Abstract

The *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* has been translated into Bangla by several authors from varied backgrounds, starting from religious preachers, nationalist leaders, literary persons, philosophers, Sanskrit scholars to left liberal thinkers, throughout the history of Bangla literature. This phenomenon has been in practice since the time period of Shri Chaitanya. However, late nineteenth century it has become a trend to work on the *Gita* in the form of commentaries, explanations and translations etc. Virtually all the eminent figures of the then Bengal from all walks of life have worked on the *Gita*. Hence, I have focused on this period i.e. early twentieth century. The early twentieth century is one of the most interesting areas to study the Bengal province as the then Bengal was reverberating with a lot of movements starting from social reformation movements to freedom movement.

With an extensive field work, which includes several libraries from the Gangetic plains of the southern West Bengal, especially Hooghly, Howrah districts and north Kolkata, I have come across a comprehensive list of translations of the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* into Bangla, mainly from Sanskrit. This list of translations also includes sizable works re-translated from translations of eminent personalities like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi.

From among the translations and commentaries on the *Gita* six works have been chosen based on varied socio-cultural backgrounds of the translators/commentators from the early twentieth century and analysed for the present research project.
The first chapter of the dissertation is about the text *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* itself and its Maneuver and its translations. This chapter deals with the *Gita* as a part of the *Mahabharata*, as a literary Text to some details. This chapter further historicises the *Gita* in the contemporary context of the time frame of the research project. There is a detailed account of the 18 chapters of the *Gita*. Moreover, the chapter delineates the philosophical aspects of the *Gita*. There is a brief mention of the impact of the *Gita* on the society and the influence and role it has played on the Indian thinkers. The chapters completes with a brief account of the translations of the *Gita* in Indian and foreign languages.

The second chapter of the dissertation is about the Bangla Translations of the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*. The second chapter contains the detailing of the Bangla translations of the *Gita*. This chapter briefly mentions about the manuscripts of the *Gita* translated into Bangla. The chapter details a little about the *Gita* as a part of the Bangla translations of the epic *Mahabharata*. The chapter further details the reasons behind focusing on the Kolkata centric Southern Bengal. An elaborate detailing of the sources used for field work are listed. The unearthed Bangla translations of the *Gita* have systematically categorized in the chapter in a separate section. A comprehensive list of the Catalogues, Libraries and Archives visited as the part of field work are enlisted. Finally, an exhaustive list of the available Bangla translations of the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* are enlisted alphabetically followed a brief analysis of the same list.

The third chapter of the dissertation is about the detailing of the texts to that were focused and analyzed as the major part of the research project. This chapter deals with the translators and their backgrounds and their principle works. The reasons behind the selection of the selection of the six translators have been systematically delineated. Finally this chapter details the six translators and their
works namely Hirendranath Dutta and his *Gitay Ishwarvaad* (1907), Shri Aurobindo and his *Gitar Bhumika* (1909), Dwijendranath Tagore and his *Gitapath* (1915), Swami Saradananda and his *Gitatattva* (1910), Jagadish Chandra Ghosh and his *Shri Gita* (1928) and Rajshekhar Basu and his *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* (posthumous). Along with the socio-cultural backgrounds and brief biographies of the translators a brief detailing of the primary texts under scrutiny is provided.

Fourth Chapter is the chapter of conclusion. This chapter deals with the placing of the selected translators against their contemporary socio-cultural milieu. Detailed discussion of the texts, focusing on the translators and their background including education, religious belief, individual worldview, understanding of philosophy, ideology, cultural background, political affiliation and inclination along with the contemporary social and political scenario of Bengal has been detailed in this chapter. This chapter contains the analytical part of how the socio-cultural backgrounds have influenced the respective translators to interpret a single primary text i.e. the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* from multiple perspectives and derive multiple meanings out of the same.