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## **TAXONOMY OF THE ROMANTIC HEROINE: INTERROGATING PSYCHOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS IN BRAJ POETRY**

### **Abstract:**

Unlike English literature, the taxonomy of the romantic heroine in the Braj literature is extended and elaborate. The nomenclature employed for each kind is descriptive, and far beyond the regular, hackneyed girlfriend, lover, beloved, sweetheart and darling type. These English expressions only tell us about romantic or sexual relationship between two lovers-married or unmarried, whereas the courtly Braj poets coined different words for heroine to express their psychological states of mind as well. Since this extended taxonomy follows a pattern that was well-established in the Bhagavata and Gita Govinda, and further mastered and reached to its perfection in the hands of Keshavdas and others, the Braj expressions are not only psychological in nature but they also reflect the religious overtone in its backdrop. The Hindu god and goddess, i.e. Krishna, Radha and Gopis are actually metaphors for lovers and beloved. This paper focuses on the taxonomy of heroine, and analyzes her moods, manipulation, persona and psyche enveloped in the poetry, while employing the textual analysis as a tool for research.

### **Keywords:**

Hero; heroine; Braj literature; court poets; sexual and romantic love