great desire to literate the girl but no school did not accept her because of her lower origin. It is heard that Binodini requested to those people

---

<sup>13</sup> Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay ed., *Sangbad Patra Sekaler Katha*, Volume I, Kolkata: p. 144

<sup>14</sup> Soumitra Chattopadhyay and Nrimalya Acharya eds., *Amar Katha O Anyana Rachana Binodini Dasi*, Kolkata: Subarnarekha, p. 62

<sup>15</sup> Soumitra Chattopadhyay and Nrimalya Acharya eds., *Amar Katha O Anyana Rachana Binodini Dasi*, Kolkata: Subarnarekha, p. 62

<sup>16</sup> 'Nita Sen Samartha, Tinso Bachorer Kolkata: Narider Bhumika', *Desh*, March 17, 1990, p. 33



who were known as friends to her but instead of helping her they stood as obstacles to her daughter's education. In the nineteenth century they were brought in the field of education by Vaishnavis, that is why Vaishnavis were attacked mostly by the educated people. In the 1860s, Bengalee women were appointed as teacher and Normal Schools were built to teach women of *andarmahal*. Vaishnavis work as internship in these schools for livelihood. It was clear from a letter published in *Som Prakash* magazine in 1866 that the so called gentle society of that time attacked Vaishnavis intensely. It was written that there was Normal School in Dhaka, but there the number of Vaishnavis were numerous, 'we are not neglecting them but the fact is that people respect Vaishnavis very little. There are special reasons for this apathy. There is nothing surprising if people do not send their girls to the teachers of this class. Becoming mature they decorate the house and become the happiness of her husband and the ideal of their children. Teaching them by the people of this class... there are objectionable attributes towards the behavior of Vaishnavis'.<sup>17</sup> This intense criticism of Vaishnavis in the male dominated society proves that at this time they play an important role in the society. Written 'puthi' is the only evidence that with the expansion of Vaishnav religion, the cultural practices were also advanced in Bangladesh.

Patronage of some Hindu Zamindar, king, Samanta and some other dignitaries were also added. Ambika Kalna, is one of the places which gained popularity with the patronage of Burdwan Jamindar. Many scriptural scholars and Sanskrit scholars were gathered at Kalna in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is found in Adam's report published in 1837 that most of the Sanskrit toll' were under the Kalna Police Station (under Burdwan District). In 1837, the number of schools, 'tols' and 'Maktab' were

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TOLL</u>	<u>MAKTAB</u>
Kalna Police Station	73	37	06
Purbasthali Police Station	33	18	03

---

<sup>17</sup> Binoy Ghosh, *Samayik Patre Banglar Samajchitra*, Volume 4, Kolkata: 1966, p. 17

Ganguria Police Station	16	07	01
Raina Police Station	72	14	14
Burdwan Police Station	37	02	10
Mangal court Police Station	45	10	04
Aausgram Police Station	91	32	19 <sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Binay Ghosh, *Paschim Banger Sanskriti*, Volume 1, Kolkata: Prakash Bhaban, 2003, p. 139

### 3.2 Music Education and Vaishnavism

Not only in the progress of woman's education, but also in the development of music education of Bengal, there was much influence of Vaishnav religion. The history of musical practice of Bishnupur of Bengal is not only the history of 10-20 or 50 years but it is the history of several centuries. The practice of *kabigaan*, *yatra*, *panchali*, *kathkata*, and *jhumur* were very popular in the society of Mallabhum for along time. Later Nandalal's Ramayana team, the *yatra* team of Ramsaran Sharma, the *yatra* team of Brajanath Rajak, Rajani Maji and Keshablal Maji's *tarja* team, jhumur song and dance team of Sarajini of Bishnupur got famous. The music culture of Bishnupur was not only limited among the Mallabhum. It spreads into entire Bangladesh. For many years musicians of Bishnupur has adorned the post of court singers in palaces of various rich zamindars and Kings of Bengal. Musical genius Jadunath Bhattacharya appointed as music teacher in many assemblies in different times. King of Manbhum Panchacoat designated him as 'Ranganath' and King of Tripura attributed him the title 'Tanraj'.<sup>19</sup> Ganga Narayan Goswami, the son of music guru Dinobandhu Goswami appointed as a music teacher in the palace of the King of Maymansingha. He earned a special reputation in 'Dhamargan'. 'Mridanga' expert Jagat Chand Goswami's son Radhika Prasad Goswami was employed as music guru by Debendranath Tagore at Jorasanko Thakurbari. There was a time when the singers of Bishnupur dominated the field of music. In the nineteenth century, the new enthusiasm regarding music which was found in Kolkata and even in Bengal with the help of rich families financial support that was fulfilled by the musians of Bishnupur. That is why in the musical culture of Bengal, Bishnupur is known as *surtirtha* and behind this the influence of Vaishnavism cannot be denied. A terracotta picture is found in the left side wall of the three vaulted door, which is in the south portion of Madanmohan temple of Bishnupur. The picture gives a description of a famous Vaishnav Goswami's scripture reading and a man is listening to him. This picture actually gives an idea of teaching learning process. In the course of his attempt to tell the influence of Vaishnavism

---

<sup>19</sup> Binoy Ghosh, *Paschim Banger Sanskriti*, Volume 1, Prakash Bhaban: Kolkata, p. 352

on the music of 'Bishnupuri Gharana', Ramesh Chandra Bandhyapadhya said that Bishnupur had the influenced of Vaishnava religion and in the festival time local singers singing 'harigan' (dhamar) with 'mridanga' and 'tanpura' and revolve round the temples in a row. This custom was in practice in the nineteenth century and it is considered to be a religious practice.<sup>20</sup> It is already mentioned that Harekrishna Mukhapadhya along with Suniti Kumar Chattapadhya from Bishnupur, once collected the replication of the Geetgobinda's 'Balbodhini' from worshipper Goswami. Not only in Bishnupur but also in many Vaishnava centre of India the influence of Joydeb's *Geet Gobinda* is found.<sup>21</sup> In the middle of the eighteenth century Ramsankar composed a wellknitted 'Bengali-Dhrupad' and its appeal influenced Rabindranath Tagore strongly. Surendranath Bandyapadhya, a great composer of Rabindra sangeet, asserts that Ramsankar Bandyapadhya is the progenitor of 'Dhrupad'. He said that following Ramsankar's style, Rabindranath Tagore composed many songs in the beginning. It should be noted that Ray Ramananda propounder of 'Goudiya Vaishnava' religion also served as a dance teacher in Orissa.

The terracotta picture of dancing and singing in Bishnupur Temple are evident of the rituals that have taken place during the time of worshipping. In an argument about Gopeswar Bandyapadhya's singing style, Rabindranath Tagore stated that the non ornamentation of musical notes is the feature of 'Bishnupuri Gharana'.

In order totell about the reason for the emergence of a conservative Vaishnava intellectual community in Mallabhum from sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, scholar Sukumar Sen said that the cultivation of Sanskrit was possible only for this Vaishnava religion. In the *History of Bishnupur Raj* it is said that there is a principal priest under whose subservient a religious sub-division was made and under whose counsel the king bestowed 'Brahmattar' land. In this book it is written about how King Gopal Singh made the religious practice mandatory 'the

---

<sup>20</sup> Chittaranjan Dasgupta , Sakkhatkar: Bikhyat Bishnupur Bisesagga, Dated- 12.01.2015

<sup>21</sup> Chittaranjan Dasgupta, *Bharater Shilpa Sanskritir Patabhumikai Bishnupurer Mandir Terracotta*, Bishnupur: Ghosh Printers, 2000, p. 181

moral and religious development of the people was placed under the care of the height priest... we have already taken notice of the compulsory religious service of Gopal Singha (Gopal Singher, Begar) it was the high priest who made the compulsion effective by establishing an elaborate system of espionage.’ Not only the religious customs but also the presence of serial scripture literature in educational syllabus in Vaishnav era is found in the manuscripts which are kept in Bishnupur Sahitya Parishad. These collected scriptures bear the tradition and memory of hundreds of ‘Tol Chatuspati’ of Bishnupur in Vaishnav era. From these scriptures we find the connection between Bishnupur and Nabadwip. The Museum of Calcutta University published twelve photograph of the ‘Patachitra’ of these scriptures in the form of postal card and half of them were collected from Bankura and Bishnupur. Curator principal Debaprashad Ghosh, the founder of the Ashutosh Art Gallery of Calcutta University, described the importance of Bishnupur in various changes in the art in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Bengal. He believes that the ‘Patachitra’ of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which were confined in the western districts of Bengal were in valuable treasures of Eastern India.<sup>22</sup> Acharya Dinesh Chandra Sen in his second part of Grantha Brihatbanga wrote that for two centuries the art, literature, society of Bengal were newly formed center in garound Banabishnupur and the King dynasty of Bishnupur lit up the educational lamp once again which had almost extinguished. In the left side of the lane of entrance of Shyam Ray Temple there is a picture which show devoted singer is singing and his devotees are falling on his feet. This picture is a reflection of the verse of Vaishnava Smriti ‘Nrisingha Paricharya’. It is said in this book about the work of Vaishnava that

বৈষ্ণবো বৈষ্ণবং দৃষ্টাদন্তং প্রণমেদ্ভুবি

উভয়োরন্তরা বিষ্ণুঃশঙ্খচক্র গদাধরঃ।।

<sup>22</sup> Chittaranjan Dasgupta, *Bharater Shilpa Sanskritir Patabhumikai Bishnupurer Mandir Terracotta,* Bishnupur: Ghosh Printers, 2000, p. 419

A Vaishnava devotee should lie down when he / she sees another Vaishnava as God Vishnu exists in every human being. Reading and hearing the ‘vaktigrantha’ is one of the major rules of Vaishnava religion. It is universally recognized that by reading *Srimadvagbat* Srinibas Goswami owns the assembly of Mallaraja. In this regard the terracotta picture of reading *puthi* of Madan Mohan temple is particularly relevant. Apart from the terracotta picture of Radhabinod temple (Kharbangla) in which we see the picture of a ‘jatajutdhari’ acharya reading scripture and two women hearing him and performing the Vaishnava rituals *japamala*. This picture of Goswami reading scripture reminds the ‘sloka’ line of Rup Goswami's *Bhaktirasamrita Sindhu* and there it is said

বৈষ্ণবানি তু শাস্ত্রানি যে শৃণ্বন্তি পটন্তিচ।

ধন্যাস্তে মানবা লোকে তে তাং কৃষ্ণ প্রসীদতি।।

It means those who hear and read the Vaishnava shastra are blessed in this world. Srikrishna favours them. The terracotta picture of two women reading scripture and performing the *japamala* ritual at Radhavinod temple reminds the rule of Vaishnava smriti, that is to practice the ritual *japamala* three times in a day. In 1958, when scholar Sukumar Sen came to Bishnupur on the occasion of the convocation ceremony in Bangiya Sahitya Parisad then he visited Jorbangla temple and identified an idol as Srinibas Acharya which is engraved on the north wall of this temple in avatar panel. This is number 205 ‘sloka’ of Rup Goswami's *Bhaktirasamrita Sindhu*, it is published from Srichaitanya Sarswata math, Sridham Nabadwip, in the Bengali year on 12 Chaitra, 1354.

Perhaps the cause of this assumption is that a branch of scripts in idol's hand.<sup>23</sup> And it is previously discussed that Srinibas came to Bishnupur by the source of *puthi*, and later that manuscript helped in spreading women's education through Vaishnavis. In the nineteenth century when there were many obstacles to women's education then these Vaishnavis came forward to help women in their course of education. These Vaishnavis took the

---

<sup>23</sup> Chittaranjan Dasgupta, *Bharater Shilpa Sanskritir Patabhumikai Bishnupurer Mandir Terracotta*, 2000, Bishnupur: Ghosh Printers, p. 432.

responsibilities of teaching the women of King's inner house of Bishnupur in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and women of Thakurbari in the nineteenth century. The zenana education system is developed by those Vaishnavis. As a result of the arrival of Srinibas in Bishnupur through the source of manuscript and the completion of victory of the royal court of Mallaraj, Srinivas and manuscript have become one and this helped Sukumar Sen to identify the idol of Srinibas at Jorbangla temple.

### 3.3 Relation between Baul and Vaishnav in Bengal

At the beginning of the discussion of the Baul Vaishnava relationship of Bengal, we need to discuss the meaning and the origin of the word Baul. According to the conventional ideas, Baul means

বা অর্থাৎ বায়ু আশ্রিত  
উ অর্থাৎ যেখানে সেখানে  
আর ল হলো সবার মনে লয় হওয়া  
যা হলে সবাই ভালোবাসবে।

But Ramananda Roy said about 'Batul' in his words

তুমি এক বাতুল  
আমি এক বাতুল  
এসো আমরা হই সমতুল।

*Chaitanya Mangal* which Jayananda composed in the 1600s, provides a reference to Rumi's *Masnabi* poetry. According to him, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Brahmins adopted the distorted path due to the influence of Kali Yuga. They do not shave their beards, they wander with stick in hand, they recite the words of "Masnabi". Indeed what could be the actual picture of the Baul Community. *Sri Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita* is an authentic book of Vaishnava literature. What Chaitanyadev said to Sanatan while describing Srikrishna's divine power in the 21st stanza of 'Madhyalila' in this book is that

আমি ত বাউল, আন কহিতে আন কহি।  
কৃষ্ণের মাধুর্য্য স্রোতে আমি যাই বহি।।

According to Chaitanyadev, the meaning of the word 'Baul' is not 'Batul' or 'Mad', its meaning is 'Krishna preme Matoara'. But there is a difference of opinion about the origin of 'Baul' because the name is not given by them selves. *Srikrishna Bijay* of last phase of the fifteenth century and *Chaitanya Charitamrita* of last phase of sixteen century says us two



words: one is 'Khapa' and another is 'Bajhya Gayanhin' which are the ancient meanings of 'Baul'. We find the use of the word 'Baul' in a riddle which is sent by Advaita Acharya to Chaitanyadev. But even today the word 'Baul' is used as 'Khapa' in Rarh. Some critics opine that the word 'Baul' originated from the word 'Baur', which means in disciplined, chaotic, and mad.<sup>24</sup> Some other critics also point out that people who plays 'Ektara' and lead a carefree life are ridiculed as 'Batul' by contemporary people and the word 'Baul' originated from the word 'Batul'.

The earliest period of expression of Baul in Bengal was not before 16th century. Because except Madhabendra Puri, Iswarpuri (1501 alive), Chaitanyadev (1486 – 1553), and Advaita Acharya (1434 – 1550) whoever named as ancient Baul or Baul guru his life has not passed sixteenth century. Therefore, we can definitely confirm that in the sixteen century Baulism arose in Bengal. Another big evidence for this opinion is that before the emergence of Gaudiya Vaishnava doctrine in Bengal, there is was no such doctrine like Oul, Baul, Kortavhaja, Shai, Nera, Fakir and Jigir. After the establishment of Islam in Bengal and after the establishment of Sufi asthana in the center of the country there created an Islamic circumstance under the influence of Sufi in general, leading to the emergence of "Vab Jagaran" in Bengal; its first fruit was the Gaudiya Vaishnava doctrine. In the sixteen century due to the Islamic circumstance and also by the influence of Vaisnav and Sufi there developed the 'Marmamukhi Chitta' inside the illiterate classes which is known as 'Baul Mat'.<sup>25</sup>

These Bauls are either protestors, they give more importance to human conduct rather than scripture and *lokachar*. They perform spiritual pursuits of physiology and express their curiosity about body, life, human guru, soul, religion, and humanity. It will be around 400 years in time when bauls life started. Muhammad Mansuruddin has said that 'Baul' evolved in West Bengal by white washing the Vaishnav structure, 'Fakir' devolved in East Bengal by

---

<sup>24</sup> Sudhir Chakraborty ed., *Banglar Baul Fakir*, p. 363

<sup>25</sup> Mahammad Enamul Hoque, *Bange Sufi Prabhab*, Volume 1, p. 161

shedding colour on the Islam structure. Bases are Fakir in East Bengal. Baul in West Bengal are an heir of spiritual Miraj. We come to know from Siraj Sai's statement that Bauls were the people of limited demand, when Siraj got Lalon he thought that he did not have any sorrow for the departure from the world. All of his accomplishment he taught Lalon and said 'I go now, from today onwards you are a Baul, from now the street and the 'parnakutir' are your family.'<sup>26</sup> Upendranath Bhattacharya wrote the famous epic book regarding Baul. In his book "Baul and Baul Songs of Bengal" he compiled 680 Baul songs and explained its meaning. Some renowned Baul singers, except Lalon Fakir whose songs were compiled are Padmalochan, Fatik Gosai, Jadu Bindu, Chandi Gosai, Rasik Radhashyam, Panchu Saha, Hawre Gosai, Gosai Gopal, Erfan Saha, Ananta Gosai, Madan Bul and Duddu Saha.<sup>27</sup>

The point of note is that the conservative Gaudiya Vaishnav did not like the Bauls. They did not support Bauls' practical behaviourism. Although the sub-community of the Bauls named Chintamani, respect Rup Kabiraj, practical commentator of *parakiya* theory, as guru, yet Gaudiya Vaishnava society casted him out of the society. Gaudiya Vaishnava society even Brahmins were in different about the Bauls. Matilal Sanyal (Howre Gosai), Rajkrishna (Raj khapa) were Brahmins yet they remained untouchable in Brahmin society as they were Baul Guru. The Brahmins did not recognize the religious practice of Oul, Baul, Sahajitya Aghariya, in some ways. However, modest Baul songs were composed by Kumar Kholi's eminent journalist and 'Buddhijibi' Harinam Majumdar (pseudonym Kangal Hairnam, Kangal Fikir Chand Fakir). He heard the songs of Lalon Fakir sitting in his own house. Prafulla Chandra Gangopadhyay was the famous singer and composer of Fakir Chand's group. One of his famous songs is

হরি দিন তো গেল, সন্ধ্যা হল, পার কর আমারে  
তুমি পারের কর্তা, শুনে বার্তা, ডাকছি হে তোমারে।<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Sudhir Chakraborty ed., *Banglar Boul Fakir*, p. 207

<sup>27</sup> Sudhir Chakraborty ed., *Banglar Boul Fakir*, p. 81

<sup>28</sup> Durgadas Lahiri ed., *Bangalir Gan*, Kolkata, 1312, pp. 858-859

Lalan Fakir knew about Kabir “সব লোকে কয় লালন কি জাত সংসারে” this is his famous song till now. Specially Lalan wants to know the unconditioned god. Baul’s *maner manus* has no meditative form or idolatry theory for this reason, the impact of the ‘nirgun’ theory of saints is seen here. It is also said that the ‘Nirgun’ theory of saints has been Vaisnavian by Bauls to some extent to determine their nature. For the unscriptural baul songs are their own resources which describes their devotional life. Their nickname differs from region to region. In the Muslim majority of East Bengal (now Bangladesh) they are known as “Fakir” and their songs are known as ‘Fakiri’ songs or ‘Marfati’ songs or ‘Murshida’ songs. Their songs are called *sabdagan* some where in North Bengal, the songs are some times called the song of “Dehatta”. They are known as ‘Baul’ in West Bengal and their songs are called ‘Baul song’. The information which Manas Ray gives in his “The Bauls of Birbhum” is that

Bagdi- 19.64%

Brahmin- 2.68%

Dome- 17.85%

Gandhabonik- 6.25%

Hari – 21.43%

Kayastha – 2.68%

Muchi – 24.11%

Sadgope – 5.36%<sup>29</sup>

Scholar Sudhir Chakraborty wrote about fifty years ago that a novelist of Rarh Bengal initiated his novel in such a way that ‘from Jaydeb’s Kendulin West to the meeting point of Ajay and Ganga at Kalna *kanu bine geetnai*’. Vaishnava’s country is an ancient country. The people of Vaishnava community wore ‘tilak’ on their forehead and also wore ‘tulasi mala’ around their neck. Even today they wear ‘tilak’ and ‘tulasi mala’. ‘Sadgope’ is the chief in the village of farmer. Other races of ‘nabashakha’ are also present there. Everyone wear garland and ‘tilak’, they put their hand together first and then talk. They address to ‘pravu’ Beggars

---

<sup>29</sup> Manas Roy, *The Baul of Birbhum*, Calcutta, 1994, pp. XIII-XV

beg using the works 'Radha Krishna'. Vaishnavas take 'Khol' and 'Karatal'. Vaishnavas and Vaishnavissing using 'Ektara' and 'Khanjani'. Bauls come alone with 'Ektara'.<sup>30</sup> Most of the Bauls claim that they are Vaishnavas. From 'Roop Rag' Bauls reach the 'Emotion'. Clean conduct of the Bauls makes them Vaishnavas.

The word 'Baul Bostam' is so popular that they are not considered separate. A Baul's accomplished companion is always called Bostomi or Vaishnavi. The phrase 'Baul Fakir' is also very popular like the phrase 'Aul Baul'. If we do not go to the debate whether Lalan is a Baul or Fakir, we will see the song of lyricist Dudu Shah from Lalan songs. There we find that Baul and Vaishnav are different.

বাউল বৈষ্ণব ধর্ম এক নহে ভাই-

বাউল ধর্মের সাথে বৈষ্ণবের যোগ নাই।

বিশেষ সম্প্রদায় বৈষ্ণব

পঞ্চতত্ত্বে করে জপ তপ

তুলসী মালা-অনুষ্ঠান সদাই।

বাউল মানুষ ভজে

যেখানে নিত্য বিরাজে

বস্তুর অমৃত মজে

নারী সঙ্গী তাই।

The difference between the Vaishnav who wear garland and tilak and the 'Manushvaja' Bauls is that the Bauls are mainly materialist. Dudu Shah said that Shree Chaitanya of Nadia in spite of taking initiation of 'Shaktimantra' from Keshab Varatiwent to Ramananda to inquire about materialistic Bauls, thus, Baul Vaishnavas took to Baul religion.

গিয়া রামানন্দের কাছে

বাউল ধর্মের তত্ত্ব পোছে

---

<sup>30</sup> Sudhir Chakraborty ed., *Banglar Baul Fakir*, Atma pakkha, p. 9.

তবে তো মানুষ ভজে পরমতত্ত্ব পায়।

সেই তত্ত্ব ভাই অবশেষে

বৈষ্ণবেরা নেয়।।

There are emotional tendency among Bengali people regarding bauls. After the death of Lalan Shah in 1890. Two groups become active in favour of and against Baul. The educated upper class people of Calcutta, especially in the endeavour of Thakurbari and with Rabindranath's personal initiative the songs of Lalan and its motivations were circulated in the printed form. Various initiatives are seen in the collection and compilation of baul songs. Even some amateur baul groups are grown up. But the nineteenth century scholars also made strong remarks about the behavior of these bauls, such as Akshay Kumar Dutta wrote about Baul in his 'Varatbarsiya Upasok Sampradai' that 'they do not kill man but when they got corpses they eat.' Pandit Jagendranath Bhattacharya writes that a Baul is a mad man: a class of beggars who pretend to be mad on account of religious fervor, and try to uphold their pretention by their fantastic dress, dirty habits, and queer philosophy of their songs. The second reason which have made many people curious about Bauls is 'Charichondraved' which is eating of latrine, urine, roj and sperm. Not only the Bauls but also many kayabadi devotees practice 'duichand' (latrine and urine) and 'char chand chand'. That is why Sudhir Chakraborty has commented about Baul as 'Mut Kheko'.<sup>31</sup> It is said in the text of 'Baulder Jouno Jiban and Janmo niyantran' which is published in *Ganaswasthya* magazine (Baisakh-Jaistha1391) that it is true that there are 'two types of *chetak* antigen in human body which is not under the immunological system. These two are tears and sperm. Tears and sperm can produce special antibody by mixing with blood. Perhaps a sperm eater man can produce antibodies in the body through his own sperm and sperm production certainly be less. That is why the number of children of Bauls is very few. But remember women do not drink this sperm.' Although their pursuit was such the meaning of baul song was deep. After hearing few Baul songs with the help of Khitimohan Sen, Rabindranath told Khitimohan that 'we do

---

<sup>31</sup> Sudhir Chakraborty ed., *Banglar Baul Fakir*, Atmapakkha, p.16.

not have the power to express such a simple, deep and reality in few words. I feel jealous to see their writings'. In the nineteenth century, a number of Baul or Baul groups known as 'Sakher Baul', wrote a lot of songs and used to sing those songs. The best example of this is *kangal* Harinath or Fakir Chand's songs. Despite not being a Baul he wrote the best Baul songs which enriched the Baul songs of Bengal. Baul songs remind us that mundane tie is not permanent, we come alone and go alone, in the midst of 'Dudiner ei duniyadari', we are actually a moment's guest of the world called 'Panthasala', the main point of Vaishnav is also the same, they say 'sab harale Krishna mele' means that "Sri Krishna is the only truth, mundane existence is only 'maya'. It is a spiritual turn, that means a world without God. Baul's songs reveal the ultimate destination through its words.

The presence of couple in Baul songs are almost inevitable. They may be in the form of Radha Krishna, indestructible devotion of Alla-Adam-Mursid is the absolute goal of Baul. Radhakrishna is the best couple in Baul songs. Radha thinks that worshipping Krishna is the best way of worship. Love is the mean to bestow offering to friend. 'Radha Krishnalila' in his way as the identity of Radha remains in 'Krishna preme' in the same way the identity of Krishna also remains in 'Radha preme'; the way of 'Radhavabik' Baul is also one. To catch the man of his mind, Baul also took the path of one to leave the path of two. Unity from duality and duality to unity is the philosophy of Baul. Baul must be a lover to ride the boat of devotion. If he is a lover he can keep under control his fascination. A lover can control his fascination. If you control your fascination you can be temperate. But the question arises here is that is this religion just for the Bauls? It cannot be said in the answer that, besides Baul there are many people in our society who can control their fascination with their own conscience and become restrain people. Ramkrishna Paramhansadev said that 'Vivek Vairagya'. Scripture forbidden us to fall in the grip of 'Indriya Shakti', 'Shada Ripu', and 'Kam'. In this place scripture and Baul are almost equitable. Believer of love forever, Bauls are always crazy to love Krishna, Radha always prevail in his heart, his heart is always immersed in the melodious rhythm, that is why they sing,

রসে ভাসিল রে বৃন্দাবন আজ প্রেম রসে ভাসিলো রে

রাই কানুর যুগল মিলন হইলো রে।।

কাঞ্চা সোনা রাইকিশোরী ভুবনও আলো করি

রাই রূপে কালা রূপ ছাপিলো রে।

পুষ্প মালা গলে দোলে কানুর চূড়া বামে হিলে

হিলে চূড়া রাইচরণের আশে রে।<sup>32</sup>

For whom 'Kalarchura' bent his head or whose love make Krishna expecting her feet. She can not be an ordinary woman. Baul does not have the strength to ignore her. But Radha has no historical significance like Krishna. There are no references of Radha in Veda-Vedanta-Ramayana- Mahavharata. Even though we get reference of Radha in puran yet not from all Purans. We only get indistinct references of Radha in Puran. Baul's Radha has been created outside the classical boundaries. The imaginative Radha of Baul is different from the scripture. The main theme of the Vaishnava religion is 'Prem Mantra' promoted by Sri Chaitanyadev. The Vaisnavainfluence on human society, the universal love, which expresses in numerous songs and verses, adorable by Baul heartily, there by Radha is created in baul's own imagination.

According to Baul those who can get into the water with 'Vaktijal' get Bramha. 'Bhaktijal' is the only *jaal* to catch 'dharma mach'. But if he falls in bad company he does not get any fish, his effort of catching fish becomes futile. That is why Baul sang

আমি পড়লাম ফাঁকে, মায়া-পাকে বল-বুদ্ধি চুলোয় গেলো।।

কু-সঙ্গে বিল গাবালাম,

কুক্ষনে জল নাবালাম,

ক্ষমা-খালুই হারালাম,

উপায় কি করি বলো।।

---

<sup>32</sup> Sudhir Chakraborty ed., *Banglar Baul Fakir*, p. 167

আমি বিল ঘুনে পাই চাঁদা পুঁটি লোভ-চিলে লুটে নিল।<sup>33</sup>

Like ideal Vaishnavbaults also follow devotional path. They are indifferent in their own pursuit for getting ‘aakul-e-kul’ Dipankar Ghosh mentioned such a handbill which was preached on the occasion of ‘Sadhu Mela’ at Panchlokee in Burdwan. It was written that

উদাস বাউল চলছে সদা

না জানে কোথা শেষ।

শ্বশত স্রোতে ভেসে বেড়ায়

নাই দুঃখ সুখ ক্লেশ।।

কী যেন কি খুজে বেড়ায়

বুঝি না তার মূল।

আকুলে কূল পাবার লাগি

হয়েছে বাউল।।

Mohammed Mansuruddin said while discussing the similarity of spirituality between Baul and Vaishnava has mentioned that the base of a Fakir is in East Bengal, while in West Bengal Baul is an heir of spiritual Miras’. Baul is not a community, not a special profession; Baul is a life experiment, a philosophy a devotional way. But it is also worth mentioning that all the song composed or sung by Bauls are not physiological or devotional. They sing a lot of songs to entertain people. But Bauls love to keep secret their devotional life because their guru’s instructions are that they must keep their life secret. For example, if they go in the right side then they say left.

In an indrawn and soulful song Bauls wanted to say that

আমার যেমন বেনী তেমনি রবে চুল ভেজাব না

রাঙ্কিব বাড়ির ব্যঞ্জন করিব তবু হাঁড়ি ছোঁবনা।।

---

<sup>33</sup> Mahammad Abdul Hai and Ahamed Sarif eds., *Jadu Bindu Gonsai*, Madhya Juger Baul Giti Kabita, p.68



হবো না সতী হবো না অসতী তবু পতি ছাড়বো না।

When people hear this song they think that it is a fun song, actually they do not understand its meaning. The original meaning of this song is ‘I can stay with family but don't tie with the familiar bond’. Another song like this where it was said that

আমি দালান কোঠা ত্যাজ্য করি গাছতলা করেছি সার

গৌর গলে ও ঝলমল চাঁদের ইহার

কুল কলঙ্কের ভয় কি আছে আর।

or,

ধুতি চাদর ত্যাজ্য করি ডোরকৌপিন করেছি সার।

This song means that the person is not completely naked but it moved the needs to a minimum place. He does not leave the building to live in field but stay under the tree, he use *dorkopin*, which is a kind of dress to prevent shame instead of *dhoti chadar*. Through this way Baul and Vaishnava community came out from affection. To give a nobility to precaution they try to promote Radhakrishna's Yugabat Chaitannya as an inventor of ideology. Those who maintained tantra pursuit and Buddha pursuit to take shelter in Vaishnava are known as *Sahajia Vaishnav* or *Rasik Vaishnav*. After Chaitannya's period two communities came out in the society. Aul chand is the founder of a branch, and another branch is founded by Madhab Bibi. The expansion of this branch was done by Birbhadra and its name was ‘baul’ given by the common people. By the effect of Hindus, Shiv-Shivani, Maya-Brahma, and Bishnu-Laxmi were used as the symbol of male's nature. The meeting field that they created with threw out various type of songs and brought together a common terminology of supreme spirit to give a successful and permanent place. When we referred the supreme spirit of a human body as a ‘Man’ then why we cannot address the supreme spirit as a ‘Man’? Bauls are leaning of vedic or brahmical conduct, support coitus phildering

and Raganuga pursuit, Siva sakti, Radhakrishna and purusprakriti theory, Sufi theory and various pupils theory were established that's why there are many contradictions. But I think that the effect on baul was maximum by Vaishnav opinion (*Chaitannya Charitamrita*). From the beginning 'boat' occupied an important place in Bengali poems. Even 'boat' comparasions are used as metaphors in baul songs. By using *sadhak* gurus name it was said to leave the 'dehatari' in baul again and again. tire, stand, oar, sail, etc. were used as metaphors. In the following lines the baul saint want to know from his guru that

গুরু কও শুনি সারাৎ সার  
কোন কামনায় বানাইছে ঘর এমন চমৎকার।  
বানাইয়া রংমাহল ঘর  
সেই ঘরেতে আছে রে মন ও তোর ঘরের কারীগর।  
হাডের খুনি চামড়ার ছানি জুং গাঁধনি কি সুন্দর।  
আট কুঠুরি নয় দরজা হয়,  
আঠারো মোকামের মানুষ আঠারোজন রয়,  
রবি শশী দুইটি বাতি জ্বলছে নিরন্তর।।  
দ্বারে দ্বারে আছে প্রহরী  
আদালত ফৌজদারি কোর্ট সদর কাছারি  
ও তার প্রধান কর্মচারী জ্ঞান চৌধুরী বিচারের ভার তার উপর।<sup>34</sup>

Baul community preferred Chaitannyadeva as their original teacher on the way of pursuit. After his appearances 'Nadia' changed in Golden Nadia. Train, bus, teacher, driver etc. metaphors are used as enjoyable in this kind of baul songs.

এলোরে চৈতন্যের গাড়ি সোনার নদীয়ায়।  
রাই কোম্পানীর জংশন হল শ্রীবাসের আঙ্গিনায়।।

---

<sup>34</sup> Sudhir Chakroborty ed., *Banglar Baul Fakir*, p. 203

শ্রীচৈতন্য ইঞ্জিনিয়ার নিত্যানন্দ টিকিট মাস্টার,

শ্রীগৌরাঙ্গ হয়ে ড্রাইভার সেই গাড়ি চালায়।।

Baul sang various social circumstances related song beside physiology. A Baul four chandrika ‘একবার এসো দিনমনি’ is sang with the tune of jhumur and created like the song ‘একবার বিদায় দে মা ঘুরে আসি’।

It is not surely known whether the founder of this song Pitambar Das was a Baul or not but this song of his touched the heart of people because he gave it an earthen tune. Though Baul has no relation with social duties and family, but he can't refuse the relation with the earth, that's why a regionalism manifest in their song. Various tunes are used in the framework of Baul songs in different regions. *Jhumur*, *vatiyali*, *vauya* are the three regional tunes which are mainly used in Baul songs but the impact of *jhumur* and *vatiyali* is more. ‘Is Baul a folk song?’ a question comes after analyzing Baul's language, tune, expression, and vision. It cannot be said that baul is a folk song because the mind of baul singer is not like the folk singer. Moreover, Baul song does not originate from the folk society, it is a song of the saint community who left the society. On the other hand, folk song is a song of the folk society. Though baul is not a folk song there is no decline of greatness of Baul, because it exit in it's own position as a pursuit song. Lowborn bauls are the poorest of the poor. In Silsidaha, Koya, Kaloya, Jahedpur, Kumarkhali, Khoksathere there were a huge number of Vaishnava bauls in the past and even in the present. Hindu lower caste people like *jholanikeri*, *kulu*, carpenter, cobbler, barber, were the main followers of Gonsai Gopal as a legacy they were poor and help less. Baul culture of Bengal have survived because Lalan Fakir is the center of it, the lalon tomb at Cheloroia Mazar is the holy pilgrim of all Bauls. But the promotion and expansion, even the way of worship was not easy. Scriptural Hindu and Shariat Muslims insulted, hated, and injustice with bauls. Hindus treated them like outcast, falled, investigative and Muslim marked them as *besra*, *bedati*, and *nararfakir*. Bishads Shindu, the renowned Mir Masraf Hussian said about baul with a hate tune that these are devils,

disbeliever unfaithful/ do you know that? (Sangeet lahari). The author of *Nadia Kahini* said that the main purpose of baul pursuit is to gratify *kamripu*. It should be mentioned here that in 1889 when the famous poet Pagla Kanai died they obstructed the funeral of his body and as 'besra fakir'.<sup>35</sup> Rabindranath Tagore wrote a poem on the first page of novel *Gora* that

খাঁচার ভিতর অচিন পাখি কেমনে আসে যায়,  
ধরতে পারলে মনো বেড়ি দিতেম পাখির পায়।<sup>36</sup>

In common mind a question may arise that which type of cage this is where birds can come inside and can go outside. Is there no door? How is this bird which is not created its shelter? Who made the cage? It is not easy to answer these questions, because it is the language of the baul. In the play, "Dakghar" it is shown that the character of grandfather came as *fakir* and gave a description of free world to the main character of the play Amal. A question may arise that why a *fakir* instead of other people? Actually *fakir* is an itinerant person, thus, the grandfather played the role of a fakir to describe the outer world to house kept Amal. The prewritten song was created by Lalan Fakir, it means he is also a *fakir*. World baul community accept him as their 'Guru'. Akshay Kumar Dutta wrote regarding this baul that it is heard that this community have a habit to eat the human flesh and wearing clothes of dead bodies.<sup>37</sup> In the treatise *Banglar Baul and Baul Gaan* Upendranath Bhattachariya said similar as Akshay Kumar Dutta escaped the word 'it is heard', as Sudhir Chakroborty opinions it was not right. When the common people of society thought that the worship of baul is a way to temple along the methara's way. The same is also thought by Ramakrishna.<sup>38</sup> During this time a news is published that Lalan Fakir was no more who was a supreme spirit of the baul. This news was published in 'Hitakari' magazine on 31st October in 1890. The author of this magazine Raicharan Das wrote that He (Lalon) was well developed in religious life.

---

<sup>35</sup> Abdul Ahasan Chowdhury, *Bangla Desher Baulder Chalachitra*. p. 72

<sup>36</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Gora*, Sahityam, p. 5

<sup>37</sup> Akshay Kumar Maitra, *Bharatbarshiya Upashak Sampraday*, p. 233.

<sup>38</sup> Sri M., *Shri Ramkrishna Kathamrita*, Kolkata: 1387, Reprint- 1980, p. 134.

He was not educated but it can be said that he was a scholar, after listing his songs. After opening his inner eyes he gained all of the religious theories. He became the nearest for all religions.<sup>39</sup> The point not view is the specialities by which Ramakrishna attracted a large number of middle class people those specialties which Lalonsohad. Harinath Majumdar, Mir Musaraf Hussain, Jaladhar Sen, Akshay Kumar Maitra, Raicharan Das are some intellectuals of Bengal who accumulated the news of baul community. An uproar was seen after the appearance of uncultured but scholar Lalan like this it was also seen after the appearance of Sri Ramkrishna, a priest of Dakhineswar. Both is field were remarkable by Brahma wise people. Sri Ramkrishna was established by Keshab Chandra Sen in society like this Lalan Shah was well established in Bengali's cultural heritage by Jorasanko's Tagore family.<sup>40</sup> It may be emphasized in this context that without exploration and auspices of Tagore family mainly by Rabindranath Tagore, Lalandid not get popularity only with the help of middle class intellectuals. The publicity originated from Tagore's family gave the eternity to baulgaan and Lalan mainly. Sub sequently, the main reason behind the creation of a new genre baul was the people of this time who started showing more interest to the songs not to the bauls.

At the end of the nineteenth century the students, working at Harinath Majumdar's *Gramabarta Patrika* and devoted Brahma Harinath Majumdar were singing baulgaan on the street of villages daily in the evening with taking the name Group of Fakirchand, besides writing baul gaan. It is also known from Jaladhar Sen's autobiography that Baul and Fakir competed each other in various competition. The success of Fakirchand team gave birth tovarious groups of baulgaan like Gareebchand, Ajabchand, and Rashikchand. The attraction of baulgaan gave Rabindranath the title 'Rabi baul'. In an essay published in the *Journal of Asian Studies* Edward C. Dimock said that 'Rabindranath Tagore is the Greatest Baul of Bengal'. But various equalizations like 'Rabi Baul', 'Rabi Vaishnav', 'Rabi Tantrik' related

---

<sup>39</sup> Abdul Hasan Chowdhury, *Lalan Sah*. Dhaka: 1399, pp. 116-119

<sup>40</sup> Sudhir Chakroborty, ed., *Banglar Baul Fakir*, Kolkata: p.75

with Rabindranath compared as seeing elephant by a blind by many. Ultra conservative Gaudiya Vaishnav critic Sundarananda Vidya Binod compared Rabindranath as sitting a fly on stool. It is proved after Sudhir Chakrobortyspeech that though there is a conflict about ‘Rabi Vaishnav’ or ‘Rabi Baul’ but baul song give an emphasis on Bengali music world. He wrote that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not a golden period for baul song (baulganerbikas o samirdhirkal). After broken the 800 years geet *padabalis* traditional tune Bengali poems getting into the shape with effort of Gupta- Rangalal- Hemchandra- Madhusudan. Maximum of their model in poetry came from abroad, subjects are influenced by western in many times. But Bengalis’ own song cannot be measured in western determination. So the Bengali regular songs were in four forms: *kabigaan*, *tappa*, *kalikirtan* and *ramprasadi* and *baul*. Among them *kalikirtan* and *ramprasadi* are more religious. *Tappais* a romantic song, *kabigaan* is on Radhakrishna’s love scandal. Only baul song was self centric and the medium of man’s need. Baul is a particular community and baul song is the main song of religious pursuit. In popular baul song ‘আমার যেমন বেণী তেমনি রবে চুল ভিজাব না’ has the secret of baul pursuit. They want to feel this secret sometime indirectly and sometime by metaphor or symbol. Baul community obeys their communal instruction.

আপন ভজন কথা, না কহিবে যথা তথা

আপনাতে আপনি হইবে সাবধান।

For this reason they do not talk about their pursuit anywhere. Chatanyadev a said about percelling of love that’s why his followers of baul community are also followers of love their love is man concentric. They don’t think about any energy without man. Their searching is in the man’s mind. According to them, supreme Radhakrishna lies in the human body. So there is no need of searching this spirit elsewhere. For this reason they sang,

কারে বলব কে করবে বা প্রত্যয়,

আছে এই মানুষের সত্য নিত্য চিদানন্দময়।

As in the Vaishnavacommunity there is no religious differentiation in the baul community. Vaishnava community is the only community where Haridas is worshipped as a pure Vaishnava though he was a Muslim. There is no conflict between Hindus and Muslims that affection can found in baul pursuit. Rabindranath's comment about this is convincing. He said the people who established themselves as educated tried to establish a relation between Hindus and Musalmans for their self need. They are educated from foreign historic school. Now the history of our country is not for but it carrying the deepest truth of man. In baul literature we can see the baul community's worshipping both Hindus and Muslims. They meet but donot wound any one. No sabha samiti is set up by this meeting, but onlya song. Language and tune of this song is succulent. Voice of Hindus and Muslims meet up here, no quarrel happen between Quran and Puran. This meeting is the real face of India. The light of school and college in modern civilization is from deepest mind of villages of Bengal. Baul community represents the original voice of the Bengal village.<sup>41</sup> The success of Vaishnava as a religion, baul community, and baulgaan is proved through it.

---

<sup>41</sup> Sudhir Chakraborty ed., '*Baul Gaan Bisaye Rabinrabhasya*' Banglar Baul Fakir, Kolkata: pp. 354-355

### 3.4 Kirtan of Bengal and Bangalees

Though Chaitanyadev was the pioneer of Bhakti Movement in Bengal, the history of Vaishnava religion in Bengal is very ancient. Eighth century idols of Krishna and Gopi in pair is seen at Paharpur temple in the Rajshahi district of Bangladesh, and the tenth and eleventh centuries old idol of Krishna playing flute present on the wall of Sareshwar temple of Deharprove the ancient practice of Vaishnavism in Bengal; also, some sacred images found in the fifteenth century bear evidence of this fact. In this context two 'patchitra' is worth mentioning: one is about 'Krishna's *gasto leela* and the other is about *das abatar*. This picture is found in Bishnupur (Bankura) and was painted in 1499.<sup>42</sup>

Before Chaitanyadev, Vaishnava devotee Madhabendra Puri started to promote devotion. Two main disciples of Madhabendra Puri were Advaita Acharya and the inductor of Chaitanyadev, Iswarpuri. Advaita Acharya was the head of the Vaishnava group that grew up in Nabadwip. This group is the original organization of Chaitanyadev in Nabadwip. Advaita Acharya was not only the head of Nabadwip but also the head of the Vaishnava group that developed in Shantipur. Sribas pandit and his three brothers Sriram, Sripati and Srinidhi, along with Mukunda Dutta, Gopinath Acharya, Gadadhar Pandit, Sriman pandit, Sadashib pandit, Suklambar Brahmachari, and Murari Gupta devotees belong to the pre Chaitanya Vaishnava group of Nabadwip. It is found in the writings of Vrindaban Das that they regularly sung *kirtan*. It is found in Vrindaban Das's *Chaitanya Bhagavat* that seeing the songs and dance of this Vaishnava group, people used to say

উদ্ভতের প্রায় নৃত্য ও কোন ব্যাভার।

That is, pre Chaitanya Vaishnava group used to sing Krishna songs loudly in Nabadwip, it was common among people and is universally recognized. That is why we see that kirtan song was sung on the occasions of lunar eclipse and Chaitanyadev's birthday. But the biographers of Chaitanyadev claimed that Chaitanyadev was the originator of *kirtan*. The first

---

<sup>42</sup> Hitesh Ranjan Sanyal, *Bangala Kirtaner Itihas*, Kolkata: K. P. Bagchi, 2012, p. 17.



Bengali biographer of Chaitanyadev, Brindaban Das entitled Chaitanyadev and Nityananda as ‘sankirtan pitarou’ in Mangalcharan of his book “Chaitanya Bhagbat”. Krishnadas Kabiraj wrote in his book *Chaitanya Charitamrita* that Sri krishnachaitanya is the pioneer of ‘sankirtan’. Lochan Das also mentioned about it in his book *Chaitanyamangal*, here he said about Chaitanyadev that “সংকীৰ্ত্তন দাতা গৌৰহরি” (2/1/11). The influence and significance of *kirtan* achieved its result as a way of worship by Chaitanyadev’s influence and that is why his biographers called Chaitanyadev the pioneer of *kirtan*. The eight ‘sloka’ which are considered as Chaitanyadev’s composition and which are found in absolute Vaishnava Rup Goswami’s compilation of *Padabali* are known as *shikkastok*. The first ‘sloka’ is about the ‘namsankirtan’. This ‘sloka’ has been explained by Brindaban Das in *Chaitanya Bhagabat* in this way

কলি যুগে ধৰ্ম হয় হরি সকীৰ্ত্তন।  
 এতদৰ্থে অবতীৰ্ণ শ্ৰী শচীনন্দন।  
 এই কহে ভাগবত সৰ্বতত্ত্ব সার।  
 কীৰ্ত্তন নিমিত্ত গৌৰচন্দ্ৰ অবতার। (চৈ.ভা.১/২)

Again Lochan Das uttered through Chaitanya Dev in his *Chaitanyamangal* that

সৰ্ব ধৰ্মসার এই সকীৰ্ত্তন ধৰ্ম।  
 বিশেষ জানিবে কলিযুগে এই কৰ্ম।।  
 পঞ্চম সে বেদ হইতে প্রকাশ ইহর।।  
 শিব তেঁই পঞ্চমুখে গায় আনিবার।।  
 -----  
 সৰ্বপাপ মুক্ত হৈয়া সব জন নাচে।  
 সালোক্যদি মুক্তি তার ফিৰে পাছে পাছে।।  
 যে যজ্ঞ বেড়িয়া রহে বৈষ্ণব আচার্য্য।

৩৮)

Most of the people whose names are found as Chaitanyadev's companions are from upper class of the society.<sup>43</sup> However, those who followed his religious path were mostly from lower classes. Seeing the gathering of lower class people in *kirtan* preached by Chaitanyadev, the orthodox religious people became very anxious. And the reasons of their fear has been presented by Krishnadas Kabiraj Goswami in his *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, in this way

কৃষ্ণের কীর্ত্তন করে চন্ডাল বার বার।

এই পাপে গ্রাম সব হইব উজাড়।।

Now the question is what is the glory of *kirtan* that thousand of people become fascinated with *kirtan*? And why religious scripture believed people became anxious about it? In order to know the answer, we must look at the meaning of *kirtan*. In *Bhaktirasamrita Sindhu*, Sri Rup Goswami defines *kirtan* in the following line,

নামগুন লীলা দীনা মুছেইৰাষা তু কীর্ত্তনং

Again Sri Jib Goswami said in *Bhaktisandarva* that

‘কালৌ যদ্য পান্যা ভক্তিঃক্রিয়াতে সা কীর্ত্তনাখ্যা ভক্তি সংযোগে নৈব।’

For true Vaishnava devotees ‘Leela Kirtan’ is not musical but spiritual. This is the way of devotion. According to *Gaudiya Vaishnava*, scripture listening and concentrating on *leelakirtan* is the way of devotion. According to Khagendranath Mitra, *kirtanis* not only a song, *kirtan* is amelodious ecstasy, the tune of *kirtan* is not intended for musical development only. *Kirtan* is an agglomeration of melody, poetry and religion. None of this can be ignored. The application of melody fills with great joy. Mind will be fascinated by the poetic ornamentation and its words. In the inspiration of religion, the tears, imagination, and

<sup>43</sup>Biman Bihari Majumder, *Sri Chaitanya Chariter Upadan*, Kolikata:, 1959, p. 567.

attraction will arise in the heart, this is the intention of *kirtan* music.<sup>44</sup>It is not that the scriptures of different religions do not speak about *kirtan* but Chaitanyadev was the founder of that *kirtan* which gathers people from all classes and which is sung with dance and instruments. The phrase ‘pad’ in the word *padabali* means ‘music’.In this country,Jaydeb was the first poet who gave us the song of ‘Radha Krishna Leela’ in the form of a complete poetry. The name of the poetry is *Geet Gobinda* and many critics of nineteenth and twentieth centuries have made their own statement about this poetry. Vidyasagar said about *Geet Gobinda* that its stylistic stepping, auditory sweetness of alliteration and the ‘prasadgun’ has never been seen anywhere.<sup>45</sup>

Baru Chandidas was the first poet who composed fulllength poetry of ‘Radha Krishna Leela’ in bengali language. Speaking about his poetry, Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyya said at the beginning of ‘Srikrishna Kirtan’ thatthe book of ‘Srikrishna Kirtan’ was found in the cattle house of an unknown village (Mukharjee family of Kankila village) of Bankura district. It remained in negligence with other scriptures for many years until its discovery. Fortunately this priceless gem is found by Basanta babu and understanding its importance he got it published from Bangiya Sahitya Parisad in 1916. It stirred up the Bengali literature. The poet takes the element from ancient scriptures and sanskrit and also very carefully presents various subjects which are common in the society.Both the background and tendency of his poetry are rural.The main difference between Joydeb’s *Geet Gobinda* and *Sri Krishna kirtan* is that it tells more about human beings in the guise of god. *Sri Krishna kirtan* is divided into thirteen sections, such as ‘janma’, ‘tambul’, ‘dan’, ‘nouka’, ‘var’, ‘chatra’, ‘brindaban’, ‘kaliya daman’, ‘yumuna’, ‘har’, ‘ban’, ‘bansi’.At the end of the twelve sections ‘Radha Biraha’ was not recognized as a part. Among these the tune of lyrical verse was found in ‘Bansi’.We find Sriradha’s anxiety enchanted by flute in ‘*kenabansiba e baraye*’, a well known *pada* of *Sri Krishna Kirtan*. In order to explain this *pada*, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi

---

<sup>44</sup> Khagendranath Mitra, *Kirtan*, Kollkata Viswavidyalaya Sangraha, Visva Bharati,1352 (1945) Bangabda, p. 65

<sup>45</sup> Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, *Bidyasagar Rachana Sangraha* (Sanskrit bhasa and Sanskrit sahitya Sastra bisayak prastab), Kolikata:Vidyasagar Smarak Jatiya Samiti, p. 112

saidon the bank of Kalindi river, in the field of Gokul the ceaseless flute sound which is continued there attracts the universe towards the sphere. Baru Chandidas gave a taste of the echoing sound of flute to the Bengali people and in this echoing sound, theology and scriptures were merged.<sup>46</sup>

*Kirtaniy* as performed *kirtan* by making the different part of *Sri Krishna Kirtan* as *pala*. But with the arrival of Chaitanyadev many changes occurred both in types and thoughts of *padabali* literature. Now many *padas* are composed about the premonk life and the monk life of Chaitanyadev instead of ‘Radha-Krishna Leela’. The pre Chaitanya *pada* writers did not compose *padabali* from the point of view of any particular religious philosophy. They presented in their *padabali* the mixture of love story of men and women and the devotion of the devotees. But as a result of influence and advise of Chaitanyadev the composition of *padabali* was controlled by the new Vaishnava philosophy and its ornamental literature. As a result, the earlier *Vaishnava Padabali* has now become *Gaudiya Vaishnava Padabali*. The tradition of singing ‘Gourachandrika’ was started as the introduction of *kirtan* in Kheturi festival organized by Narattam Thakur in the post Chaitanya era. Basantranjan Babu mentioned that ‘Krishna Leela’ which was sung in the Kheturi annual festival while writing the introduction of *Sri Krishna Kirtan*. The fact was also evident from the “Prembilas” poetry composed by Nityananda Das. It is written in “Prem Bisash” that

বিদ্যাপতি চন্ডীদাসের কৃষ্ণলীলা গানে

যে শুনে হরয়ে তার মন আর প্রাণে।

(প্রেমবিলাস, ১৯ বিলাস)

To point out the similarity of Sri Krishna kirtana padas and jhumur song Basanta Ranjan Babu in the introduction of *Sri Krishna Kirtana* has written “...to notice the fact that 2 or 3

---

<sup>46</sup> Baru Chandidas, *Sri Krishna Kirtan*, ed. by Basanta Ranjan Ray Bidadballav, Nabam Sanskaran, Kolikata: Bangiya Sahitya Parisad, 1380, p. 5

*padas* has similarity with *dhuajhumur* song.<sup>47</sup> And in that *pada* it was written ‘*jhumur* does not mean slang or song of mean people. It has a special place in music. By the influence of Sri Chaitanya in the festival of Kheturi of Narottam Thakur, Gouryachandrika become indispensable at the preface of *Kirtana*. Sixteenth century is called the Golden Age of *Vaishnava Padabali* literature because of the direct influence of Chaitnyadev many ‘Padakarta’ started to write *padavalis*. From 1509, Baisakh Sri Gouranga started ‘sankirtana’ in Nabadeep.<sup>48</sup> Returning from Gaya he becomes so engrossed in the love of Krishna that he left the job of teaching and advised his students to engage themselves in *kirtan*. Attracted by his sweet word many people started visiting Nabadweep.

While Chaitnyadev was staying at Nabadeep, Ramananda Babu, one of his mates, composed both Gourangaleela and Krishnaleela. To describe the situation of Chaitnyadev he has written

হরিনাম করে গান জপে অনুক্ষন  
বুঝিতে না পারে কেহ বিরল লক্ষন।।

In that state Chaitnyadev called his students and said

তোমা সবস্থানে মোর এই পরিহার।  
আজি হইতে আর পাঠ নাহিক আমার।।

-----  
কৃষ্ণের কীর্তন কর পরিপূর্ণ করি।।

When the followers wanted to know the manner of *kirtan*, Chaitnyadev replied

শিষ্যগন বলেন কেমন সকীর্তন।  
আপনে শিখায়ে প্রভু শ্রী শচীনন্দন।।<sup>49</sup>

To teach the followers, Chaitanyadev sung with clapping, and among the followers he sung

হরয়ে নমঃ কৃষ্ণ যাদবায় নমঃ।

<sup>47</sup> Baru Chandidas, *Sri Krishna Kirtan* edited by Basanta Ranjan Ray Bidadbhallav, Nabam Sanskaran, Kolkata: Bangiya Sahitya Parisad, 1380, Bhumika, p. 8

<sup>48</sup> Satya Giri, *Vaishanaba Padabali*, Kolkata: Ratnabali, 2015, p. 43

<sup>49</sup> Brindaban Das, *Sri Sri Chaitanya Bhagbat*, edited by Sri Dilip Mukhopadhyay, Kolkata: Benimadhab Shils Library, 2014, p. 178

## গোপাল গোবিন্দ নাম শ্রীমধুসূদন।।

In the first part of the pada is 'baithaki' song. A few people come in a particular place and listen *pada* song, Narottam Das brought this pada song from the clutches of small meeting song and started to sing it on stage. After that *kirtan* was arranged in an open place where many people can sit and listen. Generally *kirtan* team was made of five members. The main singer is the leader of the team and he is in the middle of the team during performance. On his right side there is 'sirdohar' or 'main dohar' and 'sirbalok', and in the left side there is 'koldohar' and 'kolbadok'. In front of the *kirtan* singer there is garlanded picture of Radha Krishna and Chaitnyadev and a 'tulsimoncha'. Renowned Kirtanias were musician, singer and they regularly discuss about music. Again, dance get priority among Chaitanyadev and his followers in *kirtan*. Though *kirtan* was common in this land before the arrival of Chaitnyadev, but none can deny the fact that his participation and inspiration gave new life to *kirtan*.

For this reason Brindaban Das turned Chaitanya and Nityananda as father of Sankirtan. In 'sankirtan' song we find dance of the followers of Chaitnyadev and in this context it is written in *Chaitnya bhagbad* that

সে প্রভু আপনে নাচে আপনার নামে।

ইহার কি ফল - বা বলিব পুরাণে।।

চতুদিকে শ্রী হরি মঙ্গল সঙ্কীৰ্ত্তন।

মাঝে নাচে জগন্নাথ মিশ্রের নন্দন।

-----

যার নাম শ্রবণে সংসার বন্ধ ঘুচে।

হেন প্রভু অবতরি কলিযুগে নাচে।।

যার নাম লই শুক নারদ বেড়ায়।

সহস্র মহা প্রায়শ্চিত্ত যে প্রভুর নাম।

সে প্রভু নাচয়ে, দেখে যত ভাগ্যবান।<sup>50</sup>

*Kirtan* started almost in every house when Chaitnyadev ordered his followers to transform *kirtan* song from personal worship to collective worship. That is too worthy to mention

নগরিয়া লোকে প্রভু যবে আজ্ঞা দিলা।

ঘরে ঘরে সঙ্কীৰ্ত্তন করিতে লাগিলা।।

When this news reached Kaji, he banned ‘sankirtan’ and as a protest (Chaitnyadev along with his followers went to Kaji’s house in the first man protest against ruler in the history of Bengal as well as of India) he claimed

নগরে নগরে আজি করিব কীৰ্ত্তন।

সঙ্ক্যাকালে কর সবে নগর মন্ডন।।

At the Jagganath temple of Puridham during Rathayatra, Mahaprabhu along with his musical instruments performed *kirtan* before the Ratha, which has been noticed in the nineteenth century Rathayatra of Kolkata. In James Peggs *India’s Cries to British Humanity*, second edition published in 1830 a picture vividly shows self sacrifice before the rath and team of *sankirtana*. Probably, sakta Padabali was written in imitation of Vaishnava *padabali* on it was too sung as *kirtan*. Later, Keshab Chandra Sen started *kirtan* in the Brahma Samaj.

Now, we should observe whether there was any difference among *kirtans* on were those of same type? Generally in Bengal, *kirtans* are of three types,

1. Nam kirtan or Sankirtan
2. Leelakirtan/ Rasakirtan or Palakirtan
3. Suchak Kirtan<sup>51</sup>

Nam Kirtan / Sankirtan is the *kirtan* sung in the name of worshipped god on god like divine great man. The Nam Kirtan which Chaitnyadev used to do is

---

<sup>50</sup> Brindaban Das, *Sri Sri Chaitanya Bhagbat*, edited by Sri Dilip Mukhopadhyay, Kolkata: Benimadhab Shils Library 2014, p. 235

<sup>51</sup> Paresh Chandra Bhattacharya, *Vaishnava Padabali: Udvab and Kramabikash*, Kolkata: Jay Durga Library, 2008, p. 77

হরয়ে নমঃ কৃষ্ণ যাদবায় নমঃ।

গোপাল গোবিন্দ নাম শ্রীমধুসূদন।।

Not only in the 19th century, but Chaitnyadev's *kirtan* has also made its place in present time. I have visited Munsefpur of Burdwan, Cheleyama of Purulia, Panpur of North 24 Parganas and few villages of Birbhum District and found in some villages that there is a continuous *kirtan* performance in eight 'Prahar' for two days or three days or eight days. In all the *kirtan* the *pada* which is sung rhythmically is as follows,

হরে কৃষ্ণ হরে কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ হরে হরে

হরে রাম হরে রাম রাম রাম হরে হরে।।

Many other *padas* are also sung in 'sankirtan'. Here, I will mention two *padas* which I listened during my visit to Chandradaya temple of Mayapur. Those *padas* are

শ্রীকৃষ্ণ চৈতন্য প্রভু নিত্যানন্দ

হরে কৃষ্ণ হরে রাম শ্রী রাধা গোবিন্দ

এবং

ভজ নিতাই গৌর রাধেশ্যাম

জপ হরেকৃষ্ণ হররাম

Various types of musical instruments were used in 'sankirtana', but 'mridangamadira' or 'kholkaratal' were its essential parts. During 'sankirtana' sugarcane stalks are spread on the ground and disciples loot that *Prasad* quickly; this is called *harir loot*. Here is no discrimination among rich and poor or high and low. This system, started by Chaitnyadev, later this reduced the gap among castes.

Leela kirtan/Rasakirtan or Palakirtan: While giving definition of 'leelakirtana' Dhirendranath Mirta said that "choosing various types of *padas*, presenting it with 'akhar' and 'ghatkali' in *kirtan* method with the help of 'dohar' and 'badok' which aesthetic feeling based 'leela' is presented, is called 'leelakirtana'. Vaishnava padakartas have composed *padas* on the 'leela' of Radha-Krishna as well as on Nabadeepleela of Gouranga. When *kirtan* is sung on various



types of 'rasa' that is called 'rasakirtana'. When the 'leela' on story of Radha-Krishna is presented step by step that is called 'Palakirtana'. A few 'leelas' from the birth of Sri Krishna to his journey to Mathura are 'Janmaleela', 'Makkhaleela', 'Danleela', 'SubalMilan', 'Kalahantrita', and 'Kunjabhanga'. Though *kirtan* is an age old tradition, yet Narrotom Das gave it a systematic style. He started the tradition of singing Gouryachandrika before performance of any *leela*. The *pada* of Gourangaleela which singers sing before starting *leelakirtan* of Radha Krishna is called Gouryachandrika. This Gouryachandrika is the key to enter in Krishnaleela.

**Suchak Kirtana:** It describes the virtue of a divine. Person on the occasion of data of birth on passing away if any *kirtan* is organized that is called 'suchakkirtan'. But, use of this *kirtan* is very limited. In various areas of Bangladesh *kirtan* has various traditions; these traditions of song are called 'gharana'. Such five 'gharanas' are as follows:

**Garanhati:** In 1582 Narrotom Das Thakur arranged a Vaishnava meeting at Kheturi village of the district Rajsahi. Renowned Vaishnava Poets and Bhakts gathered in this meeting. In this great festival of Kheturi, Narrotom Das started *Garanhati* tradition of *kirtan*. In this tradition of *kirtan* at first a program of music with mridanga and 'onibondhogitalap' (musical conversation, without dialogue), and then Gouryachandrika and introductory song and at last *leelakirtan* is staged. This tradition is generally followed in *kirtan*.

**MonoharSahi:** The mixed *kirtan* tradition that was introduced in the Monoharsahi pargana of Burdwan district is popular as Monoharsahi tradition. It is said that Monoharsahi tradition has been introduced by Aulia Monohar Das by mixing of that local area. Many people consider Srinibas Achariya as the founder of this tradition.

**Reneti:** This special type of *kirtan* which was introduced by Bipradas Ghosh at Saptagram of Burdwan district is known as 'Reneti'. As it is sung in a soft way many people compare it with 'thungri' tradition. At present this tradition is out dated.

**Mandarani:** The prominent *kirtan* that arises in the Mandarani region of Medinipur district is known as Mandaran genre. The old melody of Rarh which used in the ancient *Mangalkabya* was used in this genre. There is a similarity between folk music and in this ‘Mandarani’ genre. Now the use of this genre is almost extinct.

**Jharkhandi:** The prominent *kirtan* that arises in the Jharkhand region is known as Jharkhandi style. Gokulananda, a resident of Shergarh, is known as the initiative of this genre. Now this style is no longer accepted any where.

Madhusudan Kinnar or Madhukan, a resident of Jashohar, introduced a special trend called *Dhop kirtan* at the end of the eighteenth century. ‘Baithaki song’ and ‘Loghu’ music were mixed in this genre so this style got immense popularity. Not only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but also this style is still in use. In his poem ‘Vaishnava’ of ‘Sanartari’, Rabindranath Tagore has used a line which is ‘শুধু বৈকুণ্ঠের তরে বৈষ্ণবের গান’ The poet further asked ‘হেরি কাহার নয়ান রাধিকার অশ্রু আঁখি পড়েছিল মনে’. But the question is not only of Rabindranath Tagore, but the question of nineteenth century people who were interested in poetry. One of the main features of the nineteenth century Renaissance was to examine the ancient literature in a completely new perspective. At this time, *Vaishnava pada* began to appear in a new perspective which was not seen in other literatures. The *pada* of *Vaishnava padabali* became acceptable to the educated people due to its descriptions of human love. Among the collection of poems written before *Sonar Tari*, *Manasi* is one of the most important, in which the poet said

পড়ে মনে বরিষার বৃন্দাবন অভিসার।

একাকিনি রাধিকার চকিত চরণ।।

শ্যামল তমাল তল, নীল যমুনার জল,

আর দুটি ছল ছল মলিন নয়ন।।

Rabindranath Tagore compiled the 'Padaratnabali' with Srishchandra Majumdar in which he wanted to present the pure literature, not theology. A *pada* of Banshibadan's *Danleela* is

রৌদ্রে ঘামিয়াছে মুখ দেখি লাগে বড় দুখ

শ্রম ভাবে আউ লাউল কবরী।

The influence of this *pada* is clearly shown in Rabindranath Tagore's 'Pasarini' poem of *Kalpana*. The influence of *kirtan* on Ras or Dol festivals of Bishnupur which is seen at present is an old custom. It is said in the introduction part of the *Srikrishna Kirtan*, while speaking about the tradition of singing *kirtan* by Chandidas at Bishnupur on Ras and Dol festivals that Bishnupur's King Ramitta sends messenger to invite Chandidas. But Chhatna Raj sends back the messenger Naresh saying that they are not ordinary singers. For this reason a battle was fought between King Hamir and the Bishnupur King Gopal Singh. Modanmohan fought on behalf of King Gopal Singh against Basali. A treaty is signed on the condition that Chandidas will go to Bishnupur and will sing on the occasions of Ras and Dol. It is clear from the fact that in the nineteenth century *kirtan* was sung on the occasions of Ras and Dol. According to Bishnupur expert Chittaranjan Das Gupta, on the occasion of *Dolpurnima*, 'nagarsankirtan' comes out on the street of entire Mallabhum more or less. And on the occasion of Ras many families arrange 'harinam' in their house which is the result of Vaishnava influence.<sup>52</sup> Historian Ramesh Chandra Majumdar has mentioned in his *Deshabalibriti* that *kirtan* was sung in Bishnupur on the occasion of Ras and separate 'Rasmanchas' were built for Ras festival in Bishnupur. He wrote about Ras Leela that Ras Leela of Sri Krishna is held in the month of Kartik. The 'Rasmancha' is made in the shape of a hill and there are three hundred doors in these "Rasmanchas".<sup>53</sup> Vikrampur's elite Vaidya poet Narayan Sen wrote *Hari Leela* in 1872. During his posting at the University of Calcutta, Basantaranjan Roy edited *Hari Leela* with Dinesh Chandra Sen, which was published in 1928. The 'akyapatra' of this book was

---

<sup>52</sup> Sakkhatkar: Chittaranjan Dasgupta, Kabiraj Para, Bishnupur 12/1/2015

<sup>53</sup> Rameshchandra Majumdar, *Deshabalibriti*, Kolikata: Sahitya Parishad Patrika, 55 S Barsha, 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> sankha p.19

Hari Leela/Lala Joy Narayan Sen /composed /University professor /Dr. Sriyukta Dineshchandra Sen/and/ 'bidwadbhallab Sriyukta Basantaranjan Roy/edited /(mohar of the University of Calcutta)/ published from the University of Calcutta.<sup>54</sup> From this the relevance of Vaishnavism is proved again. When we see Basantaranjan Roy doing the traditional 'japa mantra' of Srikrishna, during the rule of Mallabhum King Gopal Singh, we can see the ultimate relevance of Vaishnavism. It was written about Basantababu in the introduction of *Sri Krishna Kirtan* that during his service life at the University he used to take bath and eat in time. He regularly took bath in hot water. After bath he dried his clothes by his own hands. Even he did not allow his daughter in law for this work. He ate rice at noon and roti in night. Before eating he used to chanting for an hour. After asking he used to say that the matter of Gopal sing.<sup>55</sup> Not only in nineteenth or twentieth centuries, but till now the operative people of Bengal do woe when they do not take Krishna name and tell

দিন গেল বৃথা কাজে রাত্রি গেল নিদে।

না ভজিনু রাখাকৃষ্ণ চরনার বিন্দে।।

Leela kirtan is organised in an open place. Everyone has an access there. Farmer, Kumar, Teli, Mali, Maira, Bagdi, Bauri, rich and educated, everyone is allowed to participate. This celebration brings a divine thought among the people. If it is analyzed in another site we can see that celebration expand the education through the people. The listener listen high rise eassy and song in this celebration and learned about theory to see the classical dance. It is seen in the nineteenth century Benagal that the long time *kirtan* listener carried a high feeling and mentality, according to sadhka Sadananda Goswami *kirtan* brings a spiritual value and morality among the listener in the age of English learning.<sup>56</sup> To accept the role of *kirtan* in development of sense, cultural thought, and spiritual thought in moral less modern dynamic life and society it is said the development of society done by Narattom Das to bring the

---

<sup>54</sup> Baru Chandidas, *Shri Krishnakirtan*, edited by Basantaranjan Roy Bidadbhallav, Nabam Sanskaran, Kolkata: Bangiya Sahitya Parisad, 1380, Bhumika p. 42

<sup>55</sup> Baru Chandidas, *Sri Krishna Kirtan*, ed. By Basantaranjan Roy Bidadbhallav, Nabam Sanskaran, Kolkata: Bangiya Sahitya Parisad, 1380, Bhumika, p. 49

<sup>56</sup> Sakkhatkar: Sadananda Goswami, Kenduli Mela, Joydeb Dham, Birbhum, 16.01.2017

assembler in open is same valuable in present not only the nineteenth or twentieth century. But Namkirtan is very much seen than the Leela kirtan. Vaishnavite people celebrate the occasion of arrival or death of the Sadhu Saint. Even today in many places villagers meet together in specific time of the year and organized *Ostoprohor* (1day), *Chabbisparahar* (3days), or *Navaratri* though *Palakirtan* organised at night. Even at present in many places of Bengal the people of *kirtan* still serve the name door to door in the morning of *kartik* month and in the evening of *baishak*. As a gathering celebration, female members of house make ohum sound or fire incense, bring flower, lamp for increasing the decoration during the *kirtan*. All communal people can join and participate in *kirtan*; untouchables are not segregated, they are free to participate. That is why it is said that the *kirtan* founded by Chaitanya could help for cleaning up the religious differentiation. The effect of *kirtan* in the shadow of folk religion is an association made among the Vaishnavs. For the association's power the Chaitannyanian could recover from social difficulty and the nation's wound. Hitesh Sanyal shows that later kirtan gaan is organised in many domestic house. He wrote 'Dinesh Chandra Sen admires *kirtan* for in many times in his house *kirtan* organised.'<sup>57</sup> On various special rituals, occasions, or centering holy events, people man organized *kirtan*, for instance, in 1946 Mahatma Gandhi went to Nouakhali for set up peace after Nouakhali killing. Revolutionary Bina Das and her mate Mridula Dutta went to Nouakhali under Raiganj police station at the order of Ghandhi. Bina Das wrote about Nouakhlai's experience that one day the villagers organized Harinam *sankirtan* as a proof of peace among the villagers. It was a day of magnificent celebration of *kirtan* with harmonium, Dhak, Dhol, and loud voice. Mridula whispered to Bina dithat 'when they went to camp for money appealed they murmured. Now they are in spunk'.<sup>58</sup> That is how *kirtanis* are tied with the life of Bengalis. In the seventeen and eighteen centuries high rise *kirtan* was spread in Bengal. Gokul Nanda Das a popular Chaintan of Jharkhandi Gharana of the seventeenth century, another popular singer is Srinivas Acharya', son Geet Govinda thakur. In the eighteenth century Bipradas I,

<sup>57</sup> Hitesh Ranjan Sanyal, *Bangla Kirtaner Itihas* (2<sup>nd</sup> Print), Kolikata: K.P. Bagchi, 2012, p. 195

<sup>58</sup> Hiteshranjan Sanyal, *Bangla Kirtaner Itihas* (2<sup>nd</sup> Print), Kolikata: K.P. Bagchi, 2012, p. 195

founder of Reneti Gharana, Vaishnav Das and Udvab Das singers were famous. Radhamohan Thakur, writer of ‘Padamnita Samudra’, and, Boishnob Das writer of ‘Mallataru’ were also famous. Founder of Dhop *kirtan* Rupchand Chatujye was a famous singer in the eighteenth century. Some famous chanters from eighteenth century to the present day are described by Sahitya Ratna Hare Krishna Mukhopadhyay in his eassy. Most of the *kirtanyas* from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries were from the upper class. But from the end of the eighteenth century circumstances changed. At this time besides the *kirtanyas* of Brahmins, Baidya and Kayastha caste, Nabashakha, Jolbyabaharja and even singers and musicians from backward classes established themselves in *kirtan*. The identity of such *kirtanyas* are

<u>Name of the Kirtaniya</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Caste Identity</u>
Krishnadayal Chand	Panchthupi (Mursidabad)	Subarnabanik
Haradhan Sutradhar	Meralakongarpur (Birbhum)	Chutar
Akhil Das	Kandarkulo (Birbhum)	Chutar
Kopa Haridas (Badak)	Koyas (Birbhum)	Chutar
Bahu Ballav sadhu	Ramnagar-saora (Birbhum)	Gandhabanik
Fatik Choudhury	Hasanpur (Murshidabad)	Mahisya
Shibnath Saha	Janipur (Kusthiya, Bangladesh)	Sunri <sup>59</sup>

Caste did not matter in the education of *kirtan* and Mridanga, which we can consider as a result of Chaitanyadev’s expansion of *kirtan*. Keshab Chakraborti of Ilambazar was a very famous *kirtanyas*. Although he was Brahmin yet he learnt *kirtan* from Nikunja Maiti, who belonged to Muchicaste. Krishnadayal Chand from Subarnabanik community had some Brahmin disciples. Fatik Chawdhuri from Mahisya caste learnt music from Jibankrishna Chattujye of Kukrajol (Murshidabad). To become a good ‘kirtaniya’ besides learning music, a man must have the theological knowledge. When a man can correctly balance between devotion and emotion then he can establish himself as a good ‘kirtaniya’. Many families in Rarh region practiced *kirtan* generation after generation. Thakur dynasty of Shrikhanda and

<sup>59</sup> Hiteshranjan Sanyal, *Bangla Kirtaner Itihas* (2<sup>nd</sup> Print), Kolikata: K.P. Bagchi, 2012, p. 176.

Mitra Thakur dynasty of Maynadal were famous as 'Kirtaniya'. Gouragunananda Thakur of Shrikhanda and Kishori Mitra Thakur and Rasbihari Mitra Thakur of Maynadal were famous musicians at this time. Manohar Chakrabortti and Keshab Chakrabortti of Chakrabortti dynasty were famous singers. Das dynasty of Murshidabad gained the reputation as a 'kirtaniya' dynasty. Anuragi Das and his two sons Rasik Das and Goura Das, Rasik Das's son Radhashyam Das and his grandson Jashodanandan Das of this dynasty earned fame in *kirtan*. Before concluding this part I want to highlight another topic here. It is not true that all 'Kirtanias' sang *kirtan* with whole hearted dedication. During the time of Chaitanyadev, people from different communities adopted the Vaishnava religion and to protect it Vaishnavas used to sing *kirtan*. That is, they used to sing *kirtanas* they were Vaishnava. But, later circumstances changed and they pretended as Vaishnava when they sing *kirtan*. When we look at the Vaishnava Akargrantha we can see that those who sing the 'harinam' song in exchange of something can never become Vaishnava 'pada badya'. But now we see that they sing *kirtan* only for the sake of money and if needed they even bargain. Harekrishna Mukhapadhya, a scholar in *kirtan*, has heard many *kirtanias* in his life. He had a family relationship with many singers and musicians. About the hereditary of 'kirtanias' he said in his book *Banglar Kirtan and Kirtanias* that those families who used to sing *kirtan* traditionally, they taught their children either *kirtan* or 'khol' to earn livelihood. Someone learned and some other who knew little, spent their life with the name of their ancestors. They almost did not show any interest in education. If they are somehow able to recite the *padabali* then they thought that they learnt enough. I have also seen such 'kirtanias' who are good singers but did not know the meaning of all *pada*. That is, it is universally acknowledged that not only in the nineteenth century Bengal but *kirtan* is still relevant in Bengalee lives. But there have been many changes in *kirtan*. *Kirtan* has gained more acceptance as a profession than as a form of devotion.