

THE HINDU

On a drive with Radha-Krishna's love story



An exhaustive project on Gita Govinda being done by IGNCA for several years makes it to a pen-drive

The much celebrated “Gita Govinda” — 12th Century Jayadeva’s poetry woven around the love story of Radha and Krishna — would soon be available on a pen-drive. That too in a way that’s comprehensible to a person who wouldn’t have heard of “Gita Govinda” before. The Multimedia Research Laboratory (Cultural Informatics) — established at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) in 1994 — that has been involved with intensive multimedia documentation of Brahadisvara Temple in Thanjavur, Devanarayana — a local deity in Rajasthan, Agnicayana: A Vedic ritual and Visvarupa — the cosmic version of Krishna, has been at work on Gita Govinda for over three decades under the guidance of scholar Kapila Vatsyayan.

The 12 GB pen-drive that is to be launched on May 27 by Jawhar Sircar, CEO Prasar Bharati, consists of text (Sanskrit and English), paintings and over 17 hours of video documentation, including recitations (Sanskrit and English), explanation of songs, musical renderings, dance performances, interpretation and critical evaluation of songs, of selected ashtapadis.

“What this product does is to engage the remote user, the one who has very little or no clue about Jayadeva. This product will let them listen to recitation of the songs in Sanskrit and it’s translation in English. The poem’s interpretation in traditional painting,

music and dance; and multiple meanings of the poem by the scholars,” says Pratapnand Jha, Coordinator of the project.

The soulful Sanskrit text had a deep impact on the society and thus spread across India. Poets, dancers, painters, theatre practitioners, moved by its brilliance produced great works of art based on it. “Gita Govinda” consists of 12 parts, further divided into 24 songs. Each song consists of eight couplets which are called ashtapadi.

Based on the love play of Krishna and Radha, their union, separation and reunion, the poem communicates a cosmic drama.

The multi-layered poem and its sub-text inspired interpretations in the traditions of painting, music and dance. “The multimedia presentation gives the user access to the diverse interpretation of the text in different artistic genres,” adds Jha.

The artistic genres represented in this presentation include paintings from the Jaur, Mewar, Bundi, Jaipur, Basohli, Kangra and Orissa schools while the music traditions of classical Hindustani and Carnatic music, singing of the poem in Radhakalyanam style, devotional singing in the Guruvayoor and Puri Temples are presented as selected examples. The dance styles included are Bharatnatyam, Mohiniattam, Odissi, Manipuri and Kathak.

There is a separate section comprising interpretations and critical evaluation of ashtapadis by eminent scholars.

An in-depth analysis of only six out of 24 songs of “Gita Govinda” — namely Lalitlavanga, Harirhamugdha, Dhirasamire, Pasyati disidisi, Yahi Madhava and Kuru Yadunandana — have been undertaken in this endeavour.