

<https://doi.org/10.37948/ensemble-2020-0201-a014>



## EXPLORING THE MANGALKAVYA: A NARRATIVE OF THE PRETEXT OF THE TEXTUAL UNIVERSE

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### Article Ref. No.:

20011844N1MEPY

### Article History:

Submitted on 18 Jan 2020

Accepted on 02 May 2020

Published online on 07 May 2020

### Keywords:

conflict, culture, metropolitanism, mytheme, regional, structuralism, trade

### Abstract:

Individualism, holism, and post-structuralism fail to analyze human society from all respects that drives the scholars to analyze the mode of social change through considering the role of the agency or institution. Depending on the relational structuralism, the present study has made an effort to present the internal structure and process of the current society. Literature, being an intrinsic part of the society, conveys some important messages by which scholars are able to reconstruct the social history of the medieval Bengal. Though the Mangal texts are religious texts with the typical form of poetries, they represent the material aspects of society. Along with the general statement of social dynamics, these poetries also present a stable social order. Without the divine aspects of these poetries, the significant portion carries socio-economic and political scenario. However, when a scholar studies the Manashamangal, Chandimangal, Shivayan, and Dharmamangal, s/he could notice the changing economic condition of eastern India during the middle ages. The other incidents like the dialectics between the two communities, the establishment of an urban centre by Kalketu and his return to previous life later, can be taken under sharp scrutiny. Therefore a thorough study is relevant in this respect to reconstruct the socio-economic history of the concerned period in which the role of literature is indispensable by all means.

### 1.0. Introduction

Scholars are in difficulty to reconstruct the socio-economic history of medieval Bengal. This is mostly due to the scarcity of historical sources.<sup>‡</sup> The

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<sup>‡</sup> For writing the political history of medieval Bengal the historical sources are available, whereas for the study of social history of Bengal there is scarcity of sources. Rajani Kanta Chakrabarti's *Gauder Itihas* and the two works of Rama Prasad Chanda and Akshay Kumar Maitreya definitely focus on the political affairs of Bengal. Later, Rakhal Das Bandyopadhyay compiled the entire bulk of then known epigraphic sources of the time of the Palas in order to comprehensively reconstruct the genealogy and chronology of

present article intends to focus on major *Mangalkavya*, including Manashamangal, Chandimangal, Dharmamangal, Annadamangal, and Shivayan, to bring forth their contribution for writing the socio-economic history of medieval Bengal from the literary point of view. The Mangal texts, composed from the fifteenth to eighteenth century CE (Bhattacharya, 1954), traditionally appear as eulogistic poetries in Bengal praying for the goodness of the society.

In most of the Mangal texts presence of omnipotent and conflicts among them is one of the most important characteristics.<sup>§</sup> Significantly the conflicts do not come to an end with the absolute result. The mother goddesses in these texts (except in Dharmamangal) are associated with regional culture while the *swadagar* community\*\* is related to metropolitanism. Therefore the conflict drawn in the texts is a cultural conflict based on economic activities mostly. Though the Mangal texts are religious texts with the typical form of poetries, they represent the material aspects of society. Besides the divine aspects of these poetries, the significant portion carries socio-economic and political scenario. However, when a scholar studies the Manashamangal, Chandimangal and Shivayan, s/he could notice the changing economic condition of eastern India during the middle ages (Curley, 2008). The other incidents, like the establishment of an urban center by Kalketu and his return to a previous life later, overrates the stages of social evolution. Therefore a thorough study is relevant in this respect to reconstruct the socio-economic history of the concerned period in which the role of literature is indispensable by all means. Since language has a significant role in expressing the social dynamics (Strauss, 1963), we should find out the social lineage that society preserves and reveals through myth.

## 2.0. Materials & Methods:

In this present article, an attempt will be made to understand the reasons behind different forms of social inclusions and exclusions. There are different methods to analyze society and social history. There are three basic approaches to analyze society: (i) individualism, (ii) holism, (iii) structuralism and post-structuralism.<sup>††</sup> Individualism emphasizes the moral worth of the individual and recognizes one's goals and desires, ignoring any external interference from society and other institutions. It also makes the individual its focus as the fundamental premises. Therefore, to interpret any social fact, the individual stands as the prime object, and no other factor comes into consideration to stand as historical (Swarts,

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that lineage. Besides, D.C. Sircar, B.C. Sen, R.C. Mazumder, Nijarranjan Ray – all engaged themselves in reconstructing the history of Bengal from political perspective. Therefore it is difficult to reconstruct the socio-economic history of Bengal in medieval period. Interested reader may get the detailed information: [https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/165192/8/08\\_chapter%201.pdf](https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/165192/8/08_chapter%201.pdf).

§ Specially in Manasamangal and Chandimangal, the conflicts have been depicted between popular goddesses, Manasa and Chandi on one hand and Shiva on the other. But Shiva physically is not present in this conflict. He is active through his followers.

\*\* *Swadagar Community* means the merchant community who is involved in trade and commerce.

†† Social formation has been explained under these broad categories.

1962). On the other hand, holism stands for 'Whole'. It is an idea of asserting that a system cannot be explained by a single component within it (Karakostas, 2008). This system can explain the way the parts behave. The term holism is used within social and cultural anthropology to analyze society as a whole, and here it denies the functions of separate parts of society, thereby seeing society as an entity of being. Therefore, based on this theory, an empirical study is not possible; otherwise, our vision would remain monochromatic.

Since the sociological and socio-anthropological approach implies the relationship between the parts is more important than the parts themselves taken singularly, the Mangal texts will be explained in the light of Levi-Strauss's structuralism. As the prime objective is to reconstruct the socio-economic history of medieval Bengal as represented in Mangalkavya, the major sources of our study, being mythical in nature, one must comprehend what a myth is. Why does it stand for? Another related question rises, i.e., what is the role of language? Someone can claim that human society uses myth to express their feelings, and for this, they try to place some explanations for phenomena. Readily speaking, the purpose of mythology is to provide an outlet of suppressed feelings.

"Levi Strauss is aware of his affinity with the thrust of the Gestalt school. He suggests that he only adds the discipline of sociology or anthropology to those guided by the concept of Gestalt" (Rotenstreich, 1972)

The structure is made of several elements, but one cannot undergo a change without changing all other elements. An additional term used by Levi Strauss is 'order' or 'order of orders'—the concept of the interrelationship between the levels to which structural analysis can be applied. Firstly, the societies are structures, and these structures are also divided into secondary structures, which involve themselves in definition or description of the certain common core like kinship, myth etc. Human awareness itself is essentially a part of a structure and is shaped by the interaction of its different ingredients. For Levi Strauss, the fundamental or primary human experience is that of grasping oppositions. These are called 'binary opposition'. Furthermore, they are referred to as

"certain compatibilities which are consciously maintained by a special group and which possess a normative value" (Rotenstreich, 1972).

Linguistics occupies a dominant role in social sciences, and, according to Levi Strauss (1963), it occupies a predominant position. Learning from linguistics, he views his approach as an extension to another field of structural linguistics, which is associated with Roman Jakobson. However, this previously mentioned extension of the concept of Gestalt is not comprised in the original Gestalt theory. Using different terminology, Levi Strauss speaks about language as a totalizing entity or *totalization*. The predominant position of language can be explained by, at least two interrelated considerations. Firstly, Language is the primary manifestation of human creativity or activity versus the world. The position of language as the *differentia specifica*<sup>##</sup> of man justifies turning language into a model of structures

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<sup>##</sup> It is a German phrase and stands for a basis for discriminating between two or more alternatives.

prevalent in human existence (Charbonnier, 1969). Secondly, Language operates not on the level of consciousness but the level of unconsciousness. Language just does not flame up; it creates an order of its own, and that may be observed in the texts of the Mangalkavya. This order is present not only in the comprehensive structure of linguistic units but also have an effect continuing over generations of men.

According to Levi Strauss (1963), myth can be broken down in constituent units, which are mythemes; the key to understanding the overall meaning of the myth is to uncover the way mythemes are organized or relate to each other. He focuses not on what myth means but what myth does. He argues that myth is to make a story out of fundamental and irresolvable human contradictions or enigmas. They layer many different versions of the same contradictions on top of each other. Therefore a myth is three dimensional. The linear ordering of a myth is less important than the synchronic pattern of repetitions that exists in different versions and without disturbing the mythic system. The question arises how the structure of myth can be understood more easily? Michel Danino (2010) answers that:

“By the word, ‘Myth’, I mean a complex, multi-layered legend that weaves together heroic deeds and divine miracle, and, through powerful symbols, impression a set of values on the mind of a people. The Myth becomes, in turn, inseparable from its people’s customs and traditions...And whether or not a myth has some historical bases, it is true as long as it lives and works in the mind it has shaped... Whether they are ‘facts’ in our limited sense of the term is irrelevant. Myths are something greater than fact...Whether or not a myth has grown around a historical seed; it is a maker of history”.

Post-structuralism rejects the idea that a literary text, having multi-faceted interpretation, has a single purpose or existence. Foucault holds that history has no constant human subject enabling us to identify a coherent or constant human condition or nature. It cannot show any rational development. Post-structuralism wants to establish an important factor, i.e., there is no relation among the social facts, and every fact is a unit conveying its separation from the others. Therefore, Foucault’s history is not always sound, and his historical evidence is very selective and distorted. He does not bring the experience into consideration for historical research. As history belongs to social science and society cannot be explained in such a rigid manner, Foucault is not perfect in his opinion to effective history.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that any particular theory cannot explain the social events in all respects. If we acknowledge mentalite<sup>ss</sup>, the social strata and the relation among them will not come into consideration. The role of agency in the change of society does not come into consideration, while the role and function of social strata are significant. The mode of social change cannot be explained without considering the role of the agency or institution. Therefore, relational structuralism will be our approach to study the myth in Mangal texts to reconstruct the socio-economic history of medieval Bengal.

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<sup>ss</sup> A person’s feelings about the wider society and world in which they live, and their place within in.

### 3.0. Results

Our area of study is related to the society and the economy of medieval Bengal as may be traced in the mythical representation of the Mangal texts. There is hardly any source that can focus effectively on this smoky part of the social dynamics of medieval Bengal. Since literature is an intrinsic part of the cultural aspects of human civilization, it conveys some important messages which can explain the society from a historical perspective and Mangalkavya is ideal for this purpose; in fact, this literary creation well reconstructs the history of the concerned period.

Among the Sakta literature flourishing between the fifteenth and eighteenth century, Manasamangal, Chandimangal, and Dharmamangal are the most important texts. In Dharmamangal, Dharmathakur is the male omnipotent, whereas in the other two Mangal texts, Manasa and Chandi are popular goddesses. Of those poems, Manashamangal is the oldest one and is particularly relevant across Bangladesh, Assam, Bihar, and in some parts of Orissa; this text has contributed to the formation of an integrated cultural pattern in Bengal. Some eminent writers of this text have shifted from the western to the eastern part of Bengal over time, and gradually spread this textual style over the eastern and south-eastern region, the Bengali speaking region in Assam, and North Bengal. It makes us astonished that, despite being spread over such a largest region, the themes and the story of the Manasamangal remain unchanged. Now, the question is why Bangladesh<sup>\*\*\*</sup> accepted this poetry as it was even though its people belonged to very different castes and social strata. Indeed, in Bengali culture, there are some unifying factors that bring the 'unity in diversity' and Manasamangal happens to be one of them. In different regions of Bangladesh, the goddess, Manasa, has been worshipped in different forms and modes, but they were all inspired by some common aspects. Somewhere, an earthen pot is personified as a goddess, and somewhere else, an idol made of earth is worshipped for prosperity and blessings. In Bangladesh, the extensive use of Nag-Ghat refers to the storage of grain (Bhattacharyya, 1954). Since the snake and other cult-animals are related to earth, the earth is somehow, is related to the feeling of being indigenous, in turn referring to fertility and production.

Another way to celebrate Manasa, as often found on either side of the river, Bhagirathi, is to worship the Indian *Spurge (euphorbia nerifolia)* tree. In Bengal and other parts of India, especially in South India, the snake is associated with a particular tree, and both represent fertility cult. In Northern India's patriarchal society, a snake is worshipped as a male omnipotent, Nagraaj (king of serpents) Basuki. However, in Bengal, s/he is devoted as a goddess. Her origin is hardly traceable. Followers of the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism worshipped the goddess of snake in the name of Janguli (Bhattacharya, 1954). The word Janguli hints at the jungle or its inhabitants. However, janguli is no longer used today. Instead Bisahari, the word 'Manasa' is used to denote the goddess of serpents. Among the tribal communities of (Chotonugpur, Manbhum, Hazaribug), Jharkhand

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<sup>\*\*\*</sup> I want to mean undivided Bengal.

and Bihar, the name 'Manasa' is used to refer to a goddess. In Bangladesh, as well as in the Deccan region, Manasa is venerated by people belonging to the lower casts like the Bauri, Bagdi, Chakra, Toriar, etc. The word 'Manasa' is not a Sanskrit word. It is supposed that Manasa was born out of Brahma's will to dignify its position as a goddess. However, it is mentioned in Manasamangal that she was born from Shiva, whose status is supposed to have changed in the texts. So tracing the origin of the word 'Manasa' among the tribal communities living in the western part of Bengal seems to be legitimate.

Now, it is interesting to learn how the term has come from the western part to other parts of the Bengal. Since Manasa is the goddess of the lower strata of the society, she is with an intrinsic association with the snake charmer. The traditional snake-catcher uses snakes to charm people instead of money. These snakes-charmers, and the people who deal with the mystical formulae and medicine for snake-bitten patients, consider Kamaksha as a sacred place. So, from the different regions of northern India, snake charmers used to go to Kamaksha every year crossing the Bengal. During their journey, they used to settle in Bengal. This might be the reason that the people of this region eventually became familiar with the personified 'Manasa'.

The story of Manasa and Chandswadagar is still in vogue in Bihar and Assam. This story was transmitted from Bihar to the Brahmaputra region through North Bengal and the Surma valley region of Assam. Interestingly in Indian culture, this transmission took place from the West to the East. The story of Manasa and Chandswadagar has been widely recited in north Bihar until now. Therefore, this story came from the Bihar region and became localized in Bengal. Since the story was so intrinsically accepted by the people inhabiting north Bihar, it is hardly possible to suggest that it has come from elsewhere. Moreover, the names recited in this story e.g., Soneka, Behula, Chandswadagar, and many more, are derived from the Hindi<sup>†††</sup>. Therefore tracing the origin of this narrative in Bihar seems to be justifiable. It is interesting that each of the manuscripts, based on the story of Manasa and Chandswadagar in Bihar, allowed some Bengali songs to incorporate. We are inquisitive what the reason for it is. Some scholars think that the story was transmitted from eastern Bengal to Bihar<sup>†††</sup>. On the contrary, if the story could have been transmitted from Bengal, then the question arises why the sub-stories

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††† In Manasamangal text, the name of trade route and other places are related to Bengal, whereas the characters in the text are related to Behar, at least etimologically. Otherwise, in Bihar this text appears in a shorter form than that in Bengal. Therefore the new story like 'Hassan-Hussein' and others are not there in the text in Bihar. These stories have been incorporated in the text recited in Bengal. It is well known that these sub stories as I have stated above, have been incorporated in the Manasamangal in Bengal in fifteenth century CE. Therefore, the version of the text in Bihar is older than that of Bengal and hence there is hardly any justification to trace the origin of the text in Bengal. In addition, Narayan Dev, one of the poets of the Manasamongal, refers Soneka, wife of Chandswadagar, as the daughter of Beharia king.

††† Asutosh Bhattacharya has raised the issue from literary point of view. Historically there is hardly any scope of cultural transmission from East to West. Due to the influence of the Hindi cultural tradition on Manasamangal the shorter form of the text came into Bengal and has been accepted widely. Therefore the statement is made contextually.

like Hassan-Hussein<sup>sss</sup> and many others were not incorporated in that version in Bihar? So it can be argued that the story did not completely originate in Bengal. It was later transmitted to Bihar. Rather, one can advocate that some Bengali songs in verse were attached to the main story later. In his version, Narayandev also addresses Soneka as the princess of a Beharia raja (king of Bihar), while DwijBansidas also traces Soneka's family in ManikyaPatali that may be Patna (Bhattacharyya, 1954). DwijBansidas also refers to Bihari Merchants — Hiramani and Suramani - among Chandswadagar's groomsmen (Bhattacharya, 1954). So the plots in the Manasamangal have strong pieces of evidence that they were originated in Bihar or the mid-Gangetic plain in the early medieval period.

#### 4.0. Discussion

The grounds for choosing the Mangalkavya is that they have wide social acceptance. Though they are, to some extent, religious in nature, they also represent the material aspects of society. Along with the general statement of social dynamics, this poetry also indicates a stable social order. Aside from the divine aspects of this poetry, the major portion carries socio-economic and political scenarios. From the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries, the narrative of social struggle has been found in most of the Mangal texts in Bengal and its surrounding areas, and such literary style has been applied uninterruptedly. The struggles between Manasa and Chandswadagar or between Chandi and DhanapatiSwadagar, portray the conflict between traditional and metropolitan cultures based on two different types of economy. The conflicts that have been shown in the Mangal texts do not come to an end with drastic consequences. None of the forces gains its victory or goes to be belligerent absolutely. In these texts, it is not a part of the literary etiquette for the dialectics to come to an end with synthesis. They convey the complicated message of the process of social development. The conflicts told by the authors of the Mangalkavya took place between the Vedic or mythological god and goddess on the one hand, and the popular goddess and god on the other. On the surface, it seems to be religious conflict. But metaphorically, they convey an important social movement originating out of economic activities. In these texts, popular deities behave even in a more violent manner than their followers.

Chandswadagar and Dhanapatiswadagar oppose worshipping Manasa and Chandi, respectively. However, they are never portrayed as behaving rudely with their wives. So any design of gender conflict cannot be established. Now the question is, why did the popular deities incline to be worshipped violently? Probably based on demand, several changes took place in society, and several social institutions emerged and revealed themselves initially in the form of conflict (Roy Chaudhury, 2001, p.57). The people attending worship in Mangalkavya are divided into two sections. The first one, to some extent, is secular, advocating

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<sup>sss</sup> Hassan-Hussein story refers the socio-religious conflict between the Muslim and the Hindu in Bengal. In the text, the cattlemen who are the followers of the popular deity Manasa, became involved in conflict with the representatives of Muslim community, Hassan and Hussain.

landlordism and later on the capitalistic mode of production. The others like Soneka, Fullara, Khullana and many others belong to a society that prefers hunting and a small farming-based economy, that made their sphere of movement less significant in comparison with that of the former group. The religious conflicts between the popular deities and the followers of the metropolitan god in the text may be explained as a conflict between metropolitan culture speaking about the society based on long-distance trade and commerce, and regional culture that is controlled by tradition and lineage. So, the binary relation might be apparent here. In Manashamangal, Manasa is the choice of binary; but in Chandimangal, it is difficult to identify Chandi as a binary alternative. Though in Chandimangal, Chandi is a popular goddess, in Manashamangal, Chandi presents herself as a mythological deity attached to the metropolitan culture. Gopinath Rao explains that Chandi becomes the mythological goddess in Manashamangal through the aryanisation process\*\*\*\*. This hypothesis cannot be ignored when one notices the harsh reaction of Chandi to Bhandudutta and Dhanapatiswadagar who are *Saiva* and her sympathy towards Fullara, Khullana, and Kalketu. Such behaviour of Chandi establishes her sympathy towards a matrilineal society.

There are some contradictory socio-economic statements in Mangalkavya. Along with the socio-economic trend of metropolitanism, the concept of autochthonousness has been placed so spontaneously that it cannot be felt separately. The struggles in the Mangalkavya take place between the mythological god worshipped by the merchant community and the popular deities representing the female section of the society, who confine themselves in the regional activities. This section used to recite the folk song to invoke their deity, but it has a universal appeal. We observe cruelty in the manner of popular deities, but the mythological god or goddess is sober in their behaviour. Even when their followers are at stake, they are not responsive to them. The cult-animals of the popular deities are tiger, crocodile, snake etc. who are never detached from the earth. All the struggles end with a victory for the popular goddesses, but it is interesting enough to note that these victories are not absolute. In every case, there is a trend of acceptance and recognition of each other. Again, all these facts convey more important messages than they represent apparently. In Shivayan and Manashamangal, Shiva was portrayed as economically vulnerable. He was a poor brahmin attached to the agrarian economy at the beginning of this text. However, in the later phase, it is noticeable that the Sawdagar community worshipped Shiva. From a sociological perspective, it is impossible to explain why the merchant community worshipped Shiva, who belonged to different social strata. The explanation may focus on the transformation of the economic condition of Shiva due to his involvement in agriculture and trade based on surplus agrarian production.

At the beginning of Shivayan and Manashamangal, Shiva appeared to be a brahmin who was a beggar by profession. He was financially too poor to maintain his family, and for this very reason, he was often involved in squabbles with his

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\*\*\*\* The goddess Chandi became absorbed into the greater Indo-Aryan population through the aryanisation process. It is a cultural transformation attached to socio-economic changes.



maid. In this situation, his maid, Chandi, advised him to adopt the profession of cultivation, and he obtained *patta*<sup>†††</sup> from Indra (Bhattacharya 1964)<sup>###</sup>, and seeds from Kuber<sup>§§§</sup>. He used his trident to make a plough and started to cultivate the land given to him. After successful farming with the knowledge of climate suitable for cultivation, huge crops were produced. Thus in Shivayan, Shiva becomes the merchant acquiring capital from surplus agrarian production. In this probable way, Shiva, depicted as a mere brahmin, appears in the latter part of Manashamangal and Chandimangal to be the god of the merchant community. These statements indicate two states of the economy which are, agrarian in the earlier part of the text and merchant in the latter. The composers of the Mangal texts did not overlook the process of socio-economic changes intrinsically related to the mode of production. They contributed to the formation of a cultural pattern in Bengal.

In Shivayan, when the plot of Bhīma is scrutinized, it is observed that Shiva is not careful with Bhīma, a wage-based cropper who cultivates for Shiva. When Bhīma asks for food, Shiva initially refuses to provide him with any. However, immediately, we notice that he arranges food for Bhīma, although this was made possible by Bhīma blackmailing Shiva. Undoubtedly it gives birth to the notion that the grantees of this period were, to some extent parsimonious, and recognized the importance of these primary tillers who were also independent in that very situation. Moreover, it is interesting that *arai-hala*<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> *dhan*(rice) produced in the land assigned to Shiva was burnt by Bhīma, who was merely a cropper. Here it is clear from this incident that agrarian exploitation by the landlords was extensive, and the petty croppers sometimes revolted against their masters. So there was social tension, obviously, between them. But this cannot be the example of forced labour; rather, it proves the existence of a conditional agreement between them (Bhattacharya, 1964).

In Chandimangal, there are two episodes. The first is related to the establishment of the city by Kalketu. Kalketu being a hunter established in a city where he hardly lived and then returned to the profession of hunting (Chakroborty, 2007). The other episode is of Dhanapatiswadagar, who observed a sea mirage, a miracle enacted by Chandi on his way to Ceylon. When Dhanapati

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††† *Patta* is a piece of paper establishing citizen's right over land.

### Indra being the protector of the clan became powerful and his position was as high as a king. Therefore he had right to distribute *patta* among his citizens.

§§§ In our society Lakshmi and Kuber both of them having divine glory, are treated as the divine power of wealth. But the wealth of Lakshmi comes from labour and thence it is stable and related with solvent household. But that of Kuber is not stable and comes from unfair means. It depends on trickiness rather than labour and intelligence.

\*\*\*\* *Hala* - a unit of measurement at that time. In the Iksvaku Inscription of the Krishna-Guntur region of the second half of third century C.E. the ruler is making gift of hundreds and thousands of hala. Here the word hala is used as a unit of measurement and indicates the practice of plough cultivation in that period. It is identical as the medieval Bengali literature like Shivayan refers the word in the description of burning rice, produced in the field of Shiva, by Bhīma, a temporary peasant. Therefore it seems that the unit of measurement in Bengal and Andhrapradesh is same.

failed to show the king the sea mirage, the king of Ceylon imprisoned him as per the condition. Dhanapati was ultimately released from imprisonment by his son Srimanta when Chandi favoured him to convince the king regarding the mirage. In this respect, two questions may arise. The first is – why did Kalketu not survive in city life and returned to hunting life? The second question is—why did Chandi help Srimanta to rescue Dhanapati, who acted against the popular goddess?<sup>++++</sup> These two episodes are mythical in nature, revealing much more than normal literary statements. The Kalketu episode has no reality unless we put the story on a sociological canvas. The evolution of society cannot ignore the steps of social change that define the metropolitan society, followed by the sedentary agrarian society and food gathering or hunting economy consecutively. Here Kalketu ignored the step of agronomy and entered into a metropolitan culture that is hardly possible as per the law of social change. For this reason, Kalketu had to return to an earlier phase of his life. In another episode, Dhanapati, hostile to Chandi, was rescued by Srimanta while Chandi favoured him. This incident cannot be justified factually. Rather one can say that the rescue of Dhanapati from imprisonment by the favour of Chandi, and the subsequent recognition of Chandi by Dhanapati, indicates synthesis and this process have been completed by Srimanta as mediator. This synthesis asserts the cultural synthesis since the popular goddess and Dhanapati, worshipper of Shiva, belong to different strata of society. Likewise in Manasamangal, the conflict between Chandswadagar and Manasa comes to an end with synthesis, and in this context, the role of Behula and Laxmindar cannot be denied. Chandswadagar finally agreed to worship Manasa at the request of Behula, but this submission was not absolute. While Chandswadagar, a delegate of metropolitanism, worshipped Manasa, the popular goddess, became pleased and returned his *saptadinga*<sup>++++</sup>. Therefore metropolitanism, despite being more liberal and powerful, did not acquire absolute dominance in society. It had to acknowledge the regional culture through the synthesis in the text.

In Dharmamangal, similar synthesis can be observed at the end of the text. The prime character Laosena in this text was frequently requested to do harm by his maternal uncle Mahamad. At last, Dharmathakur protector of Laosena, acted in his favour and Mahamad suffered from leprosy at the curse of Dharmathakur. But recovery of Mahamad from leprosy was also made by Dharmathakur at the request of Laosena. Here the role of Laosena may be treated as his greatness, but this analysis may simplify the complex issue of society. It indicates cultural fusion among the clusters of society representing metropolitanism and comparatively regional cultures by Mahamad, minister of the king of Gour and Laosena, son of Karnasena, who was the feudal lord of Maynangarh under the king of Gaur (Bhattacharya, 2009). The fact that Laosena is the son of a feudal lord representing the socio-economic pattern of cultural affairs of that community cannot deny the

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<sup>++++</sup>The same narrative may be observed in texts of Manashamangal, Chandimangal and Dharmamangal.

<sup>++++</sup> *Saptadinga* means seven boats used by Chandswadagar for trade and commerce.

throb of the locality. Dharmathakur, being the prime deity of the aboriginals of the western part of Bengal province, supported Laosena in his struggle with Mahamad, who represented the metropolitan outlook of the ruling elites. In reality, this fact cannot be interpreted since the king of Gaur appeared in support of Laosena. Therefore this struggle cannot be explained as either a political or personal struggle; rather, it was a cultural struggle as represented by Laosena and Mahamad. Likewise, Bharatchandra also depicted the social interactions among different strata in the typical form of poetry. In the eighteenth century Bengal the politico-economic relations among the regional elites, along with other social orders have been depicted by Bharatchandra in his *Annadamangal* (Bandyopadhyay & Das, 1944).

### Conclusion

In most of the Mangal texts, there are some social messages that appear in a mythical way. The reasons which are placed in justification of the depicted course of actions of the texts, these are pretexts of the texts composed in medieval Bengal. These pretexts may be explained as literary etiquette that was followed by the composers. In some texts, this presentation kept the impression of literary intelligence as well as social consciousness and indicates material relationships with that which they intended to signify. Composition of texts using language gave birth to myths in which language functions more actively, not on the level of consciousness but the level of unconsciousness. This creates an order of its own in the textual universe of medieval Bengal.

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