

# The Profusion of ‘*Sringara*’ Thoughts in The *Odia-Riti-Kavya* Literatures: With Special Reference to *Bhanja Kavya*

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## Abstract

Throughout the History, the pursuits of love and sex have played a dominating role in the art and literature of the mankind. Both in the religious literature as well as secular literature, we have seen the large scale presence of ‘*Sringara*’ elements. Especially, during medieval period, the *Odia ‘Riti-Kavis’* used to discuss thoughts of the ‘*Sringara Rasa*’ as one of an important theme in their literary works. This trend has actually got an influence from the classical Sanskrit literature. The high class *Odia* people patronized the court poets to write ‘*Kavya-Sringara*’ to entertain their patrons. The period in between, 1650-1850, is rightly recognized as ‘*Riti-Kavya-Yuga*’ in Odisha. Upendra Bhanja was one of a gifted poet in the ‘*Riti*’ era, and his literary works are enriched with so many cantos of erotic ‘*Sringara*’ allusions. He was credited to compose more than 80 *Kavya* texts. Upendra Bhanja is rightly considered as pioneer among all the *Odia Kavya* poets, his poems are still in use for *Odia* folk lore and enjoyed widely all over Odisha. As a result, this epoch of *Odia* literature is popularly known as Bhanjian era. Not only Upendra Bhanja, many other *Kavya* writers also contributed a lot in the field of ‘*Kavya*’ literature.

**Keywords:** *Sringara*; *Riti-Kavya*; *Rasa Lila*; Embellished; Sensuality; *Odia* Literature; Erogenous; Amorous; Damsels; *Kamasastras*

## Introduction

Art and science have always been independent methods of discovering and presenting truth.<sup>1</sup> Literary, the discussions on love, romance and sex plays are known as ‘*Sringara*’. We are well aware of the fact that Love is a subtle experience in the life of every human being. When the *Nayaka* and *Nayika* involved in love affairs, because of the physical attraction, they engage themselves in romance and sex, that is called ‘*Rati*’, and its various co-activities are called ‘*sringara*’. Therefore, various erotic actions like – hugging; kissing; embracing; sexual foreplays, acts of copulation and sexual congress etc. are the different elements of ‘*Sringara Kala*’. The Sanskrit and *Odia* literary *Kavya* writers have been well influenced by the ‘*Sringararasa*’, all through the ages. There was a strong belief that, the *Kavi* or a poet can’t be regarded as a good poet, unless his literary works are not influenced by ‘*Sringararasa*’. From the very beginning, the ‘*Sringararasa*’ has always provided a wide field for experiments to the classical and regional writers. Particularly, in the *Odia Bhakti Kavya* and secular literatures, we have seen the presence of ‘*Sringara*’ elements as a major but important part. In the epic of ‘*Ramayana*’, *Mahakavi* Valmiki, has discussed about ‘*Sringara*’ in some of its early verses. Thus the pursuits of love and sex played a significant role in literatures and *Puranas*. So far as the *Odia –Riti-Kavyas* are concern the *Odia Kavya* writers have brilliantly used the themes of ‘*Sringara*’ thoughts and the related emotions in their literary devices. We can predict that the classical Sanskrit writers may have successfully transformed the crude ideas of sex by canalizing it into a canonical system.<sup>2</sup> According to scholar, Dr. Binod Bihari Satpathy – “.....to arouse a full comprehension of sex among the masses, which included the whole sexual cycle, courtship and fertility coupling and birth, and beyond birth, a sexual symbolism of parenthood. As a result the *Kamasastras*, like *Kamasutra* of *Vatsyayana* and many other similar texts were written, and the tradition filtered down to

*Odia literature as well*.<sup>3</sup> Erotica became an important part of medieval *Odia Kavya* literature, popularly known as *Riti-Yugiya-Rasa-Kavya*. The *Odia-Riti-Kavis* were proved to be the masters of writing the naked expressions on '*Sringarakala*', that is only possible due to their good knowledge in *Kamasastras*. It is quite difficult to imagine the world of literature without love themes. All most all civilizations have produced literary creations having plenty of the '*Sringara*' thoughts in it. Literature could not be the exception, without dwelling on the love interest.

#### Aim of the Study

The main aims and objectives of the Article is to reveal the importance of '*Sringara*' in the literary works of different *Odia-Riti-Kavis*.

#### The Definitions of '*Sringara*'

Many scholars have been tried to define the exact meaning of '*Sringara*'. Some of the texts like: '*Sabdakalpadruma*', *Odia-Bhasakosa*, and in Hindi '*Sabdasagara*' etc. have presented beautiful definitions with different outlooks. It is pronounced –if a man and woman mutually agreed to engage in '*Ratikrida*' (sex play and sexual congress), that is '*Sringara*'.

1. Acharya Bharata, the author of '*Natyasastra*' mentioned certain basic compendium on '*Sringara*'. According to him, if the sexual congress occurs among the male and female as per the seasonal factors, that is '*Sringara*'.<sup>4</sup>
2. Dhananjaya Bhanja in his text '*Dasarupa*' stated –  
*"Ramyadese Kala Kula Besa Bhogadi Sebanayi,  
 Pramodatma Rati Saiba Yunoronyonya  
 Raktyaho,  
 Prahusyama Srungare Madhuranga  
 Bichestiyoh."*<sup>5</sup>  
 This clearly shows that in a good state of mind, with right time and act, if a male and female involves themselves for sexual congress that is called '*Sringara*'.
3. In the '*Hiranyagarvasukti*' a part of *Rigveda* it is found mentioned, the copulation among a male and female held for the cause of progeny, is known as '*Sringara*'.<sup>6</sup>
4. In the *Atharva Veda*, the '*Kama*' is considered as '*Yagna*', where both the man and woman should fulfill their sexual purpose. Here again it says, that the body and mind of the man is called as '*Kamagni*', which is much strong.<sup>7</sup> The above discussions on '*Sringara*', it is seen that conjugal congress is one of the core point here.
5. The *Tayitireya Upanishad* told, that the multitude sexual desires of a man paves the path towards '*Kama*' or '*Sringara*'.<sup>8</sup>

#### Classification of '*Sringara*'

Acharya Bharata, in his text *Natyasastra*, classified the '*Sringara*' into three classes. "*Tribidhakruti Sringara gyeyo Dharmartha kamokrutah*".<sup>9</sup> The verse speaks that, '*Sringara*' has three orders- The *Dharma Sringara*; The *Artha Sringara*; and The *Kama Sringara*. As Bharata mentioned that, *Dharma Sringara* is related to the

*Grihastadharma*, *Artha Sringara* is related to the act of sex in exchange of money or wealth, and *Kama Sringara* is meant for physical pleasure. Bhojaraja mentioned about one more '*Moksha Sringara*' in his text '*Sringara Prakasa*'. But most of the scholars assign that '*Dharma Sringara*' and '*Moksha Sringara*' have same spirit and objectives. Acharya Rudrata observed, if the *Nayaka* and *Nayika* engage themselves in sex, it may be called as '*Sambhoga Sringara*'.<sup>10</sup> Again Bhojaraja, made it clear that, the '*Sambhoga Sringara*' requires some external elements to ignite the senses of '*Kama*' like-season, body postures, sweet voice, descent place and time, youthful age, and after all the effect of 64 art forms etc.<sup>11</sup> Generally we have seen there are two types of *Sringara*, used in the literatures. One is *Sambhoga Sringara* and other is *Bipralamba Sringara*. The *Sambhoga Sringara* is related to physical congress, whereas the *Bipralamba Sringara* is related to a state of sadness due to the separation of *Nayaka* and *Nayika*.

After a careful analysis, it is assumed that Sanskrit *Kavya* poets and *Odia Kavya* writers particularly, in the *Riti* era were well acquainted with the '*Sringara*' knowledge of different *Kamasastras*. The '*Sringara*' thoughts, not only influenced the Indian literature and art, but also affected the other civilizations. Love, sex and romantic expressions are always remained a part of *Kavya* literatures. The *Agni Purana* enjoins- when the writer is aware of '*Sringara*' knowledge, ultimately the literary works become more attractive. Some critiques even criticize "*it has become difficult to imagine literatures without love. Since the middle ages two have depended on each other more and more and their interrelation is now as complex as civilization.*"<sup>12</sup> The romantic poets adopted this method to make '*Sringara*' a central theme in their *Kavya* works. Like the literary *Kavyas*, the art and sculpture in India as well as Odisha have received solid influence of '*Sringara*' as a core theme. The great Indian seers, from the very beginning established healthy traditions to compose number of *Kamasastras*. These *Kamasastriya* texts bid to propagate disciplined sexual pleasure along with high moral behavior in the life of every individual. In this context the *Kamasutra* of Vastiyana is unique text and much easy to understand. So the text *Kamasutra* is very popular among the readers community across the world. It has left an indelible impact on both the Sanskrit and regional *Kavya* poets.<sup>13</sup> We have seen the '*Sringara*' holds a good popularity. A noted Indologist, Prof. A .L .Basam observed – "*The literature of Hindu India both religious and secular, is full of sexual allusions, sexual symbolism and passages of frank eroticism.*"<sup>14</sup>

#### The Brief History of *Odia* literature

The *Odia* language is one of the most important mass languages in the Eastern part of Indian sub-continent. It is a mother language of common masses in Odisha. Among all modern language literatures of India, the *Odia* language was developed with passing through a long process of

evolution because of the powerful urge of neglected *Odias*. But the poor *Odia* people cannot drag laud appraisal either from royal patronage or from a scholastic base<sup>15</sup>. It was only during the medieval period of Odisha history the *Odia* literature grown and received courtly encouragement from the ruler section. In fact no other Indian language has had to struggle so hard for its very existence. On the other hand the *Odia* language also suffered a planned linguistic aggressive attitude from its neighbors. The *Odia* language is a part of *Magadhi* group of the Indo-Germanic category language in India. Originating from the *Brahmi* script, in about 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C., it has gradually improved to its present form. But actually the *Odia* literature took its original shape in between 12<sup>th</sup>- 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This age is known as *Sarala Yuga*, during the reign period of Gajapati Kapilendra Dev as well as Gajapati Purusottam Dev, the *Odia* language experienced a drastic changes. In this way of literary refinement *Sudramuni Sarala Das* was proved to be a path finder. Following *Sarala* age, The *Vaishnav Bhakti* trend dominated on *Odia* literary field, at that period literary refinement, a group of poets popularly called as '*Panchasakha*', who established a new brand of linguistic renaissance in *Odia* literature. These five comrades opened a new dimensional era in the history of *Odia* literature. They devoted their entire effort to line up the *Odia* literature. Their poetic appeals helped to rejuvenate the spiritual benefits of common *Odia* people. Following the age of '*Panchasakha*', we have seen a new literary epoch-making era has evolved, popularly known as '*Riti-Yuga*' in Odisha. Dr. Gauri Kumar Brahma, mentioned in his book the '*Rasakollala Samiksha*', that- the '*Riti-Yuga*' of *Odia* literature begun in 1650 C.E and lasted up to 1850 C.E. After the British annexation to Odisha, in 1803, only afterwards the western literature introduced in this land; as a result a new phase called 'Modern literature' has started.

#### The background of '*Odia-Riti-Kavya*' Age:

If we begin from the political front, it was in 1568 C.E. Raja Mukunda Deva the last independent Hindu ruler of Odisha was defeated in the hands of Muslim invaders of Bengal. And later on the Odisha province was occupied by the Afghans, they are followed by Mughals in the year 1592 C.E. The Mughal *Subadars* were appointed to look after the day to day public administration affairs in Odisha. But unfortunately, the Mughal *Subadars* did not paid any heed and sympathy to the poor *Odia* people. They just started to plunder and harass the innocent *Odia* people. With the disintegration of Mughal Empire in the year 1707 A.D, the provincial rulers declared themselves independent. So there was anarchy and lawlessness in the whole Mughal Empire for quite a long time. The situation in Odisha was also not different. The Muslim invasion to Odisha and their repeated acts of plundering the Puri *Sri Jagannath Mandir* was a black chapter in the Odisha history. The Muslim *Subadars* like- Kalyana Malla and Makram Khan looted and massacred the innocent *Odia* people. The invasion of Suleiman Karenii to Odisha

was a disaster for poor and innocent *Odia* mass. On the other hand the repeated natural calamities ruined the socio-economic-political backbone of Odisha. The people of Odisha suffered an endless misery in those days. In the year 1751 Odisha province came under the dominance of Marathas. Sri Pyari Mohan Acharya mentioned that- "*It will not be wrong to say that for a period of an half century under the Marathas, the people of Orissa suffered and suppressed a lot*"<sup>16</sup>. Therefore during the rule of Afghans, Mughals and Marathas, the common *Odia* people suffered a lot of misery and pain. In the year 1803, the Orissa province came under the British dominance. Under the British rule the condition of common people was not much different. Veteran historian Dr. K. C. Panigrahi wrote, during this critical period most of the princely states rulers lead a luxurious life without thinking for the sake of common people.<sup>17</sup> He cited an example of Dhananjaya Bhanja, who used to live a luxurious sex life. The medieval *Odia* society suffered a lot of jolt under the imperial British Raj and feudal aristocracy.

#### Some Important Features of *Odiya-Riti-Kavya*

The *Riti-Yuga Odia* literature has mainly two fundamental bases; one is mythological and other is fictional. The first one is developed by basing on *Bhakti* (devotion) to god *Rama* and *Krishna*. Whereas, the fictional *Kavya* works are completely the brain child of the writer's own thought and brilliancy. Still we have noticed certain over all features in the *Odia Riti-Kavyas*.

1. ***Sringarikata***; the *Odia* people of high class society like landlords, Rajas and Maharajas lead a luxurious life style. They are good lovers of beautiful women and sex. Hence their leaning towards the erotic literature and art is obviously open to the society. The woman is the center point for them and their court poets. The medieval *Odia* writers influenced by the *Sringara* motivations of classical Sanskrit *Kavya* literatures. Hence it may be right to consider *Sringara* as one of important aspect in *Odia* literature. In addition to it the *Odia* writers have been able to describe the beauty of youthful women, sexual intercourse, and *Nagara* life style. Therefore it is right to consider that, *Sringarikata* has played a significant part in *Odia-Riti-Kavya*<sup>18</sup>.
2. ***Alamkarikata***; The medieval *Odia- Riti- Kavyas* were enriched with the sound, adjectives, *Chhandas*, and *Alamkara* etc. Unlike in *Sarala Mahabharata* and the writings of *Panchasakha* poets, an exception is observed in *Riti-Kavya* poems. The *Alamkarika* descriptions adorned in every sphere of the *Riti-Kavyas*. That's why this *Odia Riti Kavyas* are well known for ornate poetry.
3. **Mythological**; Mythology is another such important element that has influenced the subject matters of *Odia Riti- Kavyas*. The *Odia* poets of *Riti-Yuga* have achieved endless success in their *Kavya* creations as poetry by taking several mythological narratives. *Kavisamrat* Upendra Bhanja was the chief patron in this regard.

4. **Music;** and songs are the glorious treasure of *Odia-Kavya* poetry. For a long period of time this love and devotional music has been juiced the life style of *Odia* people. The contributions of Upendra Bhanja, Dinakrushna Dasa, *Kavi Surya* Baladeva Ratha etc. are incomparable. For a successful composition of *Odia Kavyas*, the music and its discussion is also partially responsible<sup>19</sup>.
5. **Tradition;** We can observe the reflection of *Odia* social customs and traditions as important subject matters in the *Odia-Riti-Kavyas*.<sup>20</sup>

#### Significance of the 'Sringerarasa' in the *Odia-Kavya* Literatures:

The *Odia* literature is an important part in the world of literature. Particularly, the secular *Odia* literature is rich with the elements like- songs, ballads, stories, *Kathas*, *Charitas*, *Kavyas*, prose and poetry etc. When it is the case of *Odia-Riti-Kavya*, the pursuits of love, sex and romance has occupied a large space. As discussed earlier, in the medieval period of Odisha history, we have witnessed some dramatic changes in the socio-cultural segment. In this critical juncture, the Somavamsi rule (931-1110 C.E) came in to the political power of Odisha. Here onwards Odisha witnessed a visualized influence of Aristocracy on *Odia-Kavya* literature. Realms of royal courts and aristocracy have showed their interest towards the 'Sringera' literature and art formats, which has been rightly eulogized in Odisha. We are well aware that the classical Sanskrit poets transformed the crude form of physical beauty and erotica by canalizing them into a canonical manner. They tried their best to present thorough notes of understanding on the science of sex prescribed by various *Kamasastras*. They had demonstrated their deep knowledge on the sexual cycle, courtship, fertility and coupling, birth and even the activities of parenthood. The various techniques of love making art and physical sex described in *Kamsastras*, particularly the text *Kamasutra* of Vastiyana, has been well filtered down in to the works of *Odia-Riti-Kavya*.<sup>21</sup> Thus scores of text books on erotic themes were written for the common purpose. A number of texts on erotica were composed in order to supply the increased demand by the rulers and higher class of *Odia* society. The common *Odia* people in the medieval age were religious minded, so many books on religious sentiments had produced by different writers. For example, the *Gita Gobindo* of Jaya Deva; *Sarala Mahabharata* of Sudra Muni Sarala Dasa; *Dandi Ramayana* of Balarama Dasa; *Odia Bhagawat* of Jagannatha Dasa and many other texts on religious and devotional themes were produced. All these texts have been dedicated to the spiritual welfare of general *Odia* mass. The royal houses have not only patronized poets and writers, but also the literary texts pertaining religious and secular subjects were well recognized. The high class *Odia* people, feudal lords, and kings of princely states took the bid to sponsor the writers and poet community with great respect. Specially the literary laureates of *Riti-Yuga*, who

devoted their efforts to write books on stories related to hero-heroin romantic love affairs; descriptions on women beauty; *Kathas*; *Charitas*; the discussions on honeymoon night etc. were receive good popular appraisal. Peculiarly, the erotic phenomenal like-conjugal love, physical pleasure, sensual desires are found highlighted in the various *Odiya Kavya* works. This trend was successfully materialized by the *Odia* poets especially in the *Riti Yuga*. The poets of *Riti Yuga*, nicely presented the imaginary characters in the form of poems. Thus, a good numbers of *Kavya* literature with lots of romantic sentiment were produced. This kind of *Kavya* texts earned a good demand among the upper class of society in Odisha. Books like: the *Gita Gobinda*; the *Ushabilasa*; *Ushaharana*; the *Rasa Kollala*; the *Sarvanga Sundari*; the *Chandrachalana*; *Koti Brahmada sundari*; the *Lavanyavati*; the *Rasikaharavali*; the *Subhadra parinaya*; The *Bidagdha Chintamani*; the *Prabandha Purnachandra*; the *Rahasya Manjari*; the *Prema Panchamruta*; The *Kishora chandranana Chompu*; the *Manobodha Chautisa*; the *Ambica Vilasa*; the *Chatur Vinod*; etc. have earned a good demand among the high class people in Odisha. As mentioned earlier, the medieval *Odia* literature served its purpose in a unique manner to reflect the mass mind-set.<sup>22</sup> It was rightly endowed with a lot of literature and textual collections of *Puranas*, *Kavyas*, *Kathas*, *Samhitas*, *Gitas*, etc. were found mostly in the form poems, prose and verses. This sort of literary abundance helped a lot to possess a separate village libraries in each and every villages of rural Odisha.<sup>23</sup> It had filled the village life style of Odisha with music, recitations, street plays, poetic contest, and literary discussions. As whole we may say that, the *Odia* people in medieval period were literary conscious with less publicity. The manuscripts of these works in the form of palm-leaf copies are easily available within the territorial boundary of Odisha. Thus, we have clearly seen that, the study of '*Riti- Yuga* '*Kavya* literatures, afforded us with an insight into the perception that has influenced the minds of its patrons, kings and Aristocrats. It is the '*Sringera Rasa*' or sexual passion that has been delightfully represented in the *Odia Kavya* literatures. Probably, these erotic contents in the *Kavya* literatures inspired both the temple artisans and the ruler class to commission the depiction of different sex motifs on the temples of Odisha. This truth is again attested by the appearance of some sex postures, those are described in the *Odia* literary *Kavya* texts.

The *Gita Gobinda* written by *Bhakta Kavi* Jayadeva, is a unique *Kavya* creation during 12<sup>th</sup> century with a special kind of devotional *Kavya* text dedicated to lord Jagannatha.<sup>24</sup> *Kavi* Jayadeva was a *Bhakti* poet in the early days of medieval Odisha history. In his youth, he used to spend his life as ascetics, but later on he married with a beautiful lady named Padmavati, who was performing her duty as a *Devadasi* in the Puri *Sri* Jagannath temple. Padmavati was dedicated as a dancing girl (*Mahari*) by her parents. On the bank of Prachi River, at village

Kendubilwa the newly married couple started to live in a thatched hut. Thereat that holy place, Jayadeva wrote his famous *Kavya* work '*Gita Gobinda*'. When *Kavi* Jayadeva was writing the historic *Gita Gobinda*, his wife Padmavati used to perform dance on the tune of its song.<sup>25</sup> This text is associated with the devotional songs praising the lord Jagannatha. The context of spirit inlaid in the *Kavya Gita Govinda*, lord Sri Jagannatha is identified with Lord Sri Krishana of Hindu mythology. It is worth mention here that the *Gita Govinda* has acquired great literary merit, with having a lot of lyrical splendor and devotional attitude. The entire *Kavya* text of *Gita Govinda* deals with the subject theme of love in between Radha and Krishna. Lord Krishna is here humanized as a *Nayaka* and *Devi Radha* as his *Nayika* or lover. Lord Krishna is dignified as a master of a courtly lover, who is fully cognized of all the sexual art. Interestingly, we have noticed various *Sringara* senses, with deep ideas on erotic impulse as dominant motifs in this text. It is right to hold a view that, the erotic themes found in *Gita Govinda* are not different, which is present in many classical Sanskrit *Kavyas* of Kalidasa and others. A. B. Keith holds an observation: "*Jayadeva's work is a masterpiece and it surpasses in its completeness of effect any other Indian poem..... All the sides of love, save that of utter despair and final separation are brilliantly described.*"<sup>26</sup> The *Rasa Lila* dance of the belles of Vrindavan, in which lord Krishna is a sole participant. Actually, the exact spirit of the *Kavya* is to tend focus on the love plays in between Krishna and the milk-maids of Gopapura. The poet rightly expressed about the acts of *Rati-Kala*, for the *Rasikajana*(ix,19,8,x,8).

Another most important *Odiapoet*, was *Vishnavakavi* Dinakrushna Dasa, who wrote a textual poem named- *Rasakollala*. He is a poet belongs to *Vaishnav Bhakti* tradition. His poetic work the *Rasakollala* is dedicated to Krishna *Bhakti*. He has emerged as a luminous star during the period of 1650-1710 C.E in Odisha. His literary contributions indicate that, he is an ardent master in creating *Bhakti* poems. He produced two great *Odia Kavyas*, '*Rasakollala*' and '*Rasavinoda*'. He was a staunch devotee of lord Krishna in the form of Jagannatha, and his entire effort was dedicated for elucidating the *Krishna-Leela*.

Some other texts of *Odia Kavya* are also available in the public domain. Several secular texts were produced during the '*Riti-Yuga*'. One of a great poet was Lokanatha Vidyadhara, who wrote- '*Sarvanga Sundari*', '*Padmavati Parinaya*', and '*ChitraLekha*' etc. *Kavi* Purussotam Singh Mandhata, who was a prince of Nayagarh royal family, and he was contemporary poet of Upendra Bhanja. He wrote *Kavya* titled- the '*SobhaVati*'. The *Kavya* text has 10 *Chhandas* with full of romantic allusions. One of a great *Riti Kavi* was Bhupati Pandita, who wrote a *Kavya* named the '*Prema Panchamruta*'. This *Kavya* text has 10 Chapters, with an elaboration *Sringara* activity of lord Krishna with his beloved *Gopibalas*. He further mentioned about four kinds of *Kanyas- Deva*

*Kanya, Veda Kanya, Muni Kanya* and *Gopi Kanya* in his *Kavya* text. *Kavi* Sadananda Surya Brahma was another *Riti-Kavi* in the *Odia* literature. He wrote '*Prema Tarangini*' and '*Braja Leela*' *Kavya* texts with a lot of '*Sringara*' discussions. A woman poetess named Brundavati Dasi wrote '*Purnatama Chandrodaya*', it is a *Krushna Kavya* having 20 *Parichhadas*. These secular *Kavya* works are full of canto with the ideas related to the '*Sringara*' traditions. For example, the references on- honeymoon night, discussions on sexual intercourse, and other co-related issues were found in the discourses of *Riti- Kavyas*. It is proved with authentic evidences, that the *Odia Kavya* poets were champions, when it comes for the discussion of different sex-postures (*Bandhas*) and methods of sexual congress. For instance, poet Abhimanyu Samantasimhara in his *Kavya- 'Vidagdha Chintamani'* elaborated certain live intercourse in between lord *Krishna* and *Chandravali*.

"*Mati Nana Bandhe Mate, Majji Ananda Matte*"<sup>27</sup>

The meaning of this song is that, they enjoyed by engaging in various postures of sexual congress. Here we ought to be sure, that the sexual congress is not to be considered as obscene in the *Odia Kavya* tradition. In his *Kavya* '*Sarvanga Sundari*', the poet made a vivid description on the room, where the bride and bridegroom meet for the first time after marriage.<sup>28</sup> The erotic pictures and objects were used to paint on the walls. "*At places there are figures of the 64 postures of sexual congress, at others the marriage of Panchali is painted. Elsewhere Brahma, the pitamaha is shown chasing his daughter out of excitement, or Viswamitra is shown praying to Menaka with folded hands, or there is a scene of Ravana raping Rambha or Durmilasura committing adultery with Indumati. At one place there is a scene of Krishna, holding the Gopi's garments and demanding they pray to Sun god by raising their hands*". His other '*Sringaricheta*' *Kavyas* like- '*Prema Kala*', '*Rasavati*', '*Prema Chintamani*' etc. are unique for their literary brilliance. The *Kavya* '*Prema Kala*' contains the love affairs of between *Nayaka* Raja Kumara Sudarshana and *Nayika* Premakala. It is a fictional work with 24 *Chhandas*. The *Kavya* '*Prema Chintamani*' contains 68 *Chhandas* with the theme of lord Krishna's *Rasa Leela*. *Kavi* Surya Baladeva Ratha of Athagada Patana in Ganjam was a noted *Kavya* poet in *Riti-Yuga*. He wrote- '*Kishora Chandranana Champu*' on the theme of Radha-Krishna *Prema Bhakti*. His *Kavya*, '*Chandra Kala*' with 18 *Chhandas*, written in the style of '*Lavanyavati*', which is one of an incomplete work. Beside the above, many *Odia Kavya* writers such as Braja Natha Badajena, Jadumani Mahapatra, Nilambara Vidyadhara, Arakhsita Dasa, Bhakta Charana Dasa, have produced several *Kavya* literatures during the *Riti-Yuga*. With regards to the *Sringararasa*, several palm-leaf texts dealing with love and sex have been a great demand in the high class people. Some of the famous erotic *Odia* literatures are: *Chausathi-Rati-Bandhas* of Gopala Bhanjain 18<sup>th</sup> century, *Chausathibandha*, *Bandha-Chitra* etc. The text

*Chausathi-Rati-Bandha* is a complete Odia guide for the 64 *Bandhas* to be tried for sexual copulation.<sup>29</sup> Thus we can fairly say that, the study of 'Odia-Riti-Kavya' affords us insight knowledge into the ideas and practices were sway over the mind and socio-cultural life styles of high class Odia people in the medieval age. But we are sure that, sex was an important theme in the medieval *Riti-Kavyas* of Odisha. As mentioned earlier, '*Sringara*' and its embellished descriptions were highly glorified in the Odia literature during *Riti-Yuga*. The literary branches like, Drama, Novel, Poems, and *Katha-Charitas* dealing with religious sentiments were being gift with the erotic sensuality.

### The Bhanjas of Ghumusara

The *Bhanjas* of Gumusara region in South Odisha have been contributed a lot of literary gifts in the field of *Odia Kavyas* tradition. The *Bhanja Kavya* has its distinctive place in *Odia* literature. Modern Bhanjanagara (OldGhumusara) was a small feudatory kingdom in the district Ganjam of South Odisha. Once upon a time it was a part of Khinjali mandal. Raja Raghunatha Bhanja was the founder of Bhanja dynasty at *Ghumusara*.<sup>30</sup> In the year 1590 Raja Pratapa Bhanja sifted his capital to Kullada. The Kulada, is actually a small tribal *Kondhs* area. Raja Pratapa Bhanja build a fort at there in Kulada and this became famous as *Kulladagada*.<sup>31</sup> The deity of *Kondhs* named as '*Baghdevi*', later on it became the tertiary goddess of *Bhanja* royal family.<sup>32</sup> In the year 1636, Raja Pratap Dhananjaya Bhanja ascended the throne as the fiftieth king of *Ghumusara* kingdom. Dhananjay Bhanja was succeeded by his son Raja Neelakantha Bhanja. Raja Upendra Bhanja was the elder son of Neelakantha Bhanja. Upendra Bhanja was born in the year 1670 at *Kullagada* fort.<sup>33</sup> Grandfather Dhananjaya Bhanja took utmost care for the proper education of Upendra. In a very few days, Upendra Bhanja became master in *Odia*, Sanskrit, *Vyakarana*, *Alamkara*, *Purana*, *Jyotisha*, Philosophy etc. With the advice of his grandfather, Upendra Bhanja prayed and dedicated himself before the goddess '*Baghdevi*' whole heartedly. Legend says that, Devi dream ordered to Upendra for the perfection of '*Rama Taraka mantra*'. So to achieve the literary enlightenment or '*Siddhi*', Upendra, choose a lonely cave at *Buddha-Khola* forest near Buguda town. There he started his penance of practice '*Rama Taraka mantra*' in an ascetic manner.<sup>34</sup> After a few days he got the enlightenment or '*Siddhi*'. He admitted this fact in his early *Kavya* named '*Lavanyavati*':

"*Taraka Mantre Parisade Mohara Kavipana Ude*"

He accomplished in mystic formulae by *Yoga* of penance. The cave, where Upendra got the '*Siddhi*' is famous today as '*Siddha Gumpha*', situated 2 kilometers up words on the hills of the *Buddha-Khola* waterfall.<sup>35</sup> In this way Upendra Bhanja started his career to become a great *Odia Kavya* poet. On the other hand he was very much influenced by his grandfather Dhananjaya Bhanja. Kavi Upendra Bhanja

wrote many historic *Kavyas*- *Baidehisa Vilasa*; *Lavanyavati*; *Koti-Brahmanda- Sundari*; *Prema-Sudha-Nidhi*; *Subhadra Parinaya*; *Pacha-Sayaka*; *Chitra-Lekha*; *Chandra Kala*; *Kama Kala*; *Rasamanjari*; *Rasika Haravali*; *Rasa Taranga*; *Rasa Lekha*; *Chandra Rekha*; *Rasa Panchaka*; *Sobha Vati*; *Geetabhidhana*; *Chaupadi Chandra*; *Padmavati Parinaya*; etc. KaviSamrat Upendra Bhanja produced a vast array of *Odia Kavya* literatures. His verbal jugglery is still a matter of discussion among the scholars across the world. In his early days Kavi Upendra was known with an epithet '*Bira Bara*'. He admitted this fact in one of his poem:

"*Birabara Pada Upa Indra Mora Nama, Bare Bare Severe Manai Sita-Rama*".  
(*BaidehisaBilasa, Chanda- 52*).

He was conferred with the title of '*Kavi Samrat*' in the early decades of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Upendra Bhanja wrote about eighty books, out of them only twenty books are published so far. Many of the hand written manuscript copies have lost and perished in past days. He wrote *Odia* dictionary titled '*Gita Abhidhada*'. His first published work is '*Rasapanchaka*'. Some other literary laureates of Bhanja family were: Gopala Bhanja, Dhananjaya Bhanja, Chandra Sekhara Bhanja, Tribikrama Bhanja and Chakradhara Bhanja etc. They have contributed much more in the field of *Odia Kavya* literatures. They just imagined their literary themes and characters and successfully placed them as poetic manners, to describe the romance in the form of '*Sringara*'. Their *Kavya* works were highly popular in the well- to- do *Odia* society.

### The '*Sringara*' Thoughts in Bhanja Kavya

Dhananjaya Bhanja was one of a great *Kavya* poet in the *Riti-Yuga* *Odia* literature. He wrote many *Kavya* texts such as- '*Raghunatha Bilasa*', '*Ichhabati*', and '*Madana Manjari*'. The text '*Raghunatha Bilasa*' is also known as '*Sri Rama Bilasa*'. It is a *Kavya* work on the great deeds of lord Rama Chandra. The *Kavya* '*Ichhabati*', has 10 *Chhandas* with two parts named- *Purba Panchasika* and *Chaura Panchasika*. The '*Ichhabati*' *Kavya* is about a fictional love story of *Nayaka*- Madhukara and *Nayika*- Ichhabati. In the *Kavya* '*MadanaManjari*', there are 14 *Chhandas* and it is a romantic love story of *Nayaka*- Manava Rajakumara and *Nayika*- Kuntaka Devi. Another poet in the Bhanja family was Chandra Sekhara Bhanja, who wrote '*Raghava Leelamruta*', '*Sulochana Vivah*' and '*Prema Manjari*'. All the mentioned *Kavya* works are rich in ethos of *Sringara* thoughts. Raja Tribikrama Bhanja was also a noted *Kavya* writer of the *Riti-Yuga* in Odisha.

The '*Sringara*' aspects found in Bhanja *Kavya* are unique for its ornamental presentation. Upendra Bhanja stepped ahead then his predecessors, who beautifully elaborated the importance of '*Sringara*' by presenting two elements named- '*Rati*' and '*Priti*'. He wrote, "*Parama Drabya Pirati, Parama Sukha Surati, Rati Ru Jata Pirati, Pirati Ru Rati*".

He further quoted in his text '*Koti Brahmanda Sundari*' (13.24) that-

"Chahun Duhun Duinki Mananetra Kahinki Najai  
Upujai Sneha,  
Alokita Lokita Basun Bhaji Chakita Chhakita Hoigala  
Deha,  
Juba Rama- Hase Jhalaka Kichi Rahi Hase Palaka  
Kichi Nahin,  
Nase Swasa Rahila, Nase Mora Tohila, Murcha  
Murchita Gala Kahin".

Upendra tried his best to produce *Kavya* flows on 'Sringararasa' with the help of *Kamsastras* of ancient India. He was aware of the 'Rasa Raja Sringara,' which makes the poem more attractive. So he never hesitated to write his imaginary *Kavya* works with a lot of 'Sringara' allusions.

"Naba Rasare Sara Adye Lekhi Sringara" (*RasikaHaravali- 1.5*). He again narrated that-  
"Jeun Akhi Dekhinahin Bala Bibasana, Akhire  
Nadekhi Sikhi Chandrika Samana Je,  
Rati Utshaba Kinkini Kinkini Jeun, Karna Suninahin  
.....

Jeun Dehe Lagi Nahin Rasabati Dehi, Agamy  
Banare Suska Daru Para Sehi Je."  
(*RasaLekha-10.43.47*)

Through this poem Kavi Upendra, asserted that, without 'Sringara' or sense love the human life is tasteless and meaningless. In the *Kavya* 'Koti Brahmanda Sundari' the poet elaborated that –

"Dekhi Rama Kumara Susamaku Bhalila, Atanu  
Sutanu banta Beni Kamathila Je,  
Tahara Sastra Kusuma Eha Sastra Rupa, Ritimati  
Kale Heba Mo Punya Amapa Je." Looking at the Prince, the *Kavya* *Nayika* thought that, there are two gate ways to get into the world of 'Kama'. One is a beautiful body and other is body less. The weapon for body less 'Kama' is the Flower- Arrow of *Kamadeva* and the weapon for bodily *Kama* is its beauty. If the *Nayaka* attracted towards my physical beauty, then my life will be blessed.

"Sarita Sarire Se Sarire Mana Misi, Angasange Erupe  
Huanta Hela Ghasi Je."

Here the poet compared the river and sea with the mind and body of the *Nayaka* and *Nayika*. In another poem Upendra Bhanja mentioned that, with the advent of night, the husband wished to engage in sex with his wife:

"Chakra Dampati Bijogakala Kala Prakatila,Dampati  
Chakra Sanjoga Hebaku Ghatila Je."  
(*Baidehisa Bilasa- 15.40*).

Upendra Bhanja nicely presented the descriptions on physical beauties of his *Kavya* *Nayika* like- youthful legs, flawless breasts, nipples, navel, thighs, etc. In his *Kavya* *Usha Bilasa*, Upendra wrote-  
"Biparite Kanaka Kadalee Ninda Janu".

Here he just narrated the beautiful thighs and legs of his *Kavya* *Nayika* Usha Devi. He further mentioned the beauty of her thighs surpassed the beauty of a reverser golden plantain tree. He again wrote-

"Vipula Sughana Pandu Uchhakucha Beni, Anya  
Anya Badhile Hrudaya Sima Gheni."

The meaning of this phrase is the big solid and fair colored breasts stood close to each other without

any gap in between. In his *Kavya* *Lavanyavati*, Upendra Bhanja told-

"Basi Basaila Kole Lopana Chumbhiba Bele, Jema  
Kare Dela Bege Ratana Mudi,  
Jema Kadi Motimala Lambaila Phusangala Paraspara  
Karane Hoile Promodi,  
Se Kala Ku Asta Chandrama, Kumara Swarupa Bade  
Lekhi Pratima." (*Lavanyavati-11.34*).

This means, when the *Nayaka* Chandra Bhanu reached in the bed room at that time *Nayika* *Lavanyavati* was in deep sleep. The *Nayaka* Chandra Bhanu tried to wake her up by shaking the thighs gently. When *Lavanyavati* woke up, the *Nayaka* Chandra Bhanu took her *Nayika* *Lavanyavati* on his lap and started to kiss her for quite some time as an act of sexual foreplays. Upendra Bhanja also referred on the scene of 'Ugra Sringara' in his *Kavya* writings with an expression presenting the sexual foreplays in between *Nayaka* and *Nayika* before sexual congress.

"Uraja Madhu Karaja Anila Chalai, Nabhi Re Dele  
Kanistanguli Ku Bulai,  
Nitamba Hampali Thunku Chetana Basila, Bidhi  
Mahamare Rama Surate Rasila."

The poet Upendra, frequently narrated the 'Bipralamba Sringara' in his *Kavya* poems-

"Cheti Chaturi Chahinla Nisinase Pase Nahin Dibya  
Taruna,  
Mari Hrude Hata Natha Natha Boli Ati Uche Kala  
Karuna ,  
Khoje Adhire Chetana Hata Se Bidhire,  
Seja Leutai Kabari Phitai Kara Urukuchha Sandhire." (*Lavanyavati-12.1*)

The meaning of this poem is, when early in the morning Chandra Bhanu (*Nayaka*) got up and gone out of the chamber, at that very moment *Lavanyavati* (*Nayika*) woke up. She madly missed her *Nayaka*, and became very sad. So to search his *Nayaka* she turned the bed sheet, opened her hair-Whig.

"E Rasamaya Samaye Anae Bikale Lvanyavati,  
Bichare E Jubabayase E Mase Kole Nahin Pati,  
Kemante Banchibi Dina. Ki Kala Padmalochana".  
(44.18, *Lavanyavati*)

This poem speaks about the *Bipralamba Sringara* discussion by Kavi Upendra. When the *Kavya* *Nayaka* Chandra Bhanu and *Kavya* *Nayika* *Lavanyavati* were far away from each other, it was during that time the spring season has arrived on the earth. With The arrival of spring, the *Nayaka* and *Nayika* strongly missed to each other.

The poet Upendra Bhanja has presented several discourses on *Pranaya Sringara*. We have tried to reveal some of the examples here-

"Kara Krushaka Rama Gatra Kshetra, Nakha Langale  
Chasila Turite,  
Prema Bija Ku Rupila Tahinra, Palana Ku Barshe  
Sweda Nira." (*Prema Sudha Nidhi-6.4*)

The exact meaning of this poetical expression is – When the *Nayaka* involved himself in sexual intercourse with his *Nayika* (wife), he performed certain pre-coital activities to impress his female partner. He started to perform acts like:



kissing, hugging, lip lock, nail and bit marks on the breasts, patting the thighs, and cunnilingus etc.

Upendra Bhanja compared the *Sambhoga* (sex among the *Nayaka* and *Nayika*) scenery with a wrestling competition. As if the *Nayaka* and *Nayika* both are playing the wrestling, here:

“*Beni Mala Ki Karanti Sadhana, Tanu Tanu Jadi Bandha Rachana, Musti Tadiata Adhara Pidita, Jahin Prakata Nirata Hun Kruta.*” (*PremaSudhaNidhi- 6.7*)

In his text the ‘*Pachasayaka*’, Kavi Upendra discussed about the movement of moon and its effect on the erogenic parts of a woman popularly known as ‘*Chandrachalana*’ and the 64 love making poses.<sup>36</sup> This *Kavya* text ‘*Panchasayaka*’ is completely a text on ‘*Sringarasastra*’, It was composed by Kavi Upendra Bhanja in the year 1702. For the first time in *Odia* literature we have seen a complete *Kamasutra* specific text on the erotic science.<sup>37</sup> In this book Upendra discussed, the issue on types of male and female on the basis of their physical characteristics as well as sexual capability. He even described certain facts with detail notes on the sexual behavioral attitude during different lunar days. He also presented a vivid account on the varieties of male penis and female vaginas. Not only he (Upendra) deals with a study on erotic science, but also a brief idea on dresses and ornaments, suited for amorous encounter by the damsels. He again suggested sixteen types ‘*Sringara Kala*’ for the females and sixteen types of amorous encounter for males. The poet narrated the sexual nature and physical appearance of women of different parts of India. He minutely experimented on the sexual excitement and copulation process step by step in his book. Upendra Bhanja described on 64 *Bandhas* or coital postures that are useful for copulation. Thus, the ‘*Panchasayaka*’ is a unique text of itself, for the study of erotic art in the form of literature. In his book ‘*Rasapanchaka*’, Upendra Bhanja tried to highlight upon various types of *Nayakas* and *Nayikas*. The writer produced many literary examples basing on the theory of *Kamasatras*. Therefore, Upendra Bhanja, established a high standard morals for *Pranaya Sringara* in his *Kavya dhara*. Prof. Dasarathi Das, wrote “*Both Sri Harsha and Upendra Bhanja are the Sringara Kavis in right spirit*”. They both followed the foot prints of Vatsyayana while writing their romantic *Kavyas*. He successfully materialized the depiction of ‘*Bipralamba Sringara*’ and ‘*Sambhoga Sringara*’ in the form of literary parlance. Upendra’s concept on love and sex not only confined to the physical desire and sexual enjoyment, rather it is an act of high moral values in the individual married life too. Upendra Bhanja nicely depicted his *Kavya Nayaka* as was honest towards his wife only. Though we have seen a lot of nudity and vulgarity in his *Kavyas*, but it is not against the moral values, because it is considered as lawful activities in between the wife and husband.<sup>38</sup> Upendra Bhanja beautifully explained the physical features of *Nayikas* and their romantic expressions through his *Kavyas*. The poet tried to present a narration that no human

being is un-touch of the ‘*Sringara*’ feelings.<sup>39</sup> Even though the animals and birds are also influenced with the sexual instinct. The ‘*Sringara Dharma*’ in all most all *Kavya* texts of Upendra, has a new trend because of its “woman centric” nature. In the Bhanja literature it is found that most of the *Kavya Nayikas* were expressed with utmost beauty and descent in their behavior and character. Kavi Upendra has loudly presented his stiffness and flavored *Kavya* composition in his own style. While elaborating the themes of ‘*Sringara*’, he was aware that the ‘*Rati*’ as its base. He nicely projected the *KavyaNayikas*, who played a main role to materialize the feelings of ‘*Sringara*’ and ‘*Rati*’. To ignite the sexual feelings and emotions in the minds of readers, Upendra Bhanja drew a beautiful comparison of woman limbs with different objects, like- the face with Moon; the eyes with Fish; the eye brows with Bows; the nose with Parrot’s beak; the teeth with Pomegranates; the tone with Koyal’s voice; the hair with water Algae; the body odor with Lotus fragrance; the breasts with Hills; the breasts nipples with Raisins; walk with Swan’s walk; etc.<sup>40</sup> The descriptions of women beauties are purely his own creations. But it is hypothetic to conclude that, the ‘*Rati*’ and ‘*Sringara*’ formulas, presented by the ‘*Kavi-Samrat*’ are the right reflections *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana, and other *Kamasutra* works by Bhartruhari, Sri Harsha, Kalidasa.<sup>41</sup> It is right to consider that, the *Kavi Samrat* Upendra Bhanja was a dazzling star among the poets of ‘*Riti-Kavya-Yuga*’ in the medieval history of Odisha.

#### Conclusion

In the conclusion, it is clear that, the sex is an important theme in medieval *Odia Riti Kavya*. The literary works produced in this particular age have narrated various ‘*Sringara*’ thoughts like- sexual congress; coital poses; techniques of win over a woman; methods of cosmetic apply; dressing; jewelry; and well use of sexual symbols etc. The writers of ‘*Riti-Yuga*’ were well versed in the knowledge of ‘*Sringara*’ ideas, and also able to present them brilliantly in the literary formats without any hesitancy. Obviously, this helped much to open the doors to use the ‘*Sringara*’ themes in the field of art and sculptures in India. Probably, these erotic ‘*Sringara*’ contents in the ‘*Riti-Kavya*’ literatures of medieval Odisha, inspired and influenced the Royal or Aristocrats to commission to depict the erotic art motifs on the temple edifices all over Odisha.

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