

CHAPTER – VII

PHILOSOPHICAL TRENDS AND THOUGHTS

In the present chapter, Philosophical concepts found in poetry of some poetesses belonging to the medieval and modern period are discussed.

Śaivism as found in *Madhurāvijayam* and *Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti* :

The early rulers of Vijaynagar dynasty were Śaivas of the Śaivāgama section. Lord Śiva is invoked in the opening verses of the *Mahākāvya Madhurāvijayam*. As depicted by the poetess, their *Kulaguru* Kriyāśakti was an ardent devotee of Lord Śiva. Besides the existence of the temple of the Virūpākṣa in the suburb of Pampā hints that Lord Śiva was an adorable deity of the Vijaynagar kings :

सष्टुः स्त्रीपुंसनिर्माण मातृकारूपधारिणौ ।

प्रपद्ये प्रतिबोधाय चित्रकाशात्मकौ शिवौ ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.२॥

असाधारणरार्वर्यं विलसत्सर्वमङ्गलम् ।

क्रियाशक्तिगुरुं वन्दे त्रिलोचनमिवापरम् ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.४॥

यच्छाखानगरीं पम्पा मनेकधनदाश्रिताम् ।

अधितिष्ठन् विरूपाक्षो न स्मरत्यलकापुरीम् ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.६६॥

Dr. Candra Prabha observes, “Śaivism was followed by the royal kings particularly in the Vijaynagar Empire” in her text “Historical *Mahākāvya* in Sanskrit”.

Also the same religious practice of Śaivism was followed by *Rāṇā*s of Mewar as described in the text *Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti* written by poetess Devakumārikā (18th century).

In this text we find many references to Lord *Ekaliṅga*, the family deity of the *Mahārāṇā* of Mewar. These Rulers of Mewar beginning with Bāppā Rāvala (8th century AD) to Saṅgrāmasiṃha (18th century AD) were the great devotees of God *Ekaliṅga*.

स भूयाद् एकलिंगेशो जगतो भूतये विभुः ।
 यस्य प्रसादात् कुर्वन्ति राज्यं राणा भुवः स्थिरम् ॥वैद्यनाथप्रा.प्र.-१.४॥
 यदेकलिङ्गं समभूत् पृथिव्यां तेनैकलिङ्गेत्यभिधाऽभ्यधायि ।
 चतुर्दशी माघभवा हि कृष्णा तस्यां समुदभूतिरभूच्छिवस्या ॥वैद्यनाथप्रा.प्र.-१.५॥
 तस्योपदेशेन समग्रसिद्धेर्वापानृपस्याय बभूव सिद्धिः ।
 आराधनात्तुष्टिमतोऽस्य शम्भोस्तदेकलिङ्गस्य विभोः प्रसादात् ॥वैद्यनाथप्रा.प्र.-१.८॥

Ekalinga-māhātmya referred and quoted by Chandrashekhar Purohit in his book “*Mewar kā Sanskrit Sāhitya*”¹ observes, “*Ekalinga Māhātmya* written by Kanha Vyas is preserved in Rajasthan Oriental Institute, Udaipur. It is believed that at the behest of *Rāṇā Kumbhā* (1490-1525 AD), the poet Kanha Vyas might have composed The text “*Ekalinga Māhātmya*” :

आनन्दवृद्धादि पुराभिनन्दी नन्दीशवृन्दी नृपकुम्भकर्णः ।
 तदाज्ञया प्रेरित एव कन्ह व्यासो व्यधतारक मौक्तिकावलिम् ॥

The text *Ekalinga Māhātmya* composed by Kanha Vyas comprises of glorification of Lord Śiva by Saint Hārīta, Guru of the Mewar kings. In the beginning of the *Kāvya* the poet offers prayers to deities like goddess Lakṣmī, Pārvatī and Lord Kāmadeva respectively :

भूयस्तत् काल कान्ति द्विगुणितसुरतप्रीतिनासौ रिणावः ।
 शैय्यामलिंग नीतं वपुरलसलसद्बाहुलक्ष्म्याः पुनातु ॥एकलिङ्गमाहात्म्य-१॥
 करेण नीवीं वदनेन लज्जामंसेन धम्मिल्लभरं वहन्ति ।
 रतेन तृप्तानवकेलितस्यादर्धोत्थिता पातु पिनाकिकान्ता ॥एकलिङ्गमाहात्म्य-२॥
 रतिपरिमलसिन्धु कामिनीकेलिबन्धुः प्रथितभुवन वीर्यो नागराणं विनोदः ।
 जयतु मकरकेतुर्मोहनस्यैकहेतु विरचित बहुसेवः कामिभिः कामदेवः ॥एकलिङ्गमाहात्म्य-५॥

Poet has shown his talent by writing the following verse in praise of *Rāṇā Kumbhā* in all the eight cases (*Vibhakti*) :

¹ *Ekalinga māhātmya* *Ekalinga māhātmya purāna*, *Ekalinga stotra* in original Sanskrit language, these texts are not available so far.

कुम्भो नन्दतु भूतले हरिहरौ कुम्भं सदा रक्षतां ।
 कुम्भनैव वशीकृता वसुमती कुम्भाय तुष्टाः सुराः ।
 कुम्भादासधनोजनस्त्रिभुवन कुम्भस्य कीर्तिः स्थिरा
 कुम्भे पण्डितमण्डली स्थितमती त्वं कुम्भ!राज्यं कुरु ॥६३॥”

Apart from this temple of *Ekaliṅga*, there is a reference to the temple of *Vaidyanātha* in the text *Vaidanātha-prāsāda-prāśasti* composed by poetess Devakumārikā. In the last Canto it is pointed out that Poetess Devakumārikā repaired the dome of the temple and performed various types of donations in order to please Lord Śiva. She made relentless efforts to renovate the temple of *Vaidyanātha* and managed the daily worship of the God by appointing well-qualified priest (*Purohita*). The temple of *Vaidyanātha* is located about 6 kms. in the western direction in the village named *Śrisārama* at Udaipur :

ईशो हि कान्त्यारमतीति हेतोः श्री शारमग्रामवरो य आस्ते ।
 शिवस्थितिं तत्र विलोक्य देव्या प्रासादसिद्ध्यर्थमकारि बुद्धिः ॥वै.प्रा.प्र. ४.२५॥

She decided to reconstruct it by appointing a Brahmin named Śrīnivāsa and thus consecrated the temple of Lord Śiva named *Vaidyanātha* in 1772 AD :

तं ज्ञातिवर्गार्पितसद्दुकूलपात्रादिकं रायमिहोग्रबुद्धिः ।
 शिवालयस्योद्धवकर्मसिद्धौ सा श्रीनिवासं कुशलं न्ययुङ्क्त ॥ वै.प्रा.प्र. ४.२८॥
 श्रीवैद्यनाथशिवसद्गभवां प्रतिष्ठां
 देवी चकार किल देवकुमारिकाख्या ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-५.१८॥

During the reconstruction of this temple, these kings of Mewar gave various types of donations in order to please Lord Śiva. Poetess Devakumārikā, mother of Saṅgrāmasimha performed various types of donations and also observed different vows and gave lot of wealth for the construction of the temple *Vaidyanātha* :

तुलात्रयं राजतमुद्धिधाय दानान्यनेकानि च सद्ब्रतानि ।
 शिवालयस्योद्धरणाय बुद्धिर्दध्रे तथा तीर्थवरस्य सिद्धेः ॥वै.प्रा.प्र. ४.२१॥

When the ceremony was observed the kings from all the directions i.e. the king of Kota named Bhīmasimha and also the king of Dungarpur named Rāmasimha along with his army came to attend the religious function of the consecration of the temple of *Vaidyanātha*.

Thus on the whole we can say that big rows of kings were found attending the religious ceremony performed by Queen Devakumārikā :

प्रासाद वैवाह्यविधिं विदक्षुः कोटाधिपो भीमनृपोऽभ्यगच्छत् ।
 रथाश्वपत्तिद्विपनद्धसैन्योदिल्लीपसम्मानितबाहुवीर्यः ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.५.१५॥
 यो दुंगराख्यस्य पुरस्य नाथो दिदक्षया रावलरामसिंहः ।
 सोऽप्यागमत्तत्र समग्रसैन्यो देशान्तरस्था अपि चान्यभूपाः ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.५.१६॥
 देवालयाद् योजनभूमिरेषा नृपैर्जनैः सङ्गवती तथासीत् ।
 यथा समुच्चालितमुष्टयोऽपि तिलास्तलं नेयुरहो धरण्याः ॥वै.प्रा.प्र. ५.१७॥

At the end of the book *Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-prāśasti* there is a prayer offered by Harishchandra (*Aṣṭaka*) who might have been a court poet (c. 17th century AD) of Mewar kings. According to Harishchandra, God Śiva's dense matted hair is decorated by magnificent lustre emitting from the jewel on the hood of *Śeṣanāga* (Cobra), worn like a garland. This Śiva alias *Vaidyanātha* is endowed with the lustre of the crores of the Sun :

शेषनागमणिसुप्रभावलीभूषितोद्धतजटाकलापकः ।
 कोटिसूर्यसमभासमन्विता वैद्यनाथ इह भूतयेऽस्तु नः ॥वै.प्रा.प्र. ५.१९॥

He, who is the connecting bridge of the three qualities – *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, always gives *Siddhi* (reward) to His devotees, half of His personality is rendered charming by His consort (*Śailajā*) :

सेतुरेव च गुणत्रयस्य यः सिद्धिदः स्वभजनार्हचेतसाम् ।
 शैलजारुचिविभूषितार्धकं वैद्यनाथमभितो नमाम्यहम् ॥वै.प्रा.प्र. ५.२०॥

Harishchandra, therefore, expresses his ardent desire viz. to have constant devotion towards *Vaidyanātha*, the Supreme Being who is duly worshipped by the learned priest reciting the Vedic mantras every day :

वेदमन्त्रविधिवत्सपर्यया पूजितस्य विलुभैर्गृहनिष्कम् ।
भक्तिरस्तु सकलाघहारिणी वैद्यनाथपरमेश्वरस्य मे ॥वै.प्रा.प्र. ५.२४॥

Conclusion :

On the basis of the study of the two books '*Madhurāvijayam*' and '*Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-prāśasti*', it can be said that the royal family of *Śaṅgama* and *Guhilot* dynasties were the worshippers of God Śiva. The Mewar rulers like Bāppā Rāvala, Hammīra, Śaṅgrāmasimha-I, Jagatasimha, Kumbhā, Rājasimha etc. were the devotees of God Śiva in the form of *Ekaliṅgajī* and *Vaidyanātha*.

The propagator of the *Pāśupata* system – *Lakulīśa* :

Lakulīśa bears a staff (*Lakuta*, *Laguda*) in his hand and hence is called *Lakulīśa*.

Dr. Chandrashekhar Purohit, in his book "Mewar kā Sanskrit Sāhitya" states, "The Guru of Bāppā Rāvala worshipped Lord *Ekaliṅga*. He was the follower of the *Lakulīśa* cult (*Sampradāya*). The temple of *Lakulīśa* is found to the south of the temple of *Ekaliṅga*, which is now a days known as the temple of *Nātha* [नाथों का मन्दिर]. The tradition of worshipping of the deity *Ekaliṅga*, is done according to the teachings of Saint *Hārīta*. He passed his life as a *Tapasvin* in the form of a *Brahmacārin* and is honoured as a *Kulaguru* of the *Mahārāṇās* of Mewar. The idol of *Lakulīśa* is found in Rajasthan (Chittor), Kayavarohan in Baroda (Gujarat), Malva, and Bengal. In the left hand there is a staff (*Lakuta*) and hence it is called *Lakulīśa* and in the other hand there is a fruit resembling a lemon named *Bijorā* :

न(ल)कुलीशं ऊर्ध्वमेढ्रं पद्मासनसुसंस्थितम् ।
दक्षिणे मातुलिङ्गं च वामे दण्डं प्रकीर्तितम् ॥”

Dr. J. P. Thaker in his text *Viśvāmitrīmāhātmya* states, "The name of the Lord of Kayavarohan would naturally be *Nakuleśa* (*Nakula+Īśa*) and not

Nakulīśa. Lord *Nakuleśa* is popularly known as *Lakulīśa* and his sect also is known by the same name.

As stated in the text the holy place of Kayavarohan was formerly known as *Kaśyapa-muni-kṣetra* and it became famous as Kayavarohan after Lord *Nakula* entered the phallus along with his physical body. (lit : his body descended in the phallus : *Kāyāyaḥ avarohaṇam kṛtam*).

At present also the main phallus at Kayavarohan temple known as Lord *Brahmeśvara* is a big black phallus in the front portion where of is seen God Śiva. This holy place has been known as miniature *Kaśī* all through the centuries. The holy place of Kayavarohan is thirty-two kilometres from city of Vadodarā.”

Siddheśvaraśvaraśāstri Citrāva gives some interesting details about ‘*Lakulīśa*’. “*Lakulin* was an incarnation of God Śiva that appeared in the twenty eighth age cycle of the *Vaivasvata Manvantara* of the *Varāha Kalpa*. As this incarnation appeared with a staff (*lakuta*, *lakuda* or *lakula*) in hand, it is called *Lakulin*.”

According to Dr. Bhandarkar, *Lakulīśa* was a living person who established the *Pāśupatā Śaiva* sect in the second Century B.C.

Also, the importance of this holy pilgrimage Kayavarohan is found in text like *Matsyapurāṇa* :

शुक्रतीर्थे च विख्यात तीर्थ सोमेश्वर परम ।
 सर्वव्याधिहरं पुण्य शतकोटिफलाधिकम् ॥ मत्स्यपुराण-२२.२६ ॥
 श्राद्धे दाने तथा होमे स्वाध्याये जलसंनिधौ ।
 कायावरोहण नाम तथा चर्मणवती नदी ॥ मत्स्यपुराण-२२.३० ॥



ભગવાન શ્રી લકુલીશજી
(કાયાવરોહણ)



શ્રી પુર્વાલિંગજી (ઉદયપુર)

Viṣṇu is the deity of the sacred triad, entrusted with the preservation of the world. Viṣṇu, though a deity of capital importance in the mythology of the *Brāhmaṇas*, occupies but a subordinate position in the *Rgveda*. He is celebrated in not more than five whole hymns, while his name occurs only about 100 times altogether in *Rgveda*.

The essential feature of his character is that he takes three strides, which are referred to about a dozen times. With these three steps Viṣṇu is described as traversing the earth or the terrestrial spaces. Two of these steps or spaces are visible to men, but the third or the highest step is beyond the flight of birds or mortal ken.

Viṣṇu is given prominence from *Rgveda* :

इदं विष्णुर्विचक्रमे त्रेधा निदधे पदम् ॥ऋग्वेद १.२२.१७॥

Viṣṇu is the personification of the light and of the sun especially in his striding over the heavens. Viṣṇu in *Brāhmaṇas* is identified with sacrifice and in the *Rāmayaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* attains the Supremacy as a deity. Viṣṇu is the Supreme Being described as lying on *Śeṣa* (serpent) on Ocean. He is usually represented with a particular mark on his chest called *Śrivatsa* and holding a *Śaṅkha* called *Pāñcajanya*. He has jewel on his wrist called *Syamantaka* and another on his chest called *Kaustubha* and the river Ganges is said to come out from his foot :

विष्णोर्नु कं वीर्याणि प्र वोचं यः पार्थिवानि विममे रजांसि ।

यो अस्कभायदुत्तरं सधस्थं विचक्रमावस्त्रेघोरुगायः ॥ऋग्वेद १.१५४.१॥

यस्य त्री पूर्णा मधुना पदा न्यक्षीयमाणा स्वधया मदन्ति ।

च उ त्रिधातु पृथिवीमुत द्या मेको दाधार भुवनानि विश्वा ॥ऋग्वेद १.१५४.४॥

ता वां वास्तून्नुश्मसि गमध्यै यत्र गावो भूरिशृङ्गा अयासः ।

अत्राह तदुरुगायस्य वृष्णः परमं पदमव भाति भूरि ॥ऋग्वेद १.१५४.६॥

द्वे इदस्य क्रमणे स्वर्हशोऽभिख्याय मर्त्यो भुरण्यति ।

तृतीतमस्य नकिरा दधर्षति वयश्चन पतयन्तः पतत्रिणः ॥ऋग्वेद १.१५५.५॥

The whole *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is replete with glorification of this God pervading

the whole world and controlling inanimate and animate beings :

ततस्तत् परमं ब्रह्म परमात्मा जगन्मयः ॥विष्णुपुराण १.१०.५४॥
 विष्णोः सकाशात् सम्भूतं जगत् तत्रैव संस्थितम् ।
 स्थितिसंयमकर्ताऽसौ जगतोऽस्य जगच्च सः ॥विष्णुपुराण १.१.३५॥
 सर्गस्थितिविनाशानां जगतोऽस्य जगन्मयः ।
 मूलभूतो नमस्तस्मै विष्णवे परमात्मने ॥विष्णुपुराण १.२.४॥
 उत्पत्तिं प्रलयं चैव भूतानामागतिं गतिम् ।
 वेशि विद्यामविद्या च स वाच्यो भगवाननीति ॥विष्णुपुराण ६.५.७८॥

Viṣṇusahasranāma also glorifies the Supreme God. ¹

ईशानः प्राणदः प्राणो ज्येष्ठः श्रेष्ठः प्रजापतिः ।
 हिरण्यगर्भो भूगर्भो माधवो मधुसूदनः ॥८॥
 युगादिकृद्युगावर्तो नैकमायो महाशनः ।
 अदृश्योऽव्यक्तरूपश्च सहस्रजिदनन्तजित् ॥३७॥
 महाक्रमो महाकर्मा महातेजा महोरगः ।
 महाक्रतुर्महायज्वा महायशो महाहविः ॥७६॥
 विश्वमूर्तिर्महामूर्तिर्दीप्तमूर्तिरमूर्तिमान् ।
 अनेकमूर्तिरव्यक्तः शतमूर्तिः शताननः ॥८१॥

Poetess Lakṣmī Rājñī, the author of Khaṇḍkāvyā *Santānagopāla* has borrowed the whole theme of her work from *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (X.89). Poetess describes Lord Viṣṇu sleeping on a bed in the form of *Śeṣanāga* :

फणीन्द्रपर्यङ्गतले शयानं महेन्द्रनीलोत्पलमेचकांगम् ।
 किरीटहारादिविभूषणौघप्रकृष्टनानामणिदीपिताङ्गम् ॥सन्तानगोपाल-२.९॥
 स्वभक्तवात्सल्यविशेषशंसिश्रीवत्सलक्ष्मांकितवत्सदेशम् ।
 अनेकपङ्केरुहसंभवाण्डनिवेशवेशमायितकुक्षिदेशम् ॥सन्तानगोपाल-२.१२॥
 पीताम्बराच्छादितपीवरोरुं पापान्धकारारुणपादपद्मम् ।
 नखेन्दुविध्वस्तसमस्तभक्तजनान्तरस्थायिमहान्धकारम् ॥सन्तानगोपाल-२.१३॥
 नमोऽद्वितीयाय सदाऽस्तु तुभ्यं पुराणपुंसे प्रकृतेः परस्मै ।
 प्रपञ्चसर्गस्थितिनाशकर्त्रे विरञ्चिविष्णुविश्वपुर्धराय ॥सन्तानगोपाल-२.१७॥

¹ Mahadevan TMP — Bombay, 1972.

सर्वात्मने सर्वविलक्षणाय सर्वान्तरस्थाय सदा शिवाय ।
 सच्चित्परानन्दमयायशुद्धतत्त्वस्वरूपाय नमो नमस्ते ॥सन्तानगोपाल-२.१९॥
 यस्मादिदं विश्वमुदेति सर्वं यस्मिन् प्रतिष्ठां लभते पुनस्तत् ।
 यत्रैव याति प्रलयं च तस्मै तुभ्यं नमोऽस्त्वद्भुतवैभवाय ॥सन्तानगोपाल-२.२०॥

Besides in the third canto of the text *Santānagopāla kāvya* the *Avatāras* of Lord Viṣṇu are described (III.17-25).

Avatāra :

Delineation of *Avatāra* is not only found in *Purāṇa*'s but also in *Vedic* texts, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. We get the description of *Avatāra* particularly in *Purāṇas* in details.

In *Bhagavadgītā*, also God *Kṛṣṇa* refers to the concept of *Avatāra* (form) :

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
 अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥भ.गी. ४.७॥
 परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
 धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥भ.गी. ४.८॥

In *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the description of 24 *Avatāras* of God Viṣṇu is found (*Bhāgavatapurāṇa*-I.3.6-28).

In *Gītagovinda* also, Jayadeva (11th century AD) has mentioned 10 incarnations of God Viṣṇu. These incarnations are briefly as follows :

Matsya Avatāra :

दिविभुवा हयकण्ठ इति प्रथां गतवताऽपहृते निगमोत्करे ।
 तव तु तत्र धृता सकलापदां शमकरी मकरीशतनुः पुरा ॥सन्तानगोपाल-३.१७॥

Delineation of *Matsya avatāra* is found in text like *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, *Agnipurāṇa*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Gītagovinda*.

In this *Avatāra*, Viṣṇu became a fish to save the seventh Manu, the progenitor of the human race from the universal deluge.

This incarnation has the earliest mention in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* :

मनवे ह वै प्रातः मत्स्यः सादपणी आपेत सहास्मै वाचमुवाच विभृहि माम् पारयिष्यामि त्वेति
कस्मान्नाम् पारयिष्यसीति औच इमा सर्वा प्रजा निर्वोढा ततस्त्वा पारयिताऽस्मि ॥१.८.११॥

This legend is also told in *Mahābhārata Vanaparva*, where the fish is represented as an incarnation of *Brahmā*.

To recover the lost *Vedas*, Viṣṇu assumed the form of a fish and saved Manu at the dissolution of the earth. At that time when *Brahmā* awoke Viṣṇu slay *Hayagrīva* and restored the *Vedas* to him :

अहं प्रजापतिर्ब्रह्मा मत्परं नाधिगम्यते ।
मत्स्यरूपेण यूयं च मयास्मान्मोक्षिता भयात् ॥महाभारत-वनपर्व-३.१८५.४८॥
शुश्राव मत्स्यात्पापघ्नं संस्तुवन्स्तुतिभिश्च तम् ।
ब्रह्मवेदप्रहर्तारं हयग्रीवं च दानवम् ॥अग्निपुराण २.१६॥
ज्ञात्वा तद् दानवेन्द्रस्य हयग्रीवस्य चेष्टितम् ।
दधार शफरीरूपं भगवान् हरिरीश्वरः ॥भागवतपुराण ८.२४.९॥
प्रलयषयोधिजले धृतवानसि वेदम्
विहितवहित्रचरित्रमखेदम् ॥
केशव ! धृतमीनशरीर जय जगदीश ! हरे ! ॥गीतगोविन्द १.१॥

Kūrma Avatāra :

प्रमथिते तु पुरा पयसां निधौ मिलितसर्वसुरासुरसञ्चयैः ।
विपुलकच्छपरूपमधोगतं महिधरं हि धरन्तमुपास्महे ॥सन्तानगोपाल-३.१८॥

Delineation of Kūrma avatāra is found in text like *Taittirīya Āranyaka*, *Mahābhārata*, *Agnipurāṇa*, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, *Varāhapurāṇa* and *Gīta-govinda* :

अन्तस्तः कूर्मभूतः तमब्रवीत् मम वै त्वङ्गासात् समभूव नेत्यब्रवीत् पूर्वमेवाहमिहासम् इति
तत्पुरुषस्य पुरुषत्वं रह सहस्रशीर्षः पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपाद् भूत्वोदतिष्ठत् । तैत्तिरीय
आरण्यक-अनुवाक्-२३ ॥

ऊचुश्च कूर्मराजानमकूपारं सुरासुराः ।
गिरेरधिष्ठानमस्य भवान्भवितुमर्हति ॥महाभारत-आदिपर्व-१.१६.१०॥

कूर्मेण तु तथेत्युक्त्वा पृष्ठमस्य समर्पितम् ।
तस्य शैलस्य चाग्रं वे यन्त्रेणेन्द्रोऽभ्यपीडयत् ॥महाभारत-आदिपर्व-१.१६.११॥

कूर्मरूपं समास्थाय दहरे विष्णुश्च मन्दरम् ।
 क्षीराब्धेर्मध्यमानञ्च विषं हालाहल। हभूत् ॥अग्निपुराण ३.८ ॥
 विलोक्य विघ्नेशविधिं यदेश्वरो दुरन्तवीर्योऽवितथाभिसंधिः ।
 कृत्वा वपुः काच्छपमद्भुतं महत् प्रविश्य तोयं गिरिमुज्जहार ॥भागवतपुराण ८.७.८ ॥
 तथैव पौषमासे तु अमृतं मथितं सुरैः ।
 तत्र कूर्मो भवेद्देवः स्वयमेव जनार्दन ॥वराहपुराण ४०.९ ॥
 क्षितिरतिविपुलतरे तव तिष्ठति पृष्ठे
 धरणिधरणकिणचक्रगरिष्ठ ।
 केशव धृतकच्छपरूप जय जगदीश हरे ॥गीतगोविन्द १.२ ॥

Varāha Avatāra :

शरणमस्तु स मे किटिरूपधृग् जलनिधावसुरेण निमज्जिता ।
 क्षितिरियं बत येन समुद्धृता स च रणे चरणेन हतो रिपुः ॥सन्तानगोपाल-३.१९ ॥

Delineation of *Varāha Avatāra* is found in text like *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*,
Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, *Agnipurāṇa*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and *Gītagovinda*.

S. S. Dange in her book '*Bhāgavata Purāṇa - A Study*' states, "Prior to the
Purāṇa's this incarnation has been referred to its *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*
 (I.10.8) and (VII.1.5.1). *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (I.1.3.5-6) refers to the form
 of boar assumed by *Prajāpati*. Assuming the form of boar he dived into the
 waters and pierced the earth by means of his tusk and took it out. He then
 spread it on the lotus leaf. [This universe was formerly water. *Prajāpati* as
 a boar, plunged beneath. He found the earth below. Breaking off a portion
 of her, he rose to the surface.]"

स वराहस्ततो भूत्वा प्रोज्जहार वसुंधराम् ।
 असृजच्च जगत्सर्वं सह पुत्रैः कृतात्मभिः ॥रामायण-अयोध्याकाण्ड-१०२.३¹
 अवतारं वराहस्य वक्ष्येऽहं पापनाशनम् ।
 हिरण्याक्षोऽसुरेशोऽभूद्देवाञ्जित्वा दिविस्थितः ॥अग्निपुराण ४.१ ॥
 अयं तु कथितः कल्पो द्वितीयस्यापि भारत ।
 वाराह इति विख्यातो यत्रासीत्सूकरो हरिः ॥भागवत पुराण ३.११.३६ ॥

¹ Vālmīki-rāmāyaṇam — Oriental Institute, Vadodara, 1992, page 255

वसति दशनशिखरे धरणी तव लग्ना
 शशिनि कलङ्ककलेव निमग्ना ।
 केशव ! धृतशूकररूप जय जगदीश ! हरे ! ॥गीतगोविन्द १.३॥

Nṛsimha Avatāra :

दितिसुतं निजभक्तसुरद्रुहं कशिपुमादिहिरण्यपदं नखैः ।
 नरमृगेन्द्रवपुर्हृतवान् भवान् वसतु मे स तु मेध्यतमो हृदि ॥सन्तानगोपाल-३.२०॥

The incarnation named *Nṛsimha* is half human¹ and half animal. It is referred in *Agnipurāṇa*, *Bhāgavata purāṇa* and *Gītagovinda*.

धर्मदेवादिरक्षाकृततः सोऽन्तर्दधे हरिः ।
 हिरण्याक्षस्य वै भ्रता हिरण्यकशिपुस्तथा ॥अग्निपुराण-४.३॥
 जितदेवयज्ञभागः सर्वदेवाधिकारकृत् ।
 नारसिंह वपुः क्लृप्त्वा तं जघान सुरैः सह ॥अग्निपुराण-४.४॥
 तव करकमलवरे नखमद्भुतशृङ्गम्
 दलितहिरण्यकशिपुतनुभृङ्गम् ।
 केशव ! धृत नरहरिरूप जय जगदीश ! हरे ॥गीतगोविन्द-१.४॥

Vāmana Avatāra :

तमहमिन्द्रसहोदरमाश्रये त्रिपदलान्नमितां तु जगन्नयीम् ।
 बलिकरादपहत्य च यः पुरा मघवतेऽघवते प्रददौ मुदा ॥सन्तानगोपाल-३.२१॥

Vāmana avatāra is referred in Vedic text like *Rgveda*, Brāhmaṇa texts, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and *Gītagovinda*. In *Rgveda*, Viṣṇu strode over the universe, in three places. Hence Viṣṇu is called *Trivikrama* :

इदं विष्णुर्विचक्रमे त्रेधा निदधे पदम् ॥ऋग्वेद १.२२.१७-१८॥
 यत् तद् वपुर्भाति विभूषणायुधैरव्यक्तचिद् व्यक्तमधारयद्भरिः ।
 बभूव तेनैव स वामनो वटुः सम्पश्यतोर्दिव्यगतिर्यथा नटः ॥भागवतपुराण ८.१८.१२॥
 छलयसि विक्रमणे बलिमद्भुतवामन
 पदनखनीरजनितजनपावन ।
 केशव! धृतवामनरूप जय जगदीश ! हरे ॥गीतगोविन्द १.५॥

Paraśurāma Avatāra :

हृदि करोम्यनिशं जमदग्निजं द्विजकुलापकृतौ निरता नृपाः ।

सपदि यस्य परश्वधनामके हुतवहे तव हे शलभाः कृताः ॥सन्तानगोपाल-३.२२॥

Parāsurāma avatāra is referred in text like *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and *Gītagovinda*. In this Viṣṇu was born as the son of the Brāhmaṇa Jamadagni and descendant of Bhṛgu in the second age, to restrain the *Kṣatriyas* :

त्रेताद्वापरयोः संधौ रामः शस्त्रभृतां वरः ।

असकृत्पार्थिवं क्षत्रं जघानामर्षचोदितः ॥महाभारत-आदिपर्व-२.३॥

सर्वविद्यान्तगं श्रेष्ठं धनुर्वेदे च पारगम् ।

रामं क्षत्रियहन्तारं प्रदीप्तमिव पावकम् ॥महाभारत-शांति पर्व-४९.२९॥

अवतारे षोडशमे पश्यन् ब्रह्मद्रुहो नृपान् ।

त्रिःसप्तकृत्वः कुपितो निःक्षत्रामकरोन्महीम् ॥भागवतपुराण-१.३.२०॥

क्षत्रियरुधिरमये जगदपगतपापं

स्नपयसि पयसि शमितभवतापम् ।

केशव ! धृतभृगुपतिरूप जय जगदीश ! हरे ॥गीतगोविन्द-१.६॥

Rāma Avatāra :

Rāma avatāra is referred in Vedic texts, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and *Gītagovinda*. Rāma, the son of King *Daśaratha*, of the solar race took this form of God Viṣṇu at the close of the second or *Tretā* age, to destroy several demons including Rāvaṇa, the king of Lanka.

Reference of God Rāma is found in the *Mahākāvya Raghunātha-Abhyudaya*. Emperor Raghunātha, the son of king Acyuta and a great devotee of God Rāma. He is appropriately compared with God Rāma by the poetess Rāmabhadraṁbā. God Rāma, the king of Ayodhyā was kind, generous, brave, righteous and the follower of *Dharma*. During his reign there was perfect happiness and prosperity prevailing all over the earth as stated in the following verses of *Rāmāyaṇa* composed by sage Vālmīki :

इक्ष्वाकुवंशप्रभवो रामो नाम जनैः श्रुतः ।
 नियतात्मा महावीर्यो द्युतिमान् धृतिमान् वशी ॥रामायण-बालकाण्ड-१.८॥
 धर्मज्ञः सत्यसंधश्च प्रजानां च हिते रतः ।
 यशस्वी ज्ञानसम्पन्नः शुचिर्वश्यः समाधिमान् ॥रामायण-बालकाण्ड-१.१२॥
 सर्वशास्त्रार्थतत्त्वज्ञः स्मृतिमान् प्रतिभानवान् ।
 सर्वलोकप्रियः साधुरदीनात्मा विचक्षणः ॥रामायण-बालकाण्ड-१.१४॥
 धनदेन समस्त्यागे सत्ये धर्म इवापरः ।
 तमेवंगुणसम्पन्नं रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् ॥रामायण-बालकाण्ड-१.१८॥
 न चानृतकथो विद्वान् वृद्धानां प्रतिपूजकः ।
 अनुरक्तः प्रजाभिश्च प्रजाश्चाप्यनुरज्यते ॥रामायण-अयोध्याकाण्ड-१.१४॥
 तथा सर्वप्रजाकान्तैः प्रीतिसंजननैः पितुः ।
 गुणैर्विरुरुचे रामो दीप्तः सूर्य इवांशुभिः ॥रामायण-अयोध्याकाण्ड-१.२७॥
 अस्मत्प्रसादसुमुखः कलया कलेश इक्ष्वाकुवंश अवतीर्य गुरोर्निर्देशे ।
 तिष्ठन् वनं सदयितानुज आविवेश यस्मिन् विरुध्य दशकन्धर आर्तिमार्च्छत् ॥भा.पु.२.७.२३॥

King Raghunātha too was endowed with the virtues like those of God Rāma. Out of his love and devotion for God Rāma, king Raghunātha composed the book '*Rāmāyaṇa-sāra-saṅgraha*':

तामावसत्यब्जदलायताक्षीतारुण्यभाग्योदयधन्यजन्मा ।
 विश्वत्रयीविश्रुतबाहुधामा रामावतारो रघुनाथभूपः ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-३.१॥
 शतं पदानां शनकैस्तदा व्रजञ्जपन्स रामायणसारसंग्रहम् ।
 ततः प्रसादं तुलसीदलं हरेरचर्वदुर्वीपतिरादृतव्रतः ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-११.८८॥

King Raghunātha is compared with both God Rāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa :

वरं रघूणां गुणवैभवे यं वदन्तु सर्वे रसिका वयं तु ।
 सहस्रकान्ताजनसामरस्ये कृष्णावतारं हृदि तर्कयामः ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-३.५॥

He constructed a bridge like God Rāma to help the king of Nepal (Jaffna):

विच्छिद्य सेतुं विशिखासनेन परैरगम्यं पयसां निधानम् ।
 चकार रामः स पुरेति सिन्धुबन्धुं विभुर्नोत्सहते स्म बन्धम् ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-९.१०॥

Just as God Rāma gave back the kingdom of Srilanka to Vibhīṣaṇa, the

brother of Rāvaṇa, similarly, king Raghunātha restored the rule of Nepal to its king :

सिन्धौ कृत्वा दुष्करं सेतुबन्धं जित्वा शत्रुं सत्वरं श्रीसमेतम् ।
 रामं साक्षादीश्वरं क्षमाधुरीणं जानीमस्त्वां सांप्रतं भूमिजाने ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-८.९९॥
 विधाय विद्वेषिवधं स्वयोधैर्विभीषणं राम इवात्मभक्तम् ।
 नेपालभूपं रघुनाथनेता तदास्पदे तत्र समभ्यषिष्यत् ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-९.२३॥

In the *Mahākāvya Raghunātha-Abhyudaya* poetess Rāmabhadraṁbā has revealed her genuine affection and reverence for the emperor Raghunātha by rightly comparing him with God Rāma.

Poetess Lakṣmī Rājñī also refers to Rāma as *Avatāra* :

सुरजनार्थनया दिनकृत्कुले दशरथात्मजतां समुपेत्य यः ।
 दशमुखं तु जघान जगद्द्रुहं स भव मे भवमेदुरतापहा ॥सन्तानगोपाल-३.२३॥

(I have discussed about the personality of God Kṛṣṇa as a historical figure in chapter-IV titled 'Historical Data'). Poetess Lakṣmī Rājñī has given here reference of *Balarāma*, the elder brother of God Kṛṣṇa. There is no mention of *Gautama Buddha* in the *khaṇḍakāvya Santāna-gopāla*.

Kalki :

कलियुगेऽन्तमुपेष्यति कल्किनः खलजनानखिलांश्च विभेत्स्यतः ।
 तव पदाब्जयुगं तदिदं मनः स्मरति मे रतिमेकतमां वहत् ॥संतानगोपाल-३.२५॥

The incarnation of Kalki is for the first time mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* :

कल्किर्विष्णुयशा नाम द्विजः कालप्रचोदितः ।
 उत्पत्स्यते महावीर्यो महाबुद्धिपराक्रमः ॥महाभारत-वन पर्व-१८८.८९॥
 अथासौ युगसन्ध्यायां दस्युप्रायेषु राजसु ।
 जनिता विष्णुयशसो नाम्ना कल्किर्जगत्पतिः ॥भागवतपुराण १.३.२५॥
 म्लेच्छनिवहनिधने कलयसि करवालम्
 धूमकेतुमिव किमपि करालम् ।
 केशव ! धृतकल्किशरीर जय जगदीश ! हरे ॥गीतगोविन्द १.१०॥

Sarasvatī :

पावका नः सरस्वती वाजेभिर्वाजिनीवती ।
 यज्ञं वष्टु धियावसुः ॥ऋग्वेद १.३.१०॥
 चोदयित्री सूनृतानां चेतन्ती सुमतीनाम् ।
 यज्ञं दधे सरस्वती ॥ऋग्वेद १.३.११॥
 महो अर्णः सरस्वती प्र चेतयति केतुना ।
 धियो विश्वा विराजति ॥ऋग्वेद १.३.१२॥¹

Sarasvatī, Goddess of speed and light is derived from the root 'sr' meaning to move at speed. All the knowledge springs from her. She is the Goddess of *Vāk* i.e. speech. The variations of all sound, wind and even of the atom originate from her *Kriyāśakti* only.

We also find the glorification of Śrī (Devī) Goddess in the *R̥gveda Pariśiṣṭa* (Appendix). The whole hymn is called *Śrīsūkta*¹ :

हिरण्यवर्णा हरिणीं सुवर्णरजतस्रजाम् ।
 चन्द्रां हिरण्मयीं लक्ष्मीं जातवेदो म आ वह ॥श्रीसूक्तम्-१॥
 मनसः काममाकूतिं वाचः सत्यमशीमहि ।
 पशूनां रुपमन्नस्य मयि श्रीः श्रयतां यशः ॥श्रीसूक्तम्-१०॥
 पद्मानने पद्मविपद्मपत्रे पद्मप्रिये पद्मदलायताक्षि ।
 विश्वप्रिये विष्णुमनोऽनुकूले त्वत्पादपद्मं मयि सं नि धत्स्व ॥श्रीसूक्तम्-१७॥

In *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* (78-90) also there is a reference of Devī, in *Durgāsaptaśati* :

देव्या यया ततमिदं जगदात्मशक्त्या निःशेषदेवगणशक्तिसमूहमूर्त्या ।
 तामम्बिकामखिलदेवमहर्षिपूज्यां भक्त्या नताः स्म विदधातु शुभानि सा नः॥सप्तशती-४.३॥
 यस्याः प्रभावमतुलं भगवाननन्तो ब्रह्मा हरश्च महि वक्तुमलं बलं च ।
 सा चण्डिकाऽखिलजगत्परिपालनाय नाशाय चा शुभभयस्य मतिं करोतु ॥सप्तशती-४.४॥
 या श्रीः स्वयं सुकृतिनां भवनेष्वलक्ष्मीः पापात्मनां कृतधियां हृदयेषु बुद्धिः ।
 श्रद्धा सतां कुलजनप्रभवस्य लज्जा तां त्वां नताः स्म परिपालय देवि! विश्वम्॥सप्तशती-४.५॥

¹ Bahadur Kantdev — Śabdakalpadruma, vol.

¹ Satavalekar S. V. ṛgveda Samhitā. Kīlāpārādī page 772.

मेधाऽसि देवि! त्रिदिताऽग्निरिन्द्राऽस्त्रमाग्रा दुर्गाऽसि दुर्गभवसागरनौरसङ्गाः ।
 श्रीः कैटभाऽरिहृदयैककृताधिवासा गौरी त्वमेव शशिमौलिकृतप्रतिष्ठा ॥सप्तशती-४.११॥
 दुर्गे स्मृता हरसि भीतिमशेषजन्तोः स्वस्थैः स्मृता मतिमतीव शुभां ददासि ।
 दारिद्र्यदुःखयहारिणि! का त्वदन्या सर्वोपकारकरणाय सदार्द्रचित्ता? ॥सप्तशती-४.१७॥

Daṇḍi in his *Kāvyādarśa* says :

संस्कृतं नाम देवी वागन्वाख्याता महर्षिभिः ।
 तद्भवस्तत्समो देशीत्यनेकः प्राकृतक्रमः ॥काव्यादर्श-१.३३॥

Poetess Gangādevī in her *Mahākāvya Madhurāvijayam* has paid her homage to Goddess Sarasvatī :

महाकविमुखाम्भोज मणिपञ्जरशारिकाम् ।
 चैतन्यजलधिज्योत्स्नां देवीं वन्दे सरस्वतीम् ॥मधुराविजयम् १.३॥

Similarly, poetess Devakumārikā in her text *Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti* glorifies Goddess Śāradā :

शारदा वस्तु शारदाम्बुजस्वानना मम मुखाम्बुजे सदा ।
 यत्कृपायुतकटाक्षभाग् यतोऽभाग्यलोपमयमेति मानवः ॥वैद्यनाथ प्रा.प्र.१.३॥

The same trend of worshipping Goddess Sarasvatī is continued even in the modern period by poetess Nalini Shukla and Uma Deshpande.

The power or the energy of all pervading Omniscient and Omnipotent *Parabrahman Paramātmā* is called Divine Mother (*Devī*). She is called Mātā, Ambicā, Pārvatī, Devī, Mahālakṣmī, Durgā, Cāmuṇḍā, Reṇukā, Sarasvatī, Śāradā etc. Patki Rajni states (in her book 'The concept of *Upāsana*'). In India the worship of *Devī* is as ancient as the Sanskrit literature itself. In the *Rgveda* this *Śakti* is identified by various names as Uśā, Sarasvatī, Aditi, Rātri etc. and the hymns to them are abundantly found in the Vedic text. The single power of the divinity is described by various names in different situations. When she maintains the world she is called *Bhavānī*, when she is in action she is called *Lakṣmī*. In her angry appearance she is called *Durgā*. In destructive sense she is called

Kālī. These various forms of *Devī* like *Mahālakṣmī*, *Mahāśarasvatī* and *Mahākālī* — represent the three modes of *Prakṛti Guṇās* namely *Satvaguṇa*, *Rajoguṇa* and *Tamoguṇa* respectively.”

In the poem *Ambā Vandanā* poetess Nalini Shukla implores the Goddess to bestow divine love on her :

आधार एक एवास्ति नामस्मरणमम्ब! ते ।
येन केनापि भावेन स्वालस्येनेतरेण वा ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥
त्यक्ष्यसि त्वां यदा मातः! कोऽन्यस्साहाय्यमेष्यति ।
कः परः सहातां लोके केवलं जननीं विना? ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥
ज्ञानेनाऽप्यथवा ऽज्ञानात् यत्किञ्चिद्रचितं मया ।
तदादरेण श्रोतव्यं क्षन्तव्यं परमेश्वरि ! ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥

In the composition *Devīdevanam* consisting of nine verses, poetess finds herself engrossed in ocean of the mundane world and asks for help :

गतः कियान्काल इहारुढदन्त्याः दिने दिने त्वामनुचिन्तयन्त्याः ?
कथं स्वपुत्रीं प्रति हार्दरूपिणि! सुदारुणा निष्करुणेव वर्तसे ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥
न संसृतौ मत्सदृशोऽस्ति पातकी यदाम्बिकाप्यद्य तटस्थतां गता ।
श्रुतेर्वचः शास्त्रपरम्पराथवा श्रयत्यलीकत्वमिति स्थिरा मतिः ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥

In the concluding verse she appeals to the Goddess to show compassion and kindness towards her :

कियद्विचित्रं तव चेष्टितं जगन् न पार्यते ज्ञातुमहो रहोरहः ।
विधीयतां देवी ! दयोदयो मयि त्वमेव मातः ! शरणं भवे भवेः ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥

In seven verses poetess depicts the greatness of Goddess *Durgā in Durgā Stavah*. Goddess *Durga* is the remover of all the miseries. The poetess afflicted by various mental and physical ailments implores Goddess to protect her and blames her fate, which is slowly drawing her towards death :

शरण्ये! दीनानां करुणकरुणायासहरणि !
 भवेदम्बायाः किं कुलिशसविधत्वात्कुलिशता ?
 यतस्त्रस्तां ध्वस्तामभित इह विक्षोभविकलां
 न मां दृक्पातोऽपि प्रलवहदयां दातुमलषः ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥
 न चेदृश्यावस्थामथितहृदयायै यदि दया
 किमर्थं तां धत्से ? किमुत तव मातृत्वमहिमा ?
 न चैवापत्यं यः स्नपयति सुधास्नेहसुनिधिः
 किमर्थो जाने न प्रथितभुवनस्सोऽपि च कथम् ॥भावाञ्जलिः ॥
 स्नेहासिक्तदृशं स्वभक्तवशगां माङ्गल्यकीर्तिप्रदां
 पूर्णेन्दुद्युतिकोटिकोट्यतिशयामानन्दमन्दाकिनीम् ।
 ब्रह्मग्रन्थिगवेषिमानसमतां भक्तेष्टवृष्टिप्रभा-
 मज्ञानौघतमोविदारणरतां विद्यां परामाश्रये ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥

In the following verse, the Goddess is glorified by the poetess as the giver of pleasure to eyes, of the essence of (*Vidyā*) erudition, wisdom (*viveka*) the bestower of (*Vātsalya*) affection. She is worshipped by all the Gods and is the remover of ignorance :

विद्याबुद्धिविवेकसारसरसां विश्वंभरां भारतीम् ।
 वात्सल्यामृतवर्षिणीं सुमधुरां वाणीं पराम्बां भजे ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥

In *Vāṇīpañcadaśī* poetess prays Goddess to bestow her grace on her. She further says that many people have praised Her glory and many sinners too have crossed the ocean by, Her grace :

त्रिलोके विख्यातस्तव जननि! कारुण्यमहिमा ।
 न दृष्टिस्नेहाद्रा सरसति ममाङ्गेष्वपि सुधाम् ।
 कियत्कालो यातो वितरसि दृशं नैव सुभगे!
 मृतप्रायप्राणेष्वमृतरससंचाररुचिराम् ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥
 कदा त्वां वात्सल्यं झटिति न विचार्याप्यसुकृतं-
 बलादङ्गीकर्तुं विवशयति मां पुण्यरहिताम् ।
 न मे भक्तिशक्तिर्न च जननि! योगस्तपकथा
 तवापत्यत्वञ्च प्रथयति उपेक्षां न सहते ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥

In the seven verses of *Caraṇa Cintanam*, the pious feet of Goddess are

glorified. In the first two verses poetess Nalini Shukla praises the feet of Goddess. Even the Gods are eager to assume the form of bees with a desire to taste the nectar of her *Pādapadma* (lotus feet) :

यत्पादपद्ममकरन्दमिलिन्दभूता विष्णुः शिवः कमलजादिकदेववृन्दाः ।
तन्माधुरीमधुपभावविलासलुब्धं चित्तं प्रयाति शरणं शुभदे! प्रसीद ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥

She implores the Goddess to bless her :

मातस्त्वदीयनखरश्मिसमूह माला, प्रोद्यदिवाकरकरान्विफलीकरोति ।

Finally, in the last verse she asks mother to bestow grace on her :

दीर्घीकरोत्यनुदिनं परितापगाथां पुत्र्यास्ततो न हि विलम्बविधाप्रशस्या ।
मातुः कलङ्ककलुषाय भविष्यतीयं स्नेहेन तज्जननि! पाहि कृपाकटाक्षैः ॥

Three verses of *Śāradāyācanam* are dedicated by the poetess to Goddess Śāradā :

कदाचित्तमिस्रातमो वारयन्ती,
स्वदीप्त्या शरच्चन्द्रज्योत्स्नां स्फुरन्ती,
करैः कोरकैः कच्छपीं लालयन्ती,
विकासं, मुदं, राहि हे रागशीले
जगद्धासुरे ! शारदे!स्नेहशीले ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥

Similarly, Poetess Uma Deshpande has exhibited her intense love for *Girvāṇabhārati* and thus has highlighted the greatness of Sanskrit Language.

यया दत्तमृषीणां तद् दर्शमं मन्त्रदर्शनम् ।
आविर्भूता च तस्मात् सा भारती वेदभारती ॥अर्चनम्॥
वाल्मीकिना पुरा दत्ता रम्या रामायणी कथा ।
व्यासेन मुनिना सृष्टं भारतं ज्ञानमौक्तिकम् ॥अर्चनम्॥

Further, poetess pays her homage to Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya, a philosopher follower of *Karma Yoga* and a protector of culture :

शङ्करं शङ्कराचार्यं तत्त्वज्ञं कर्मयोगिनम् ।
गोसारं संस्कृतेर्धीरं वन्दे वेदान्तज्ञानदम् ॥अर्चनम्॥

In the last verse she pays homage to *Gīrvāṇabhārtī* and appeals Her to reside on the tip of our tongue :

वयं सर्वे नमस्कुर्मः तुभ्यं गीर्वाणभारति ।
वस त्वं ननु जिह्वाग्रे सर्वविद्याप्रदा भव ॥अर्चनम्॥

Great affection of poetess towards Sanskrit language is reflected in the poems like “रतिर्मे संस्कृतभाषायाम्”, “जयतु जयतु दैवी वाक्” and “सञ्जीवनं संस्कृतम्”

The poetess considers Sanskrit language to be the mother of all languages, the treasure house of knowledge :

संस्कृतभाषा भाषाजननी संस्कृतेरेवं खलु ज्ञानखनी ।
अति रुचिरा सा, बहु मधुरा सा तदर्थं ममेवमभिलाषः ॥अर्चनम्॥
संस्कृतशिक्षा हि मोदप्रदा संस्कृतशिक्षा हि मुक्तिप्रदा
आर्याणां सा जनवाणी सा असौ हि राष्ट्रीय भाषा ॥अर्चनम्॥

Again in ‘*Jayatu Jayatu Daivī Vāk*’ poetess glorifies the Sanskrit language. That immortal language, which depicts the Supreme Reality, (which is in the form of *Satya* and *Śiva*), permeating the whole world and bringing an end to all miseries may that language triumph :

रघुवरकुलदिव्यं वृत्तमन्तर्दधाना
यदुवरकमनीयं जीवनं दर्शयन्ती ।
प्रतिपदमधुरार्था सेव्यते या मनोज्ञा
जयतु जयतु दैवी वाक् सदा संस्कृता सा ॥अर्चनम्॥

अखिलजगदवस्थं सत्यरूपं परेशं
शिवमपि सकलार्तिनाशनं दिव्यरूपम् ।
ऋषिगणश्रुतिनादं सुन्दरं धारयन्ती
जयतु जयतु दैवी वाक् सदा संस्कृता सा ॥अर्चनम्॥

सङ्गीतं श्रुतिपेशलं समुदितं यस्मिन् पुरा भारते
मन्त्रास्ते नवविश्वजागरकरा दिव्या मुनीनां सदा ।
शास्त्रं नैकविधं समुन्नतिकरं यस्मिंश्च सृष्टं परं
विश्वे यन्ननु राजते ह्यभिनवं सञ्जीवनं संस्कृतम् ॥अर्चनम्॥

God Gaṇeśa :

Poetess Gaṅgādevī and Devakumārikā of the Medieval period have offered prayers to God Gaṇeśa in their compositions namely *Madhurāvijayam* and *Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti* respectively :

कल्याणाय सतां भूयाद् देवो दन्तावलाननः ।
शरणागतसङ्कल्प कल्पनाकल्पपादपः ॥मधुराविजयम् १.१॥

Poetess Devakumārikā too in her composition *Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti*, offers homage to God Gaṇeśa :

गुञ्जद्धमदध्रमरराजिविराजितास्य स्तम्बरेमाननमहं नितरां नमामि ।
यत्पादपङ्कजपरागपवित्रितानां प्रत्यूहराशय इह प्रशमं प्रयान्ति ॥वैद्यनाथ प्रा.प्र.-१.२॥

Among the modern poetesses studied by me poetess Nalini Shukla has glorified God Gaṇeśa in her composition *Gaṇapaticintanam*. She praises God Gaṇeśa and describes the child Gaṇeśa taking milk and lying on the lap of Mother Pārvatī :

वात्सल्येन सुलालितं गिरिजया स्वाङ्गे निधायाञ्चले
वारम्वारमपास्य हारसरणिं स्वाल्पाल्पहस्ताम्बुजैः ।
वक्षोजामृतपानलग्नललितं स्निग्धस्मितं शैशवे
स्वौत्सुक्येन मृशन्तमम्बचिबुकं शम्भोः सुतं भावये ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥

God Gaṇeśa is the giver of pleasure to both Lord Śiva and Goddess Pārvatī. He is described as playing, embracing and loving his mother. His face looked beautifully due to spreading of milk on his face :

दूरीकृत्य निचोलमास्यकमलात् केलिप्रसन्नानने
मुग्धे क्षीरकणश्रियातिसुषमं बालार्ककोटिप्रभम् ।
श्लिष्यन्तं जननीं तथा च झटिति प्रेम्णा मुहुश्चुम्बितं
वात्सल्याणवमज्जितं शिवशिवानन्दप्रदं नौमि तम् ॥भावाञ्जलिः॥

गणानां त्वा गणपतिं हवामहे कविं कवीनामुपमश्रवस्तमम् ।
ज्येष्ठराजं ब्रह्मणां ब्रह्मणस्पत आ नः शृण्वन्नूतिभिः सीद सादनम् ॥ऋग्वेद २.२३.१॥

Bhatt B. N. in his book “*Gaṇeśavijayam*” observes, “It is supposed to be the *Sūkta* of Lord Gaṇapati. Really speaking this is a *Sūkta* of

Brahmaṇaspatiḥ. Even though He was a son of Śaṅkara and Pārvatī, He was not born from the womb of his mother as stated in *Brahmavaivartapūrāṇa* 3.4 and *Lingapurāṇa* 105. *Upaniṣads* like *Gaṇeśatāpini*, Gaṇeśa-atharvaśiraṣ, Gaṇeśa and Heramba pertain to Lord Gaṇeśa.

Another reference of *Gaṇapati* is found in *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* (23.19).

Here some scholars say that the reference to Gaṇapati should be understood as referring not to Lord Gaṇapati but to leader of the (Gaṇas) in a general sense. Gaṇeśa was included in the five deities (*Pañcādevas*) during the Gupta period. The *Pañcādevas* are Viṣṇu, Śiva, Devī, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa. Before Gupta age no clear reference to the worship of Gaṇeśa is found in any work or inscription. Very few idols of Gaṇeśa belonging to the Gupta period are found. The characteristic feature of the idol of Gaṇeśa are found in works like *Viṣṇudharmottara*, *Bṛhatsamhitā* etc. He was recognized as a son of Śiva. His worship spread far and wide where He was recognized as a representative of prosperity.”¹

In India He is invoked at the commencement of all the religious rituals.

Conclusion :

Gaṅgādevī as a devout poetess has offered prayers to different divinities like God Śīva and Pārvatī, God Gaṇeśa, Goddess Sarasvatī, Kulaguru Kriyāśakti as well as to her learned teacher Vīśvanātha. Rāmabhadraṁbā being ardently devoted to her husband emperor Raghunātha has shown her reverence to God Rāma by comparing the king with the latter. In the *Khaṇḍakāvya Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti*, the poetess Devakumārikā has offered prayer to God Śīva alias *Vaidyanātha* and *Ekaliṅga* ardently worshipped by the people of Mewar even today. Since, *Santānagopāla Kāvya* is based on a theme found in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, it contains glorification of God Viṣṇu alias Kṛṣṇa and his various incarnations.

¹ Bhatt B. N. — Introduction, page 20

Thus in the poetry of the poetesses belonging to the medieval period we prominently find the mythological and metaphysical expressions mainly related with the divinities portrayed in Epics and *Purāṇas* and worshiped by the people in different regions of India.

In case of modern poetry this trend of offering prayers to the deities is continued. Since these compositions are brief and concise, we do not find the description of various aspects connected with these divinities. The poetesses offer the prayers to the Gods keeping some purpose in mind like removing the pains of poverty, illness, isolation and dispelling physical, intellectual and spiritual weakness. Secondly, the poetesses like Pandita Kshama Rao, Mithileshkumari Mishra, Uma Deshpande have nicely depicted majestic personalities of some saints and scholars like Jñāneśvara, Tukārāma, Rāmadāsa, Mīrābaī, sage Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, Śrī Aurobindo, Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī, Nānā Mahārāja etc. These scholarly saints have not only explained practical wisdom but have also shown the path of spiritual enlightenment.

In short, the Philosophical trends and thoughts are skilfully highlighted by the poetesses from 14th to 21st century AD.

