

# SEARCH

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Education for All

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## **DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION, UTKAL UNIVERSITY**

### **THE LEGEND 1962-2012**

#### **Utkal University**

The UTKAL UNIVERSITY was established on 27 NOVEMBER 1943 under an Act of the Odisha Legislative Assembly. Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati, the Prime Minister of Odisha, Pandit. Godavirish Mishra, Education Minister and Pandit. Nilakantha Das, Speaker, Odisha Legislative Assembly were the key players. This Mother University of Odisha, originally created as an Examining University includes 27 Post Graduate Departments, Two Law Colleges and a Directorate of Distance and Continuing Education. It has more than three hundred affiliated colleges under its jurisdiction.. It also houses Ambedkar Study Centre, Population Study Centre, Centre for Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy Study, Women's Study Centre, University High School, UGC Academic Staff College and a Play School. It offers courses under faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Technology, Pedagogy (Teacher Education), Commerce & Management, Medicine and others.

#### **University Evening College**

The Directorate of Distance and Continuing Education (DDCE) had a modest beginning as the University Evening College way back in October, 1962 with an objective to provide continuing education to the aged and employed. The University Evening College offered Intermediate in Arts and Bachelor in Arts Programme. It operated from BJB College and provided access to those who could not join day colleges. Shri Ram Chandra Rajguru, Shri Damodar Mishra, Shri Baidyanath Mishra and Shri Shiv Charan Panda were the Principal of University Evening College. Shri Purna Chandra Pattanaik, Shri Ashutosh Pattanaik, Sri Khitish Chandra Dey and Shri K.P.A. Pillai were the Vice Principals. Subsequently, The University Evening College continued as BJB Evening College under the Government of Odisha.

#### **Directorate of Correspondence Courses**

On the 32<sup>nd</sup> Foundation Day of the Utkal University, 29th November, 1974, The University Evening College was converted into Directorate of Correspondence Courses under the aegis of Shri Gyan Chand, IAS, the Administrator. Dr. Ram Shankar Rath, Reader, P.G. Dept. of Mathematics took over as the OSD of DCC. He served as the first Director from 29.10.1975 to 31.05.1993. The DCC offered Intermediate in Arts and Bachelor in Arts Programme from July 1975. B.Com was subsequently added and B.Ed was offered for a short duration. The DCC operated from the Administrative Block

of the Utkal University. It was shifted to the present campus in 1987. The ground floor of the Old administrative Block was shared by DCC and the University Press. The first floor of the DCC building was inaugurated on 1 January, 1995 by Prof. Satyananda Acharya, Vice Chancellor. Shri A.N. Mishra served as the Director in-charge of DCC from 10.06.1993 to 24.11.1995. Prof. S.P. Pani took over as the Director from 15.10.1996.

### **Directorate of Distance And Continuing Education**

As per the revised UGC guidelines for Open and Distance Learning the DCC was converted to Directorate of Distance And Continuing Education w.e.f. 15.10.1996. Prof. G.K. Das, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Ajit K. Mohanty, P.G. Dept. of Psychology, Prof. K.B. Pattanaik, P.G. Dept. of Physics, Members of the Syndicate, Prof. S.P. Pani, Prof-Cum-Director, DDCE, Shri Alekh Chandra Mishra, A.O., DDCE played an active role in the regeneration.

DDCE introduced several new programmes in succession. It offers BA, (Gen & Hons), B.Com (Gen. & Hons), M.A. in Odia (1996), History(1996), Political Science(1997), Sanskrit(1997), Public Administration(2000), English(2000), Education(2000), Economics(2011), M.Com(2011) & MSW(2011). M.A. Sociology (2000-2005) was offered for a short duration and is being revived. DDCE introduced courses in Computer Science in 1998 under the leadership of Shri A.K. Tripathy, IAS, Vice Chancellor. Subsequently MCA in Regular mode as an evening course was introduced in 1999 under the tutelage of Prof. G.N. Das, Vice Chancellor. Prof. Krutibas Pattanaik was the first co-ordinator of the programme.. DDCE offered B. Sc(ITM), BITM, Diploma in Digital Art, BCA, DCA & PGDCA etc. for a short duration. PGDCA has been revived. DDCE introduced management programme in 2000. Presently IMBA, MBA & PG Diplomas in Management (HR,MM,FM,POM,TTM & DNM) are offered under Distance Mode. Prof. R.K. Jena the first Coordinator, Prof. S.K. Das, Prof. B.R. Mohanty, Prof. S.Sahoo, Prof. P.K. Sahoo, Prof. R.C. Mohapatra and teachers of Commerce and Management faculty were the for runners. Post Graduate Diploma in Banking and Insurance Management in collaboration with ICICI Bank was introduced in 2007 with the initiative of Prof. L.N. Mishra, Vice Chancellor, Shri Ashok Kumar Tripathy IAS, Commissioner –cum Secretary, Govt. of Odisha, Dept. of Higher Education, Shri K.V. Kamath, Chairman, ICICI Bank and Shri Paul Delima. Certificate and Diploma Course in NGO Management in Odia medium was introduced 2010 in collaboration with UNAIDS, New Delhi. Prof. B.K. Rath, Vice Chancellor, Ms. Sarita Yadav, UNAIDS and Prof. S.P. Pani provided leadership. The Soft Skill Development Cell was established in 2007. The SSDC organizes Training programme for Soft Skills, Yoga and Self Defense. The Internal Quality Assurance Cell, Utkal University also functions from DDCE since 2011. DDCE had also established the Centre for Women Studies in 1997. Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairman, UGC inaugurated the Centre for Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy Study on 23.02.2008 established by DDCE. Both are now independent centers.

The PCP Block with six class room was added in 1997 for conduct of Personal Contact Programme. An Extension Counter of the Syndicate Bank was opened on 16.09.1997 to provide banking service to staff and students. It was upgraded to a Branch on 10.11.2005. The Foundation Stone for the Silver Jubilee Building was laid by Prof. S.P. Pani on 14 July 1999, on

the auspicious occasion of Rathayatra. The Silver Jubilee Building stands on the place where Shri Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India had laid the foundation for Utkal University on 1 January 1958. The Office establishment and Library functions from this building since January, 2005. Prof. P.K. Sahoo, Vice Chancellor, along with Prof. S.P. Pani, Director and Team DDCE laid the Corner Stone of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of the Silver Jubilee Building and the Examination complex (2<sup>nd</sup> floor of old administrative block) on 30.06.2012.

Computerization of student database was initiated in 1994. Since 1996, DDCE has progressively adopted IT solutions. Presently, a state of the art IT infrastructure including interactive website and dedicated NET connectivity is in place. Receipt and Accounting, Examination, Admission and Library process have been computerized. Modest Online learning process for PGDBIM has been introduced. The Virtual Class room is upcoming. DDCE has also developed the Utkal University Examination System Software in 2011-12.

Prof. A. Mishra, Prof. P.C. Tripathy, Prof. R.C. Mohapatra, Prof. B.C. Guru, Prof. H.K. Swain served as In-charge Directors between 01.10.2000 to 03.11.2004. Prof. R.K. Bal served as the In-charge Director from 20.04.2010 to 07.12.2012. Prof. S.P. Pani, (Director, DCC-25.11.1995-14.10.1996) is serving presently as Prof. –cum- Director, DDCE (from 15.10.1996 to 30.09.2000, 03.11.2004 to 20.04.2010 and from 08.12.2010 and continuing).

### **OUR MOTTO**

*Satyam Param Dhimahee*, Truth Alone shall prevail, is the motto of our University.

Education for All, is the motto of DDCE.

### **OUR MISSION**

- § To Increase Access
- § To Provide Quality Education
- § To offer Innovative, Need Based Courses
- § To Improve Employability and
- § To Enhance Professional Competence

### **OUR VISION**

- § To grow as a quality Educational Institution meeting National & Internal Goals of Higher Education
- § To provide Higher Education for Any One, Any Time & Any Where.
- § To offer On-line Interactive Education without any boundary and barrier.

*DDCE, Utkal University has completed 50 years of its existence in October 2012. A Legend Stone has been designed. We are placing the same in place of an Editorial. Further, a list of faculty members, both past and present, is also placed in this issue.*

***The Editor***



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*Papers are invited for*

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## **Guidelines for contributors :**

1. Each paper be prefaced with an abstract not exceeding 300 words. A Bio-note on the author (s) will be needed.
2. The article should be within 6000 words including references etc. It should relate to Arts, Humanities and Management.
3. MLA style sheet or Chicago style sheet or APA style should be strictly followed.
4. Please use MSword and e-mail the article to : **searchpolly72@yahoo.com**. Send a hard copy by post in confirmation. Articles shall not be returned, but acceptance shall be intimated as soon as possible. Contact Dr. P. P. Panigrahi, Lecturer in English, DDCE, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar - 751007, India, for further details. You may reach Dr. P. P. Panigrahi at **searchpolly72@yahoo.com**
5. Authors may suggest names of References who are specialists in the field.
6. Published material shall not be considered. However, Papers published earlier in abstract format in proceedings of Seminars, Conferences and Workshops may be sent. Such details may be provided by the authors.
7. Authors are responsible for contents and views expressed in the article and DDCE shall bear no responsibility for the same.



## KRISHNA IN ART TRADITIONS OF ODISHA

Dr. S. Acharya

H.K. Aich

*Odisha boasts the proud possession of the footprints of different religious sects which flourished in India in the form of sculptures and monuments. Vaishnavism is one such prominent subsets of Hinduism. The concept of Vishnu and the ramification of the iconographic forms of this deity constitute one of the noblest themes in the realm of Odishan art.*

*The sculptural themes associated with Krishna like baby Krishna stealing butter, Kaliyadalana, Govardhana dharana, Gopinath (associated with Gopis) etc. have been depicted in the temple art of Odisha since 7<sup>th</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D.. But images of Krishna (popularly known as Gopinath in Odisha) belonging to the 12<sup>th</sup> / 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Ganga period) can be seen presiding over a number of temples in the coastal belt of Odisha. Krishna as a subject matter has not only enriched the domain of art but has immensely contributed to the growth of religious literature of medieval Odisha. The concept of Krishna worship and metaphysical doctrines of love, devotion and sankirtana being preached by the celebrated medieval saints like Ramanuja, Madhava, Nimbarka, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Jayadeva have tremendously influenced the socio-cultural life of Odisha. This impact is well reflected in the temple art where Krishna is depicted with his miraculous feats in his mortal life.*

The state of Odisha, situated in the east coast of the Indian subcontinent on the Bay of Bengal, is well-known for its religious and sacred past. The Jagannath temple in Puri, for example, is an important pilgrimage place for Hindus, particularly worshippers of Krishna and Vishnu, and constitutes part of the *Char Dham* pilgrimages that a Hindu is expected to make in one's lifetime. Orissa is also famous for its large number of magnificent temples built by a succession of rulers reflecting the state's prosperous and sophisticated heritage. With its rich cultural, architectural, trading and military history, virtually every religious sect of India has left its mark on the province.

The objective of this paper is to present the Epic hero Krishna in the art traditions of Odisha, including images and sculptural art. The long tradition of Vaishnavite art, architecture and literature has significantly contributed to the religious history of Odisha. From an archaeological point of view, the evolution of Vaishnavism, which began during the time of the Matharas (*circa* A. D. 350 -500), reached its climactic flowering in the building of the great Jagannath temple in Puri. Lord Jagannath is considered to be the pinnacle of every cult and deity. The place is known as *Sreeksheetra*, and to millions of people, the state is known as *Jagannath Desa*.

Krishna is perceived as the *Avatari* or one who takes *Avatar*. Some scholar also depict Krishna as an *Avatar* of Vishnu.<sup>1</sup> Earliest references to Krishna are found in the *Chhandogya Upanishad*<sup>2</sup> Here, he is depicted as the son of Devaki. The *Mahabharata*, *Harivamsa* and *Bhagvat purana* depict Krishna as a divine hero who is born, grows up, fights, marries, loves and finally dies.<sup>3</sup>

The representation of Krishna and Balaram on the coins of Agathokles Dikaios found from the excavations of Ai-khanum on the banks of river Oxus indicates the popularity of the Bhagavat cult as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., suggesting that foreigners were also followers of this cult.<sup>4</sup> It is also possible that the Greek rulers were using such images on coins politically and militarily – to enable them to rule the people in their charge. In South India we also find iconographic representations of *Gopinath-Krishna* on coins. Vra Pandya of the Pandya dynasty issued coins with the figure of *Venugopal muralidhara* Krishna. Images of dancing Krishna are found on the punch-marked coins of *Yadavas* of Devagiri.<sup>5</sup>

The 13<sup>th</sup> century Keshav temple at Somanathpur represents the highpoint of temple architecture and sculpture of the Hoysala period. It is a triple shrine. The three images represented are *Keshava* (the main image), Krishna as *Venugopala* (playing the flute), and *Janardhana Vishnu*.<sup>6</sup>

Hindu socio-religious life revolved round the hero of the Epic *Mahabharata*, Sri Krishna. His miraculous feats, which has immortalized him in classical Indian literature and sculpture, his alliance with sixteen thousand *gopis*, his role as a statesman, warrior and politician in the battle of *Kurukshetra*, a prophet and the builder of a united *Bharatavarsa*, reflect his acumen and superiority over the existing cults and popularity among the general masses, irrespective of caste, sect or creed.

It is worth noting that an image of Gopinath-Krishna is found in the Rajarani temple in Bhubaneswar. This temple is supposed to have been constructed in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>7</sup> The figure has two arms holding a flute. A miniature of the same sculpture is to be found in one of the stone wheels of the Sun temple at Konark, which was constructed by Narasimhadeva I in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>8</sup>

We have description of the images of adult Krishna or Gopinath in Sanskrit literature, but we do not have the sculptural representation of those images before 13<sup>th</sup> century AD in Odisha.<sup>9</sup>

Lord Krishna, when enchanting the *gopis* with his flute, is referred to as *Gopinath*, *Venugopal*, *Muralidhar* or *Madan Gopal*.<sup>10</sup> Such images of Krishna, in the *tribhanga* pose, representing the Lord standing upright, his body exquisitely adorned with ornaments and dressed lavishly, are carved from black chlorite stone (*muguni*). *Gopinath* is invariably two armed and stands in a relaxed *tribhanga* pose under a *kadamba* tree with his right leg crossed in front of his left so that his toes touch the ground. He holds the flute to his lips with both the hands, decorated with ornaments like *kundalas*, ornate *chandrahara*, pearl string *yajnopavita* and a long *vanamala*. *Gopinath* or *Krishna* is usually flanked by eight *sakhis* (associates) aligned in two rows, four on each side.<sup>11</sup> These female figures are frequently described as representing the *astapatavamsis* or eight chief consorts of Krishna. The *kadamba* trees and the cows imply the setting is *Vrindavana* rather than *Dwarka*. The *sakhis* carry various emblems or presents in their hands, vessels of offerings, musical instruments, flowers and, in an image from Hirapur, near Bhubaneswar, a bird.<sup>12</sup>

These images, depicting the pure rapture of music on Krishna's face, have a profound effect on the viewer wherever they may be. The inspired artists also found this form of representing Krishna highly desirable giving ample scope for the display of their deep devotion and artistic skills. The images are generally surrounded by cowherds and cowherdesses. The complexion of such images of Krishna is meant to be dark in hue resembling rain clouds.<sup>13</sup> The head is decorated with a bunch of peacock's feathers. These iconographic features are common to most images of Gopinath that have been discovered in Odisha.

There are some variances; for example, in the image from Dharmasala, now in the Odisha State Museum, the *dasavataras* are carved on a pedestal and back slab. The four-armed deity stands in a somewhat rigid pose with his right leg across the front of his left. With his front set of hands he holds the flute upto his lips, while his uplifted back hands hold a *chakra* and a *sankha*. He wears a tall *kirtamukuta* and is richly adorned. His head is framed by *makaratorana* with branches of the *kadamba* tree visible at the apex. He is flanked at the base by two sets of consorts, the inside set represent *Sri* and *Pusti*, while the outside set are *Rukmini* and *Satyabhama*, the consorts of Vishnu and Krishna respectively. They stand in front of a *khakhara-mundi*. Near the right foot of Vishnu-Krishna appear a kneeling *Bhu* and a diminutive image of *Anantasayana-Vishnu*. A herd of cows appear on the pedestal. This image of Vishnu-Krishna is similar iconographically to the four-armed images of Krishna from South India<sup>14</sup>, except for the addition of *dasavataras*, two pairs of consorts and accessory figures at the base. Essentially this composite image combines the rigid and hieratic *samabhanga* pose of conventional Vishnu images with the relaxed pose of Gopinath-Krishna playing the flute under a *kadamba* tree.

In the Khirachora Gopinath temple in Remuna, Balasore, the image of Krishna-Gopinath is flanked by images of *Govinda* and *Mana Gopala*.<sup>15</sup>

In the Sakhigopala temple in Satyabadi, the exquisite image of Krishna-Gopinath holds the flute to his lips with his first set of hands as conventionally depicted. At the same time a *sankha* and a *chakra* appear on the upper part of the back slab suggesting the influence of the four-armed images of the deity. The back slab is decorated with the *dasavataras* of Vishnu, but the standard motifs of *Gopis*, *kadamba* tree, cows, *vanamala* and *kirita* are absent.<sup>16</sup>

At Dandamakundapur in the temple of *Jaya-Gopalji* the image of *Jaya-Gopalji* is in black chlorite. It depicts Krishna in a conventional pose holding the flute to his lips. The *kadamba* tree is profusely laden with leaves and flowers while birds, monkeys and squirrels frolic on its branches. The *kirtimukha* at the apex of the *makaratorana* has a *chakra* on one side and a *sankha* on the other. Gopinath is flanked by a consort on either side; the right side displays *varada* holding a *padma* while the left side displays *abhaya* holding a lotus bud. The pedestal contains cows, *gopas*, *gopis* and Garuda.<sup>17</sup>

Other examples which deviate slightly from the more conventional iconographic depictions include the image from Janakdevipur, in Patna Museum, where Krishna-Gopinath is flanked by six *sakhis*, two of whom are shown embracing his two legs and looking adoringly up at him. Two others are shown seated playing a *vina*, behind them are two more standing images each

holding a *couri*. In contrast to other major images of Krishna, here he is depicted without the wooden platform sandals. Four cows are shown occupying the pedestal. Iconographically, the image can be ascribed to the late 14<sup>th</sup> or early 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>18</sup>

There are numerous later examples of Krishna depicted in bronze though invariably the iconographic features are greatly reduced. One of the best of these bronze images, in the collection of Prof. Samuel Elinberg, a mathematician and collector of Asian art, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, shows Gopinath standing under the *kadamba* tree with his flute flanked by two *gopis* on either side with a small standing figure facing him.<sup>19</sup>

The late 13<sup>th</sup> century Chitrakarini temple in Bhubaneswar also depicts Krishna delighting the *gopis* with his flute in *Vindavana*. It appears on the horizontal *gavakṣa* lintel on the north side of the *jagamohana*.<sup>20</sup>

The deplastered *vimana* of the Jagannath temple in Puri exhibits scenes of *Krishnalila* on its exterior wall signifying the close association of the Krishna cult with that of *Jagannath*.

The theme of baby Krishna stealing butter from the milk pot churned by Yashoda has been depicted beautifully in the Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar. Yashoda churning milk smiles at baby Krishna's playfulness. Nandaraja is seen enjoying the scene to his full satisfaction.

The Jagannath Ballava *matha* in *Sreeksetra*, Puri, has two exquisitely carved images, one of Gopinath and the other of Krishna, who in the name of Radhakanta was worshipped by Sri Chaitnya, a devotee who stayed in the *matha* for eighteen years.<sup>21</sup> The *gambhira* of the *math* still cherishes the memory of Sri Chaitnya.

On the temple walls of Chateswara temple in Kisenpur, of the undivided Cuttack district in the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD, Krishna is depicted standing in the typical *tribhanga* pose. But here he holds a flute and carries the *Govardhana* mountain in his two uplifted back hands. The *gopis* and cows are also represented here.

The biggest image of Gopinath to be found in Odisha, demonstrating excellent workmanship, can be seen at Vira Ramachandrapur Sasan in Puri district.

A small panel sculpture of *Govardhana* (the kidnapping of cows) is carved on the southern façade of the Meghesvara temple in Bhubaneswar. In this panel, Krishna is seen sitting on a couch attended by *gopis* on either side. A herd of cows are carved on the pedestal. A small bearded figure of Brahma is shown enjoying the scene at a little distance.

A large number of images of Krishna-Gopinath have been explored from Prachi Valley in Odisha. It is the birthplace of the great medieval saint poet, Sri Jaydev. His seminal work, the *Gitagovinda*, immortalised the divine dalliance of Radha & Krishna has inspired many interpretations in poetry, literature, music, paintings and other art forms.

The development of iconography in medieval Odisha reached its high water mark in the exquisite Krishna-Gopinath sculptures and images. Hindu religious life, literature has deeply

been influenced by this cult. Krishna themes have also immensely contributed to the art and sculptural heritage of Odisha.

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## **THE MAHIMA DHARMA: ITS PEREGRINATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

**Dr. Priyadarshi Bahinipati**

*The nineteenth century was a period of transition from medieval to modern times in the history of India as well as Odisha. When the British occupied Odisha in 1803 the state was in a benighted age where poverty, squalor, corruptions were the order of the day, which left the region in a state of limbo. Religionism, shamanism, sorcery, human and animal sacrifices, the brutalities of the ruthless potentates and their minions crippled the society and there was chaos and confusion in every sphere of society. Another debilitating force in the nineteenth century Odisha was the natural calamities which crippled the society a number of times. At this critical juncture, the Mahima Movement was initiated by the illustrious Mahima Swami with the sole purpose to restore the much needed equality, truth and justice in the society. From 1862 to onwards, he started his journey for the propagation of the new Mahima Dharma among the people, ordained a number of disciples and entrusted them with the task of spreading the message of love, piety, truth and justice among the lowly, deprived and desolate people. He preached in a lucid manner the various concepts of sunya, mukti, ahimsa etc., which formed the philosophy of Mahima Dharma. He inspired Bhima Bhoi to compose poetry to spread the message of the new faith. After the demise of Mahima Swami in 1876, the nascent faith faced a tumultuous time as he had not named a successor nor did he institutionalize the faith. A large number of followers met at Joranda in Dhenkanal where the Guru was given a Samadhi to decide the future course of action. There the first sign of factionalism appeared. But, Bhima Bhoi kept himself aloof from such milieu and established an ashrama at Khaliapali and contributed in a great way to spread the message of his Guru through his inimitable compositions throughout the later part of nineteenth century.*

*The movement marched through the tumultuous time into the twentieth century and the first quarter of it marked the emergence of a sanyasi, Biswanath Baba who with an intellectual bent of mind tried to establish an umbilical cord between Hinduism and Mahimaism by giving the latter a Sanskritic and shastric touch which was a departure from Mahima Swami's initial approach and intention. The basic purpose of his behind such reinterpretation and experimentation was to break in to the academic and intellectual circle to attract them and arrest their attention. He had written the official history of Mahima Dharma and a number of such related works totaling around twenty-six to explain the philosophy to the east and west. He, till his demise in 1992 almost single handedly steered the faith in the twentieth century. Besides him there were a number of other sanyasis who took the faith to distant places outside Odisha. Thus, this sesqui-centinarian faith witnessed changes in its approach in the twentieth century which is the essence of this discussion.*

The Mahima Dharma was a socio-religious movement of second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century in Odisha. Its fundamentals included *Sunya Brahma*, the absolute void as the supreme reality, a casteless society marked by justice, equality and humanism. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had spread over Odisha and also reached Assam predominantly. Bengal and Bihar were also affected. The reformist movement was also essentially non-Brahminic. It was a movement from below. In essence it was non-elitist. The movement remained alive and vigorous in the 20<sup>th</sup> century also. Biswanath Baba was the most prominent figure in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The present article attempts to examine the movement its contours and development and its leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

All religious movement faces a crisis after the departure of its founding figure. Issues of leadership, organizational setting and ideological difference etc. grips an organization and movement after the departure of founding figures. After the demise of Mahima Swami, Mahima Dharma had also to come to terms with all these issues. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century these were the issues for Mahima Dharma.

As such, Mahima Dharma, confronted similar intra-faith confusion and contradiction after Mahima Swami's demise which later sowed the seeds of divisive tendencies in the nascent cult. Some of the crucial and avowed principles of the faith propounded by Mahima Swami were interred in course of time and attempts were made to justify the new approaches.

Mahima Swami died in 1876 at Joranda where he was given *samadhi*. Great confusion followed his death; many *âçeritas* reverted to their earlier faiths.<sup>1</sup>

In the same year a sort of council had taken place in Joranda in which *sanyasis* and *bhaktas* took part.<sup>2</sup> In the absence of the founder and without any consensus about a leader to succeed him, without any scripture or systematic written document to follow, they searched for the ways and means to overcome the critical situation.<sup>3</sup> A *samadhi mandira* of the Guru was built at Joranda in the next year.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the process of institutionalization of Mahima Dharma started. Mahima Swami's principle of non-possession of wealth, his aversion to ritualism were shunned by the followers who apotheosized the Guru, built the eponymous permanent structures, i.e. the *gadi mandiras* etc. at Joranda, which became the mecca of the Mahimaites by gradually attaining the status of a pilgrimage. *Asramas* and *tungis* were built to accommodate the laities, *sadhus*, and *sanyasis*. *Mandiras* such as the *Dhuni Mandira* (fire temple), *Sunya Mandira* (empty temples) were built. Rules, regulations, *ritis*, *nitis*, have come into existence with the coming up of these *mandiras*. *Guru Purnima* began to be observed with gaiety and fervor to commemorate the Guru's *mahaprayana*.

These developments witnessed a break from the heretofore basic teachings and practices as envisaged by Mahima Swami. The institutionalization of *Asramas*, *tungis* and *mandiras* was the beginning of a semi-sedentary life, as opposed to the former itinerant life for every

wandering mendicant. Instead of *sanyasis* visiting the *asritas*, now the *asritas* were invited to the pilgrimage centre to pay homage to the Guru.<sup>5</sup>

Mahima Swami apparently had not paid any attention towards the future of the sect as he had not nominated any successor or made any provision for its continuation probably he had not felt the need of it or death came to him before he could do so. This remains as some sort of an enigma. It is palpable from his teachings that he was an ardent believer in the practice of *sanyasdharm*a which to him was “to break the shackles of all the worldly bonds and ties practicing self abnegation in order to get a spiritual mind set and to prevent the retrogression of the spiritual life by prescribing detachment.” To him the reason of existence of asceticism which resembles the eternal word of St. Paul was “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy spirit”.<sup>6</sup>

He insisted on his disciples to travel and spread the message. He prescribed therefore that the *sanyasis* should not stay more than a day in a village.<sup>7</sup> The message is clear that he stressed on the mobility of the sect and was against sedentarization.

The demise of Mahima Swami and subsequent institutionalization triggered confusion and crisis. Friction arose regarding the rights to perform the *niti* at the *samadhi* of the guru. Bhima Bhoi who took part in the council held at Joranda in 1876, did not participate in the construction of the shrine in Joranda. Probably he was averse to any division based on obdurate and rigid rules which not only weaken the sect but also would be opprobrious and disrespectful to the greatness of the Guru. Therefore, by distancing him from such controversy, he established his *asrama* at Kaliapalli in Sonapur district.<sup>8</sup>

Tracing the origin of the infighting regarding the status of the groups it may be mentioned that during the time of Mahima Swami the sect was divided into two sections which he himself had approved, were known as – *Kumbhipatias* / *Balkaladharis* (who wear bark of *Kumbhi* tree) and *Kanapatias* / *Kaupinadharis* (who wear red ochre dyed cloth) but he had not specified their respective positions. There were differences during his life time but could not come to the fore in the *alfresco*. But his absence expedited the bickering. After his death, his followers were further divided into *Chapan Murtia*, *Tetis Murtia* and *Kodie Murtia* according to the number of *sanyasis* in the group.<sup>9</sup>

Upto the year that followed the death of Bhima Bhoi i.e. 1896 there was no intake of *sanyasis* as per the wish of Mahima Swami. In this year, however the last *siddha sanyasi*, Nanda Baba initiated by Mahima Swami himself received a *sunya* word (*sunya vâ?i*) to initiate the novices who in the meantime had joined the order<sup>10</sup> and in the next 16 years about 200 *sanyasis* were initiated.<sup>11</sup>

In the year 1912, the same Baba, received the order to initiate a few of the *Kaupinadhâri* monks as *Kumbhipatias*. However, Krupasindhu Baba, another *balkaladhari siddha* did not accept this *sunya vani* and moved out of the common *matha* in Joranda with his followers and this resulted in the final break between the *Kaupinadharis* and *Balkaladharis*<sup>12</sup>.



Thenceforth, disputes between both groups about the lairdship of Krupasindhu Baba, about the management of temple estate etc. is continuing and both parties have indulged them in prolonged legal intrigues.<sup>13</sup>

In the second decade of twentieth century Biswanâth Baba emerged as one of the top of the line of *sanyasis* of the *Balkaladhari Mahima Samâja*. Born to a Mahima follower he got attracted to the faith early in the childhood. Consequently he left home and went with Niladri Baba and Siddha Nanda Baba to Mahima Gadi and received *Kaupina*. Thereafter in 1912 he received the *Balkala Bana* from *siddha* Nanda Baba. Biswanath Baba thereafter through his itinerary engaged himself in the propagation of the faith.

He is credited with providing the faith a new dimension by intellectualizing it through an allegorical presentation and comparative analysis of the principles of the faith by extensively quoting from the *Vedas*, *Upanisads* to establish its provenance and a simile with Hinduism which broke the heretofore traditional mode of interpreting and preaching the faith. His erudition, mastery over *Sanskrit* language and sharp intellect made him an authoritative expositor of the faith who almost single-handedly dominated the scene for a long period. He popularized the concept of *Ekamadwitiya Param Brahma* and interpreted the various concepts of *sunya*, *brahma*, *mukti*, *Mahima karma* etc. in the *Upanisadic* lights in his voluminous *Philosophy of Mahima Dharma*.

His importance lies in the fact that he made conspicuous efforts to write a number of books and treatises on Mahima Dharma which laid the foundation of an intellectualized tradition. His prominent works are : *Mahima Dharma Pratipâdaka*, *Mahima Dharma Itihasa*, *Ārimad Chinmaya Gita*, *Bhagabata Sara Satya Dharma*, *Sadhu Giti*, *Mahima Dharma Darœana*, *Saravedavedanta Sarathttwa Siromanih Alekha Param Brahma Darsanam*.

In 1934 on the invitation of Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and Bengali Encyclopaedist, Nagendra Nath Basu he went to Calcutta and participated in a number of religious conferences held at Bangiya Parishad, Sahitya Bhavan, Biswakosha Karyalaya, Vivekananda Mission. He headed the Mahima Gadi and Mahima Dharma Samaj from 1935 and from 1955 he became the President of Satya Mahima Dharma Parichalana Samiti.

He enunciated the Mahima Dharma Philosophy as “*Visuddha Adwaita Brahmavad*”. His differential ideological treatment making the faith homologous with Hinduism and his prolix deliberations on its different aspects to give the faith a new identity which is a matter of debate and discussion. After long and eventful life he breathed his last on 16.06.1992.<sup>14</sup>

Another important *sanyasi* of the faith was Achyutananda Baba. Born in 1918 in Jagat singhpur he left home at the age of 18 to become an ascetic. He was initiated into the faith by Surendra Baba, a disciple of Bada Krupasindhu Baba. He played a significant role in the spread of the faith in Assam. For almost thirty years he moved around the hilly areas of Assam preaching the faith. From 1955 to 1975 he was the President of Assam and Nepal Sadhubhakti Samiti and brought thousands of people into the fold of Mahima Dharma.

From 1938 to 1955 he traveled Balangir, Sonepur, Anugul, Athamallik, Boudh, Redhakhole and acted in different capacities as the Treasurer, Secretary and Vice-President of Mahima Dharma Samaj. From 1979 he remained head of Kaupinadhari Mahima Samaj.

It is through his effort the Assam Utkal Dharmasala was built. In 1960 he attended the World Religious Conference held at Calcutta along with Mahindra Baba. In 1984 he participated in the Biswa Hindu Parishad meeting held at Delhi on behalf of Mahima Dharma Samaj. After preaching the Mahima Dharma in the length and breadth of the country he died in 1996 at the age of 78.<sup>15</sup>

Biswanath Baba represented altogether a different personality. His affinity towards Mahima Dharma was quite natural as he was born to parents who were the followers of Mahimaism. He joined the order at an early age and by 13, he received the *kaupina* and in 1925, when he was 21, was initiated as a *Balkaladhari*<sup>16</sup>.

He through his *Sanskritic* and *sastric* profundity tried to give a facelift to the hitherto bucolic religion. He coined new designations for the *sanyasis* : *apara* (imperfect) for the *kaupina* wearers, *para*, (perfect) for the *kumbhi-payias*<sup>17</sup> which resulted with further division and stratification in the sect.

The *Balkaladharis* claimed superior status over the *kaupinadharis* on the ground that Mahima Swami and his first disciple wore *kaupina*, but this proposition was rejected by the *kaupinadharis* on the premise that even the Guru and his first disciple wore the *kaupina* first as such *kaupina* is the *adibana* (original insignia) of the guru.<sup>18</sup>

Biswanath Baba through his mercurial exhibitionism of erudition reinterpreted the teachings of Mahima Swami and in a way “*Sanskritized*” them.<sup>19</sup> He marshalled the historic events to produce the first history of Mahima Dharma, *Satya Mahima Dharma Itihasa* in 1935. He collated the past events of the Dharma to systematize the order and to authenticate those developments. He remodeled the teachings of the Guru *vis-à-vis* the older text. He has added a new dimension to the Mahima cult by bringing it in touch with the intellectual and academic circles.<sup>20</sup>

The works of Biswanath Baba were open to wider circles and also to those educated in the western education system, who in search for a new understanding of their own tradition, reacted to them positively to some extent. Thus two groups of followers of the sect were formed first, the properly initiated, other, and a wider circle of sympathizers who usually do not get initiated.<sup>21</sup>

He descended on the scene at a critical juncture when the faith was marred by dissension, disintegration, divisions, distinction, he took the affair as a disciplined soldier into his own hand and put it on the track through well defined etiquettes. His towering personality and in-depth knowledge somewhat silenced his opponents. He created a splendid aura and sprinkled it with an essence of mysticism and spiritualism and outlined a new *parampara* for the followers to tread on. The present form of *Balkaladhari* group with its strict centralistic organisation is

deeply influenced by him. He introduced stricter monastic discipline and new designation of *para* and *apara* for the *sanyasis*. This special categorization and the subordination of *kaupinadhari*s under the *kumbhipatias* aggravated the opposition to the *kaupina* group, which probably as a reaction also started organizing itself in a more uniform way.<sup>22</sup>

Through intellectualization of the faith, Biswanath Baba created an order. He wanted to give a new meaning and status to the faith by attracting the educated urban elites and middle class intelligentsia. Therefore, he ventured into writing texts, the most appropriate means to achieve his end. His works include *Philosophy of Mahima Dharma (Sarba Veda Vedanta Saratattwa Siromanih Mahima Dharma Darsanam and Mahima Dharma Pratipadaka)*. In these texts he authoritatively tried to substantiate and justify the tenets of Mahima faith by quoting from the *sastras* and *srutis* through arguments and *pramanas* in tradition with the schools of Indian philosophy. His dedicated learning of Hindu sacrifices enabled him to theorize.

Another important work of his was the *Satya Mahima Dharma Itihasa*, published in 1935 in which he tried to give the Mahima Dharmis an authentic past and accorded the Guru the dignity of chronology, temporality and a new historicity.<sup>23</sup>

He took to writing as a service to the faith and through it he answered the need felt by the self-realized ascetics of Mahima Dharma and its sympathizers among the Oriya literati, of the absence of authoritative treatises so as to make the movement meaningful, provide an intellectual base and maintain stable continuity of the principles.<sup>24</sup>

In consonance with the tradition started by the Guru, the peripatetic Baba has made numerous contacts and attended innumerable meetings for giving authoritative expositions for the spread of the religion. Since 1934, he addressed a large number of savant bodies.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the efforts of Biswanath Baba perambulated around his desire of making the Dharma a cynosure for the intellectuals, learned and academicians. This is a conspicuous departure of interest and approach propounded by Bhima Bhoi for the dharma. This experimentation of Biswanath Baba has been criticized. Following summarizes the criticism.

- His hardening stance and reinterpretation of the Dharma led to the *coup d' grace* resulting in the vivisection of the faith on a firm basis;
- He has been imputed for giving scope and encouragement to orthodoxy and fanaticism;
- By making the Dharma elite centric he hampered its spread and distanced it from the reach of the commonality;
- He diluted some of the basic ideas propounded by Mahima Swami and followed by Bhima Bhoi such as the reliance upon *nirveda*, *abheda*, and use of the common people's language have been openly sacrificed;
- Biswanath Baba in his book *Satya Mahima Dharma Itihasa* attempted to establish Mahima Dharma to be of classical origin and also fabricated the life of the Mahima Swami with legends

and tried to keep Bhima Bhoi away from the scene as if he had no bearing with it.<sup>26</sup>

- He is accused of ‘*Sanskritisation*’ and *Vedantisation* of the faith thereby diminuting the intrinsic quality and purpose of the faith.
- He refers to Sanskrit texts of the *Vedanta* school on the one hand and to the *Bhâgavad Gîtâ* or the *Bhâgavata Purâna* on the other.
- He prefers the Sanskrit text rather than their widely circulated Oriya translations.
- Anacharlot Eschmann has pointed out some of the contradictions of his teachings in this way; he strictly rejected the *Ekaksara Mantra* and the entire connection with the medieval Oriya tradition is played down by him.
- He thus made an attempt to dissociate the teachings of Mahima Dharma from the regional esoteric traditions of the Panchasakha and Bhakti cult and substantiate these from Sanskrit tradition.
- He differs fundamentally in attitude from Bhima Bhoi who remained in the Panchasakhâ tradition and wrote in their style;
- In his interpretation of *saguna* and *nirguna* concept while describing the attributes of *Sunya Brahma* and Mahima and his attempt to establish the *swarupa* of the Mahima Swami he wavered between *Vedantana* and other Philosophies like *Sanksa*, *Ahimbudhnya – Samhita* and other *Vaishnava* texts in a veiled manner and sometimes even goes beyond these.
- He repeatedly stresses that Mahima Swami did not refer to the scriptures in his sermons at all, but the scriptures must endorse all declarations of *Isvara Puru?a*, who is Mahima Swami himself, from whom they really originate.
- In doing so he even reinterpreted some aspects of the traditional scriptures to suit his considerations ignoring at times their original descriptions.<sup>27</sup>

Notwithstanding valid criticism Biswanath Baba was a prolific writer having a commendable insight into the *sastras* and *Upanisads*, a dedicated and disciplined *sanyasi*, a self made self accomplished personality. He had worked for the progress of the faith by interpreting it in a new line of thought. He was right in his own way and might have attended to the needs of the time. He might have thought to take the faith to a new level. He displayed enough grit, to rise above the prohibitive and vindictive temperaments and most importantly to break the monotonous characteristics of the faith. And it was certainly his credit that he not only ventured into the new area but also got huge success in his adventure of attracting the attention of the learned and academicians and also got the camaraderie of a galaxy of reputed educationists and thinkers. Thus, he supported and supplemented the cause of the faith, helped the spread of the faith to certain extent.

Of course, the contentions raised against Biswanâth Baba have their credentials which cannot be overlooked. His activities as a strict disciplinarian and a martinet ruptured the

organisational setting resulting in split between the *Balkaladharis* and *kaupinadhâris* who built their respective *samâjas* for advancing their own point of view.

Unlike Bhima Bhoi, Biswanâth Baba's extent of ideological representation in his innumerable texts remained within the perimeter of the Mahima Dharma. It appears that he frittered away his sedulity in explaining different concepts of the Dharma and the Mahima of Mahima Swami in the light of *œrutis* and *sm?tis* and never touched the contours of socio-political-religious issues and the plight of the commonalty whereas, his compatriot, Bhima Bhoi went to the extent of expressing his hope by prognosticating about the deracination of the Britishers from the country in the verse of his *Stuti Chintamani*.

*The foreigner will fight but will not succeed and will remain in his place. The God will be witnessing this from the heaven.*<sup>28</sup>

This shows the concern of a humanist poet who has the responsibility of arousing spiritual consciousness along with spotlighting the socio-political issues because spiritualism cannot proceed side by side with social instability.

Biswanath Baba's urban-elite leanings, though, not halted the progress and spread of the faith altogether but to certain extent might have slowed down the pace which if given proper attention would have grown leaps and bounds by attracting followers on a large scale. One of the ironies is that while much attention was paid for setting a high standard of the faith to make it a rallying point for the educationists and luminaries, no such efforts were made for raising the intellectual standards of the inmates and lay disciples. Most of them were till today illiterates with no or little educational background.<sup>29</sup>

The *Sanskritic, Vendantic, Upanisadic* obsession of Biswanath Baba and his attempt to mould the faith as per their teachings may have some harmful repercussions. Mahima Dharma emerged as a reactionary movement against orthodox Hinduism. To establish its credential and distinct identity Mahima Swami bestowed it with a name, outlined its tenets and organized a mass base.

History will repeat itself if any attempt is made to alter, play down or experiment with its basic premises that would lead it to an identity crisis and ultimately expose it to the possibility of assimilation as this has been the case a number of times in the past and the disappearance of Buddhism from the Indian scene after having so profoundly influenced Indian thought for over thirteen centuries can be attributed to the gradual indistinguishability of Buddhism and Hinduism, is to be taken seriously. Sankara who was accused as a *Prachana Buddha* or a concealed Buddhist, broke down the barriers between the Buddhist laity and Hinduism by his fight against the *Mimamsakas*. The Buddhist temples, like the famous Jagannâth temple of Puri, became Hindu temples.<sup>30</sup> As Elliot the historian of Buddhism, says:

“The line dividing Buddhist laymen from ordinary Hindus became less and less marked, distinctive teaching found only in the monasteries: these became poorly recruited..... Even in the monasteries, the doctrine taught bore a closer resemblance to Hinduism than the

preaching of Gotama and it is the absence of the protestant spirit this pliant adaptability to the ideas of each age which caused Indian Buddhism to lose its individuality and separate existence.”<sup>31</sup>

Hinduism is a deep rooted religion, which thrives within the two extremes i.e., it is rigidly rigid and flexibly flexible. Due to this characteristic it survived centuries of onslaughts of external forces – both political and cultural.

The developments in Mahima Dharma immediately after the demise of Mahima Swami have exposed the underneath fumes that was waiting for an opportune moment to come to the fore and the founder's death provided the *casus belli*. The internal squabbles, the ritualisation, the acquisition of landed property, the transmogrification of the *Samadhi Sthala* of the Guru into a pilgrimage, the apotheosisation of the Guru and creation of concrete structures (*Mandiras*) in his memorium, the proliferation of *mathas* (monasteries) and *Asramas*, acceptance of pecuniary assistances, the practice of *tantras* and *mantras* for healing purposes, the gradual sedentarization of the faith – all these speaks of the glaring diversions that had crept into the faith which the Guru had vociferously opposed. These later developments in the Mahima Dharma can be considered to be part of the process which it was losing its distinct identity and its difference with the Brahminic Hinduism was getting obliterated.

Despite these apprehensions, contradictions, quandaries, intra-organizational discussions, distinctions, divisions, differential approaches, secessions, long standing court intrigues, Mahima Dharma has come of age. Since its birth, this sesqui-centenarian faith witnessed many landmark events and transitional phases such as the Great Famine of 1866 in Odisha, the growth of national consciousness leading to the formation of Indian National Congress at the national level and Utkal Sammilani in Orissa, the formation of Orissa, the independence of India and the adoption of the Indian Constitution etc. The after effects of these movements were tremendous which fermented the entire socio cultural political sphere for the creation of a stable and progressive society. Mahima Dharma was the, product of a period of great fermentation in the world, India and Odisha.

Its growth and spread has been a continuous process through the activities of the key and towering personalities of the faith like Bhima Bhoi, Bada Krupasindhu Baba, Sana Krupasindhu Baba, Biswanath Baba, Mahindra Baba, to name a few and a host of such other Babas, *sanyasis*, and lay followers, the faith penetrated various strata in a significant manner. As a result, today it can boast of a trans-Orissan and trans-Indian presence. Of late, it has aroused the inquisitiveness of scholars and researchers within and without India and became a subject matter of debates and deliberations among them.

With the passage of time the impact of the developments in socio-political-economic spheres have intruded into the faith affecting the lives of the votaries of the faith and changing their perceptions towards it.

During the life time of Mahima Swami, propagation of Mahima Dharma was confined to certain places of Orissa and between 1860s and 1870s, it could attract 30,000 people as followers.<sup>32</sup> As per the survey report of A. Eschmann in the 1970s, the number of *tungis* and *Asramas* in Orissa was 1372 which were increased to 2157 as per another survey conducted by Fanindam Deo in 1994.

As per information the *Kaupinadhâri Mahima Samâja* could establish the following *Asramas* and *tungis* in eastern India. The lists of these places are:

Bihar: Barai Junction; Jamshepûr; Tatanagar; Singhbhum, Chakradharpur.

West Bengal: Chingudia; Ushar, Nuagaon, Sanamukshi, Tentulia, Ambi, Ektali, Danton, Digha, Balabhadrapur, Biniadihi, Bakhudiapada, Kanthi, Balulakusuda, Biharpur, Baligadia of Midnapre District, Grama Chinabadi, Sulabadi, and Rukshia of Bankura District. Tarabani; Amadia and Khatada of Purulia District, Ramkrishnapur of 24 Parganas District, Khuguda, Panchanantala and Baishnab Para Lane of Howrah District.

Assam : According to the 1955 census made by *Kaupindhâri Mahima Samâja*, the number of the villages and families who accepted this cult in Assam is as follows.

267 families of 28 villages of Dumduma;

139 families of 18 villages;

67 families of 7 villages of Baga/Barpeta area;

70 families of 13 villages Koila Gudha and Kakeni area;

101 families of 16 villages of Doriakothalaguri area;

149 families of 34 villages of Tejapur area.

Pabhoi Mahima Âûrama, Daranga Mahima Âûrama Balagaon Mahima Âûram of Shibsagar District; Dehal and Betajana Mahima Âcerams of Dibrugarh District, are the important Mahima Âûrams of Assam.

Achyutânanda Baba, Nabakisore Baba, Pranabandhu Baba, Dibakar Baba, and Kumaramani Baba of *kaupinadhari* Mahima Samâja are the main preachers of this religion in Assam.

This religion has spread to Nepal where *kaupinadhari sanyâsi* Niranjan Baba is preaching this religion establishing a Mahima Âûrama at Tarabadi.

In Bangla Desh one kaupinadhari *sanyâsi*, Krishan Baba is preaching this religion having established a Mahima Âûram at Kaphana Pahada.<sup>33</sup>

Mahima Swami preferred to popularize his faith in rural areas and succeeded in attracting unlettered people and the educated mass in the rural areas were not influenced towards it due to the restrictions prescribed by it on day to day life. The Mahima faith was expanded in Gadjat

areas with the support of the native rulers and therefore, the converts were found in large numbers there.

The primitive tribes have not accepted it due to the complexities in observing the rules. Some sections of the Kandhas like Desia Kandha, Panas and some of the Sa-aras accepted while other factions of the Kandhas like Kutia, Dongarias and even Sa-aras which are Hinduised or have their independent tutelary deities were less attracted to it.<sup>34</sup>

The Mahima Dharma still not cast off its caste biases and even the followers were unable to liberate themselves from such mindsets. The various concepts evolved to dissuade the Mahima empathizers from Hindu rituals like *Brhama Bibâha* (Marriage according to Alekhism) has not yet been consented upon by them. Similarly birth and death ceremonies were observed with a slight deviation from traditional pattern.<sup>35</sup>

Further, there are some grey areas which still hold the truth are weakening the sinews of the faith and hindering its progress.

To think of wiping out Brahminism or orthodox Hinduism and polytheism is entirely impractical and impolitic. Because its ineluctability has been an established fact and its deep rootedness, adaptability and assimilative qualities had decimated some popular religions like Buddhism, Jainism in the past. Instead attempts should be directed towards rationalizing the tenets and canons of the Mahima Dharma keeping in view the goal of working for social.

“At the present moment the Mahima Dharma is more at a personal level of acceptance. In order to revitalize and strengthen its hold as well as to make it acceptable on a mass scale the present organization should be brought to a practical level. Then only it may continue to have some following. The sanyasis of this sect should, therefore reorient their way of life and follow the principles only in consonance with the sweeping changes which development programmes have brought to the life of the people”<sup>36</sup>

Mahima Dharma, along with numerous other socio-religious movement of 19<sup>th</sup> century India was reformist. It worked for social justice and equality. It was a movement from below. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it became an organized faith, scholastic and even elitist, though most of its anti-intellectual. Mahima movement provides a great opportunity to contemporary scholars to study social dynamic and the shifting consent of social justice and equality. Its study enriches our understanding of social exclusion and inclusive movement.

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## A LINGUISTIC REVOLUTION: PUNDIT RAGHUNATH MURMU'S 'OL- CHIKI'

Sujit Kumar Chhatia

*Movements of nations or other social groups (classes, women, etc) invariably look both at the past and to the future. The past has to be appropriated in order to yield the grounds of the present condition and thus of present actions too. National movements usually appropriate the past in a mythical manner, returning back to some 'Golden Age'. A vision of the future too is necessary in order to inform present actions and invest them with a meaning that transcends the immediate results. It is therefore not surprising that the Santali Language Movement has sparked off discussions on both the past and the future. From time immemorial Santals preserved and transmitted their language from one generation to the other. On the way they must have come in contact with other contemporary language families but their love for their language for its beauty, completeness and richness forged their spontaneous adherence to it. They kept it intact, thoroughly endeavoured for its betterment and their interest for excellence paved the way for the evolution of their own script known as Ol-Chiki. This historic path breaking invention not only gave them confidence but also facilitated proper expression of their words while writing as it was not at all possible with any of the available scripts of the world. This statement here will remain incomplete without having a mention of the legendary genius Pundit Raghunath Murre, the inventor of the script popularly known as Guru Gomke among the Santals. Santali as a language possesses unique characteristics of its own. It has a well knit grammar having a number of affixes, tenses, moods and usages covering all the common necessities of day to day life of the people referred to. It has got its own pronouns, numerals and syntactical structures which form the characteristics of a full fledged language.*

Mayurbhanj, the erst-while state ruled by Bhanja dynasty in an unbroken continuity for over a thousand years until its merger with Orissa in January, 1949<sup>1</sup> is situated in the northern boundary of the state of Odisha, sharing her boarder with Jharkhand and West Bengal- two neighbouring India states. This tribal dominated district is thickly populated by the Schedule Tribes and 57.87% of its population constitutes these communities.<sup>2</sup> Out of sixty two types of tribals in Orissa, Mayurbhanj alone houses fifty three. The major tribes found in Mayurbhanj are: the Santals, Kolha, Bhuyan, Bathudi, Bhunya, Gond etc.<sup>3</sup>

From the view point of historical and typological linguistics, languages in this area are grouped in to four major linguistic groups, Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Indo-Aryan and Tibeto Burman. Among these four groups, Austro-Asiatic language is regarded to be oldest indigenous one: although relatively smaller in number, as compared to the enormous population of the Dravidians in South Indian and the Indo-Aryans in North India, Austro-Asiatic languages are most important ones considering their oldness. Austro-Asiatic has four major sub groups are

Munda, Nicobarese, Man-khmer and Aslian. The sub group is located mostly in Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. It Comprises of Santali, Mundari, Ho, Kalko etc. Santals are the largest population among them.<sup>4</sup>

In order to maintain the identity of the region and to strengthen the bases of tribal solidarity the Santals have developed a distinct script (*Ol-Chiki*) for their language. Pundit Raghunath Murmu who is known as the *Guru Gomke*, the spiritual leader of the Santals, had developed a sense of identity from the beginning of the forties, of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when he devised the *Ol-Chiki* Script.<sup>5</sup> Pundit Raghunath Murmu was born on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1905 in Dahardihi village near Rairangpur in the district of Mayurbhanj. His father was Sidh Murmu and mother was Salama Murmu. He completed his school in Gamaharia Lower Primary School, Gamaharia Upper Primary School, Bahalda M. E. School. In M. K. C. High School, Baripada, Pundit Murmu finished his studies. After qualifying of High School examination, Pt. Murmu married Nana Baskey. During the year 1930-31, he joined as an instructor in Baripada spinning mill. During his service at Baripada, Pundit Murmu lost his father. For the family burden as well as, for the development of the script he requested the Maharaja to give him a job near his village. The Maharaja appointed him as an assistant teacher in Badamatalia High School. At that time Soren Pati was Head Pandit of that School. On promotion Mr. Pati was transferred and Pundit Raghunath Murmu became the Head-master of this institution.<sup>6</sup>

In 1925 by inventing this Script he brought about a renaissance in Santali Literature. From phonetic point of view this '*Ol-Chiki*' is suitable for Austric language and it is scientific. In the year 1936, Pundit Murmu published his first work *Har Serenj* (theory of Universe) in Bengali Script. In the meeting at Chemenjodi village, convened by Meghnad Majhi, Pundit Murmu declared that he had invented a script for Santali language. But, no one had given importance to the script of Pundit Murmu. Coming back to Badamatalia, Pundit Murmu convened a meeting of teachers and asked them whether the script is suitable for the Santali language. All the teachers who were present in this meeting gave an affirming reply. Murmu prepared a wooden printing-machine for *Ol-Chiki* script. This machine was highly appreciated by Mr. Sachindranath Das, who was the school Superintendent. He directed Sawana Murmu, the assistant teacher of this institution to take the printing machine to Baripada which would be exhibited in the exhibition in 1939. On the last day of exhibition, the Maharaja made a visit and came to know about the genius of Pundit Raghunath Murmu. Sawana Murmu made an attempt to put the *Ol-Chiki* printing machine to test. During this time the son of brother-in-law of Pundit Murmu, Muniram Baskey returned from England to India. He gave assurance to Pt. Murmu for the development of the script.

Pundit Raghunath Murmu formed *Ol-Samiti*, an organization at Bantali and its sole objective was to popularize *Ol-Chiki* in an organized way. The son of Bantali Sadar, Samara Charn Majhi was its first President, Lakhan Majhi was its Vice-President and Dinu Murmu of Dahardihi

became its first Secretary. In that meeting it was decided to give an application to the *Maharaja* for royal recognition to the script. But the *Maharaja* questioned about the necessity of the script. The members of *Ol- Samiti* pointed out that, there were a number of words in Santali language, which cannot be written in Oriya. The *Maharaja* answered that though he had not realized the necessity of alphabet, still then he would give a notice about these alphabets through out the state.

After a long period, a letter came to *Ol- Samiti* that, this script cannot be used, it will be very expensive in the publishing sphere. In this connection, a meeting was convened at Dahardihi. Sunaram Soren read out the letter before the audience and justified the necessity of the script. It was decided in the meeting to convince the *Dewan* of Mayurbhanj about this matter. Sundar Mohan Hemram with others met the *Dewan* of Mayurbhanj and requested him to recognize this script. As Santal people are so large in numbers in the areas of Bihar, West Bengal, the *Dewan Saheb* advised them to popularize this script, in those states at first. He assured them, there would be no difficulty for this script in Mayurbhanj State. In 1942 *Bidu Chandan* was published from Cuttack, with the effort of Sunarm Soren and Sundar Mohan Hemram. It was published in Oriya Script. It is to be noted here that the Santals had sung their folk songs in Bengali language. But the publication of *Bidu Chandan*, gave confidence to the mind of tribals. Panchanan Marandi from Ekdali, made an attempt to popularize this script in the remote area by singing various folk songs in Santali language. As a result, *Ol-Chiki* script gained popularity and momentum among the Santali-speaking people.<sup>7</sup>

As the work-load about *Ol-Chiki* script increased day by day, in 1946 Pundit Raghunath Murmu resigned from teacher ship and established a school with his own expenditure to teach the interested students at Dahardihi. He taught the students there in Hindi and Santali language. That institution continued here for about two years. In the mean time Muniram Baskey returned from England and joined in TELCO. Pundit Raghunath Murmu had a great expectation from him and for this purpose Pundit Murmu requested Muniram Baskey to help for the popularization of *Ol-Chiki*. With the help of Muniram Baskey the first Santali press was setup at Khasmahal in Jamshedpur, Bihar (present Jharkhand). The first work which had been published in *Ol-Chiki* script was “*Niyeljam lipid Ol*” (letters for learning). The issue of the merger of Mayurbhanj then irritated the tribals of Mayurbhanj. In this context, a meeting was held at Khadam Beda near Biso, where Pundit Murmu told extensively about the new script. In the year 1952, the President of *Ol- Samiti* met Pundit. Murmu to take permission for popularizing the *Ol-Chiki* script. In this connection, a meeting was held at Badada. The *Ol-Chiki* leaders like Lal Mohan soren, Surdhan Hemram, Badha Bersa, Shyam Sundar Hasdah etc, had attended this meeting all of whom lately had taken an active-part to popularize *Ol-Chiki* script.<sup>8</sup> In this meeting *Ol-Samiti* was renamed *Adivasi Lakchar Sammelan*. Surdhan Hemram, Lal Mohan Soren, Badha Bersna became its President, Vice-president and Secretary respectively. In 1952 land was acquired for *Adivasi Lakchar Sammelan*. The Santal press which was at Khasmahal, Jamshedpur

was named as Chandan Press. *Ol-Chemen* was published in this year. *Sagen Sakam* Magazine was also published. Sundar Mohan Hemram became its first editor. From the year 1963, Pundit Murmu had paid visits to the several villages of Orissa, Bihar and West Bengal for popularising *Ol-Chiki* script. In the year 1964 *Adivasi Lakachar Sammelan* gave birth to Adivasi Socio – Educational Cultural Association (ASECA) which was established at Rairangpur. During the year 1970-71 ASECA became weak due to organizational drawback. An adhoc body was formed in which Pundit Raghunath Murmu became its President and Gurucharan Soren its Secretary. However, after a long interval, in a general body meeting ASECA became reorganized to popularize *Ol-Chiki* Script at grass root level of the community. In 1977 ASECA of Orissa, West Bengal and Bihar formed All India Santal Council at Jhargram (West Bengal) which was the apex body of ASECA of four states (Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, and Assam). The formation of ASECA in these states augmented in a new era the field of Santali Language in its attempt to assert –its identity in the larger Indian Society. Before Pundit Murmu, the movement for Santali language was a non-political one, gradually it was transformed into a political movement with manifold tasks and activities.<sup>9</sup>

Pundit Murmu designed an alphabet of thirty letters, with six vowels and four consonants linked to each vowel. All the letters were based on either some object, activities of the body or particular sound patterns which they resembled. In this connection, the alphabet has five significant tones used after the letter to give different sound effects (1) Nasalization, (2) Low pitch, (3) Prolongation of Vowels, (4) separation between checked consonants and other consonants or vowels, (5) Force (check value) to open the checked consonants and make them simple consonants. It is thus a fairly sophisticated script and meets most of the phonetic requirements.<sup>10</sup> With the help of this script Pundit Murmu has produced so many works which have enriched the store house of Santali Language. These are *Bidu Chandan*, *Har Serenj*, *Badege Dhan*, *Alchimen*, *Parsi Puna*, *Bakhen*, *Sidha Kanhu*, *Elkha*, *Hitan (I, II, III)*, *Lakchar*, *Andol*, *Alupurum*, *Santal Hule* etc.

For this valuable contribution towards the invention of Santali script, *Ol Chiki*, Orissa Sahitya Academy felicitated him on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1978. The first works of Pundit Murmu, *Kherwal Veer* and *Bidu Charan* when published, were patronized by Kherwal Jarpa Samiti of Jamshedpur. It encouraged Pundit Murmu to refashion *Ol-Chiki* along the lines of modern types suitable for use in printing press. He went to Calcutta and got the typeset in the *Swadeshi* type foundry. *Kherwal Veer* was printed at Bistupur and *Bidu Chandan* in Bengali at Calcutta. Both the plays were extremely popular among the Santal masses and were performed in remote villages. The *Kherwal Jarpa Samiti* acquired the Chandan Press and started printing *Sagen Sakam* and *Ol-Gemet* in *Ol-Chiki*. Panchaman Marandi (Bijatala Block, Ekdal, Rairangpur), through various folk songs, popularized the Santali Language in the Villages.

The invention of a script was not sufficient for Murmu for popularizing Santal literature and to create the bond of Santal identity. There was a necessity to form an organization which would take the responsibility to recognize Santal literature, culture and education within the community in a systematized manner. To fill the blank Adivasi Socio-Educational and Cultural Association (ASECA) was established in Rairangpur on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1964 with the objectives of the promotion of literature in Santali and in its other sister languages with the medium of Adivasi *Ol-Script*.<sup>11</sup> The promotion of cultural and social reforms among the Adivasis would be through discussion, demonstration and practice of arts and music and establishment of such educational institutions which would advance the development of Adivasi Language and Script.<sup>12</sup>

The ASECA, Rairangpur has taken up the work promoting Santali language, literature and the *Ol-Chiki* script. *Sagen Sakam* the monthly magazine of this association has been published in the *Ol-Script*. The Bihar ASECA published *Semlet Sakwa*, where as ASECA West Bengal published its own Journal called *Jug Jarna*.<sup>13</sup>

It is to be noted that Pundit Murmu's inspiration, advice, guidance and help were always followed by the Association and its leaders. A Semlet M.E. School was started by the Association (ASECA) at Rairangpur upto class VI in July 1967. The Board of Santal Education was established in 1975 as a wing of ASECA in Rairangpur. Under this Board, *Ol-Chiki* teaching was started for lower and higher classes for the year 1975. Matric Standard *Ol-Chiki* teaching has been started from 1988. Intermediate Standard and Graduation level *Ol-Chiki* teaching have started under ASECA from the year 1997 and 1999 respectively.

Pundit Murmu has a broad conviction that to create a script was not sufficient. The next work was how this script would work for the common advancement. Pundit Murmu tried his best to see the Santals learn this script and use it in their day-to-day life but the problem was, the Santals with the same cultural heritage, social tradition and language living in the states of Orissa, Bihar, and West Bengal were faced with a problem of communication among themselves. The literate Santals in these three states express themselves in four different scripts Oriya, Bengali, Devnagari and Roman. This had created a communication hindrance. Pundit Murmu proposed that at least Primary Education should be in Santali language and with Santali Script. But this formula was related to several other related problems, as: Lack of Santali text books in *Ol-Chiki* Script, absence of teachers who are trained with this script and language, absence of voluminous Santali literature which demands a similar position with the other literature.<sup>14</sup>

Pundit Raghunath Murmu himself authored the following texts- *Ol-Cement*, *Parsipoha*, *Elka Patab*, *Pansi Itun*. *Ol-Cement* was published by the Adivasi Socio-Educational and Cultural Association, Rairangpur. This had a wide spread circulation and its eighth edition Published in 1970 was financed by the Calcutta ASECA. *Parsipoha* at first was published by the Bihar (Chakulia) ASECA in 1968. In addition to the preparation of text books in the *Ol-Chiki* Script, Pundit Murmu was cautious about the Santali-language trained teachers who would be capable

to teach *Ol-Chiki* Script. For this, a Semlet M.E. School had started in July 1967 at Rairangpur. A proposal had been given to the State Governments of Orissa, Bihar and West Bengal to impart education to the Mundari group of tribals in the medium of *Ol-Chiki* at the primary level. But the Semlet M.E. School did not give a good response. The ASECA of Calcutta, Rairangpur and Chakulia had organized camps, known as Santali literacy camps, at different times and in different places. Normally these camps last for seven to ten days and a large number of educated Santals particularly Santal teachers attended these camps where the methodology of quick teaching in the *Ol-Script* and Santali language was imparted by experts. It is to be noted that Sundar Mohan Hemram, Lal Mohan Murmu, Lal Mohan Soren, Mansing Murmu greatly cooperated with Pundit Murmu in this effort. Mansing Murmu in his own work *Guru Gomke Hitle* mentions how Pundit Murmu had proceeded. Besides these camps which were held occasionally now, regular educational institutions in an informal manner were also running in different places. These are called *Itun Anashala*. The first *Itun Anashala* was established in the year 1962 at Rairangpur. Again there were three hundred *Itun Anashala* established in Orissa. These institutions generally function outside the normal Primary Schools. The teachers were often the same and the same School room was used for this purpose. The scene has changed. There are full time teachers available in these institutions and regular classes are also going on. Now due to government rules and procedures, the non-tribal teachers are also taking interest in learning of *Ol-Chiki* Script and Santali language.

So *Ol-Chiki* gradually took shape in to a movement in collaboration with Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa organizations, institutions and the individuals behind it. Many writers from different areas have made contribution towards the enrichment of the store house of Santali literature. Day-by-day it is going to justify its importance. To materialize these efforts Santal presses in different area has been established, like

- (1) Chandan Press-Tatanagar, Kherwal, Jamsedpur.
- (2) Ol- Press Rairangpur, Mayurbhnaj, Orissa. (This Press became Semlet Press –in 1<sup>st</sup> Nov .1966)<sup>15</sup>

Establishment of Press in different places has created enthusiasm among the Santal people to publish periodicals and books. The periodicals which have been published are

- (1) Sagen Sakam, Rairangpur, 1<sup>st</sup> editor was Pt. Raghunath Murmu.
- (2) Sarjam Baha, Bhubaneswar.

Day by day, when the publication multiplied on, opinion emerged to use Roman Script for the Santali language. However, the solution was made in the following manner. The Santali language has its own original existence, its own entity. As Oriya, Hindi or Bengali language cannot be written in English and also vice-versa, Santali Language cannot be written in English or any other language. If it happens, within a short period the Santali language will be phonetically



deformed. Consequently it will lose its glamour, its original appeal as a result by the process of time; this language will be condemned to live a crippled life and disappear. With the publication of so many periodicals a vast number of books have also been published.<sup>16</sup> Gradually, this demand has been gaining momentum. The followers and supporters of this movement argue that for the recognition as a full fledged language there are four elements necessary. Indeed Santali language fulfils all these elements. These are the population speaking the language, Literature, Script, Dictionary.

The situation and position of the Santali language amply substantiates to the fact that, it fulfills the above condition, or it has the above elements for which it can be treated as a language in the modern sense of the term and there is sufficient justification behind their argument that Santali language must be included in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution of India.<sup>17</sup>

From the time immemorial Santals preserved and transmitted their language from one generation to the other. On the way they must have come in contact with other contemporary language families but their love for the language for its beauty, completeness and richness forged their adherence to it. They kept it intact, thoroughly endeavoured for its betterment and their zest for excellence paved the way for the evolution of their own script known as *Ol-Chiki*. This historic path breaking invention not only gave them confidence but also facilitated proper expression of their words while writing as it was not at all possible with any of the available scripts of the world. This statement here will remain incomplete without having a mention of the legendary genius, Pundit Raghunath Murmu, the inventor of the script popularly known among the Santals as *Guru Gomke*. Santali as a language possesses unique characteristics of its own. It has a well knit grammar having a number of affixes, tenses, moods and usages covering all the common necessities of day to day life of the people referred to. It has got its own pronouns, numerals and syntactical structures which form the characteristic of a fully fledged language.<sup>18</sup>

Beside the above factors, those who are justifying Santali to be included in the 8<sup>th</sup> schedule of the Constitution, there also exists a dictionary in Santali language. P.O. Bodings' Santali Dictionary in five volumes, Santali English Dictionary by Comphell and Santali Hindi Dictionary claim their authority in support of the above demand.<sup>19</sup>

During the birth anniversary function of Pundit Raghunath Murmu on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1999 at Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj Santali Cultural Organizations like the Adivasi Socio-Educational and Cultural Association (ASECA), All India Santali Writers Association (AISWA), All India Santal Council, Santali Bhasa Morcha and the Mayurbhanj Adivasi Employee's Cultural and Welfare Association have taken up cudgels to obtain a place for their language in the Constitution. The Mayurbhanj Adivasi Employees Cultural and Welfare Association also demanded that the Santali Language be taught through *Ol-Chiki* in Santali dominated areas. The organizers, leaders, speakers, in a combined statement, told that Pundit Raghunath Mumu, the Vidyasagar of the

tribals, first opened up the world of letters to his people with his book of Santali alphabets. Endearingly referred to as “*Guru Gomke*” or spiritual guru of the tribals, Murmu was a legendary figure in Santali literature, social reformer and humanist. Murmu is best known as the architect of Santali literature. His script is phonetically most suited to the Santali language. Earlier Oriya, Bengali, Hindi and Roman alphabets were used to communicate Santali which had no script of its own. Roman alphabets which were modified were considered a fairly accurate phonetic medium for the Santali language. However, Murmu’s scientific Script most accurately captured Santali pronunciations. A striking feature of *Ol-Chiki* is the linear arrangement of five letters to form a better block. Despite this their demand for inclusion of the language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution has not been considered.<sup>20</sup> In this connection, on the eve of Pt. Murmu’s Birth anniversary another meeting was held at Cuttack on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1999 by Parsi Dulal Ganeer Gawanta. Speakers like Saraswati Hembram, Thakur Das Majhi, Baidya Nath Majhi and Smt. Bijyalaxmi Sahu had attended the meeting. The meeting demanded to include Santali language in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution and to impart education in Santali language to the tribal students in primary level in the tribal populated areas.<sup>21</sup>

In the mean time, All India Santal Writers Association had decided to form an all India level Socio Educational and cultural Forum for inclusion of Santali language in 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution of India. This was to be a co-ordination committee among the different social cultural organizations of Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa, Assam and Bihar. It was decided by the Association that after formation of the coordination committee a delegation would go to New Delhi to press the demands before the Hon’ble Prime Minister, Home Minister and other authorities of Central Government from 20<sup>th</sup> February to 25<sup>th</sup> February 2001.<sup>22</sup> Its crowning glory came when finally the Santali language got recognition in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution in 2003.

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## THE SOCIAL REFORMER AS PATRIOT : A STUDY OF BIPIN CHANDRA PAL'S MEMORIES OF MY LIFE & TIMES

Amiya Kumar Rout

*Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932), one of the mightiest prophets of Indian Nationalism, architect of Bengal Renaissance, strode the country like a giant in the last quarter of nineteenth century and the first two decades of twentieth. Through the written word an unrelenting adherence to principles, he awakened his countrymen. His autobiography *Memoirs of my life and Times* reflects the impressions of a young perceptive mind of a transitional period. It is no doubt a unique composition and evidence of so many untraceable occurrences of the country in general and undivided Bengal in particular. The memoirs reflects all shades of activities of the society i.e art, culture, literature, politics, religion, religious movement, social evils, reforms, social rites, education and administration. Inclusion of so many known and unknown or forgotten leaders of different leaders of different social strata and events connecting to urban and rural life under one platform is striking. The life story furnishes lively pictures of the national movement and the author's formidable participation in it. Above all it is weighted as a treason house of his times.*

Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932), one of the mightiest prophets of Indian Nationalism, architect of Bengal Renaissance, strode the country like a giant in the last quarter of nineteenth century and the first two decades of twentieth. He was an extraordinary phenomenon. A committed Journalist, an inspiring Brahma Samaj activist, a serious literary critic, an eclectic spiritual interpreter, an intrepid nationalist orator, a stimulating thinker, a deft leader of the 'extremist' group and a consummate analyst of social life, Bipin Chandra Pal encompassed in himself the significant forces of the early phase of Indian nationalism. Highly sensitive, his mind quickly responded to the influences of the movements of his time. A 'successor' of Keshab Chandra Sen and 'the most earnest and eloquent preacher in the Brahma Samaj,' Bipin Chandra Pal was a man "of fine spiritual disposition as well as of high intellectual attainment". (Saggi, Dawn of India P, 243). Through the written word and the spoken, through a long life of suffering and sacrifice, an unrelenting adherence to principles he professed, and with a rare clarity of vision he awakened his countrymen to a consciousness of inner strength. Pal was conscious of the interdependence between society and the individual. His autobiography is a reflection on the contemporary history. Pal reflects on the post first war of independence (1857) period (i.e. post 1857) 'A Bom Rebel' as maintained by an academic historian, is the aptest description of Bipin Chandra Pal. The period which covered his public life (1882-1932) was a period of great changes in the religious, social and political life of the people. And as Lord Ronaldshay said in his book *Heart of Aryavarta*, "his pen played a not inconsiderable part in the social and political ferments that have stirred the waters of Indian life during the period" (Ronaldshay P, 132). Pal's autobiography *Memories of My Life and Times* reflects the impression of a young perceptive mind of a transitional period, tremendous political upheaval and unprecedented

wide turmoil led to total transformation of Indian life and thought. Pal as “a nationalist of indomitable” will – a true liberal, dedicated himself to the nation’s cause according to his own understanding and convictions”. (Bipin Chandra Pal Centenary Brochure, 1958 P 4).

The life of Bipin Chandra Pal reads like a fascinating realistic version of a political Pilgrim’s Progress in the winding and unpredictable paths of our nationalist movement. If we shift our sight from general theoretical problems and sometimes hasty and sweeping generalizations about Bipin Chandra Pal, we realize that his ideas were not wholly patternless and that our notions about him are inexact. One may surmise that we can find clues to an understanding of Pal’s ideas in his autobiography which reads like an open book with no embroidery of silken phrases. The melange of his memory was not written with any rhythmic glory, though it reveals the solitary pain that gnawed his heart at the cross roads of his life, and also glimpses into the contemporary social and political history. It is extremely hard to escape the dilemma of understanding Pal’s life’s mission, his ideology, close to *simpoilitical* (the term coined by Benedetto Croce) and the political waves raised by him at the regional and national level, without ‘delving’ into his numerous writings both in English and Bengali.

It has also to be noted that the practicing historians, political scientists and politicians’ contour of scholarship and nationalist thought in the colonial world reveal the general mood of the turbulent decades, sometimes growing anti-historical bias in contemporary culture, deepening sensitivity, and sometimes a shift from cynical realism to nostalgic escapism. In the third world historiography, we observe the tendency of historical scholarship to vacillate periodically. We do not yet have a complete survey of empirical ground to assess Pal’s engagements in an ideological discourse, and our danger lies in accepting unexamined methodological assumptions. It is broadly true that the so-called ‘elite politicians’ and elitist historiography’ have not done justice to Bipin Chandra Pal.

Every individual has debt to his history – his family, socio-economic roots and political arithmetic of his times. Much confusion has been created by historians and social scientists by placing Bipin Chandra Pal in the context of extremist challenge in India. In many respects he was different from Lala Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak though they sought to encounter the pathological hostility of the Raj. As a born rebel, he became a reactionary against this background.

“The value of the life story of any individual,” observed Bipin Chandra Pal in the foreword to his autobiography, “consists, therefore, not in itself, however great or noble that life may be, but only as revelation, an explanation and interpretation of the hidden currents of social history and evolution that entering into it, shapes and moulds it to its universal end.” (Pal, *Memories of Life and Times* P,2). His most intimate friend Dr. Sundari Mohan Das aptly described him as “a soul to receive the currents – the currents of global politics and India at the crossroads. It is therefore necessary to take a synoptic view of his social and intellectual tradition and political climate of his times, though he was a reactionary against his own background”. (Das, B. C. Pal – *His Inner man* P,12)

The beginning of Bipin Chandra Pal's autobiography is richly laden with rural memories, picturesque natural scenery of Sylhet riverside, and 'home influence and early education' of his life. Pal quotes some memorable utterances of Chanakya to emphasize his tender childhood memories:

*For five years a son shall be treated with great tenderness. For ten years he shall be subjected to rigorous discipline when he attains his sixteenth year the father shall treat his son as a friend". The tenets of Chankya were much in vogue among the higher classes of Bengali Society seventy years ago. Pal writes in his autobiography, "my father shaped my life in many respects by these wise sayings. He followed this injunction of Chankya almost religiously in my up bringing upto my sixth year I was treated by my father almost as a young divinity. Every whim of mine was satisfied. (Pal, Memories of My Life & Time P,25)*

Looking back at the corridor of his early memories Pal remembers, his mother was a strict disciplinarian, remarkably reserved and self contained. He tells us that it was a custom in these days to send a maid servant along with the young bride. He writes in his *Memories of My Life and Times* "slavery of a kind still extant in this province during the early life of my father. Every respectable family had a few "slaves" attached to it. They were not laborers like the slaves in the western colonies before the system was abolished in the last century, but were really members of the family with an inferior social status". In case of Bipin Chandra Pal it was "Kanchaneerma" or Mashi. He had abundant regard and came for the maid servant as it is evident from his observation:

*Considering the stern and reserved nature of my mother, my young heart would have been starved of all love and tenderness if it had not been tended with such fondness by my auntie or Mashi. (Pal, Memories of My Life & Time P,66)*

Bipin Chandra was initiated into the Bengali alphabet after the worship of Goddess Saraswatee, the Goddess of learning. This initiation of Bipin Chandra Pal was done by the family priest, who was simple and unostentatious, without least suspicion of conceit of caste or of sanctity of religion in him. The first lesson that the king is honoured only in his own country and the man of learning is honoured every where made a deep impression on his mind. The story of 'Data Karna', the man who sacrificed his first born to do his duty as a house holder by a guest, made the profoundest impression upon his young, impressionable mind. Bipin Chandra Pal in his boyhood read a fair number of 'out side books' as Ram Chandra's discipline did not extend to his readings. This miscellaneous reading gave him confidence in his general knowledge and made him well equipped for his professional career as journalist and librarian.

Bipin Chandra Pal started reading university level books as he approached the entrance of matriculation examination. Bain's English Grammar, Movell's Analysis, Clarke's Physical Geography, and "Rijupath" (Selection from Vishnu Sharma's Hitopadesh and the *Ramayana*

and the *Mahabharat*), Bengali “Choripath Part III, Hygiene and Goldsmith’s *Vicar of Wakefield*, Addison’s *Spectator*, Johnson’s *Rasselas* are Principal text books moulded and stimulated the inquisitive mind of Bipin Chandra Pal. Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare* and Thackeraray’s novels left an indelible impression on the young mind of Pal.

The rigorous discipline to which Bipin Chandra was subjected by his father was relaxed, when he had reached the fifteenth year in 1872. After the entrance examination from Sylhet Government High School as a district scholar, he came to Kolkata to study at the Presidency College. However, even after four years of unproductive labour he failed to complete his collegiate education successfully. This was because, while yet a first year of Arts student at the Presidency College, Pal had joined the Brahma Samaj and broken away from the fold of orthodoxy. He espoused Brahmoism of a militant and aggressive type under the captivating influence of Keshab Chandra Sen. As a sequel to the development, Bipin Chandra was disinherited by his father, and entered the life long pilgrimage of poverty. Though he could not derive the advantages of a collegiate study, his thirst for knowledge was ceaseless, and his learning became diffused and many-sided.

The autobiography of Bipin Chandra Pal is no doubt a unique composition and evidence of so many untraceable occurrences of the country in general and Odisha in particular. Inclusion of so many known and unknown facts and social occurrences and events of remarkable importance connecting to urban and rural life under one platform is striking. The autobiography furnishes lively and most enchanting pictures of Odisha during 1879. Pal has described his compelling journey to Odisha owing to sharp differences of views with his father. He writes in *Memories of my life and Times*.

*The breach between father and son had become by this time too strained for any reconciliation. I could no longer depend upon him for my expenses. I had, therefore no option but to look out for some employment. (Pal, Memories of My Life & Time P,262)*

The first appointment which Bipin Chandra Pal received was in 1889 as headmaster of the Cuttack Academy at Cuttack owned by a local Brahma gentleman. In his autobiography Pal has given a vivid and lively description of the then Odisha, as well as of the city of Cuttack with photographic honesty:

*Odisha had not as yet been connected with Bengal by rail. People had during my boyhood and early youth to walk all the way from Bengal to Puri along the old pilgrim way mentioned in Sixteenth Century Bengali literature. In the seventies of the last century steamer communication had however been opened between Calcutta and the part of Chandabali in Odisha. My first trip to Cuttack was made on board the ill fated S.S. Sir John Lawrence, which was lost a few years later in the Bay of Bengal. It was a rickety old thing hardly seaworthy, and no one who had any experience of it had any cause for surprise when it went down with a full complement of passengers during the pilgrim season and not a sign could be traced of either its men or its materials. That*

*was my first experience of the sea, and though it was winter time and the sea stood calm and placid almost like a lake, I did not entirely escape the discomforts of crossing the black water. We left Calcutta early in the morning and reached Sagar, the mouth of Ganges, at about sunset. It took about six hours to cross from here to Chandabali, which stands at the mouth of the delta of the Mahanadi. (Pal, Memories of My Life & Time P,287)*

After twenty four hours of hazardous journey Pal reaches Cuttack by canal boat. Cuttack stands at the Junction of the Mahanadi and its tributary, the Katjuri. It was the chief town of Odisha under Hindu rule. Commenting on the social life in Odisha, Pal remarks, "When I went to Cuttack fifty years ago, neither the class nor the masses there had developed any separatist provisional consciousness. Odisha formed a part of Bengal administration. Pal tells us that the educated Bengalis had no conceit of provinciality and looked upon Odisha "as much as their own mother country as they did upon Bengal proper". (Pal, Memories of My Life & Time P,291) Together with this, the rising generation of Odisha was also eager to study the Bengali language and literature as they cultivated their own mother tongue. In 1841 the city of Cuttack had an English School and in 1876 a full fledged college up to MA degree under the university of Kolkata.

Society in towns is always of a mixed character. Pal was an exponent of composite culture, and in this context it is necessary to refer the influence of social life in his ancestral village and Sylhet. Both Poil and Sylhet had fairly large Muslim population Bipin Chandra Pal tells us that differences in the religious faiths and practices did not make the slightest difference in the social amenities and relations. There was perfect tolerance of one another among the members of both the communities. He remarks, "It was this subtle atmosphere of good manners and noble thoughts and pure sentiments, in which our ignorant and unlettered people lived in our village that contributed to their higher humanity". (Pal, Memories of My Life & Time P,52). Pal was full of admiration for the Manipuri community of the town of Sylhet. Both men and women used to take regular bath and use sandal paste and bedeck themselves with flowers and leaves. Bipin Chandra Pal wrote, "I think these Manipuri are the cleanest of clean people of Hindustan both in their person and their ways and habits." (Pal, Memories of My Life & Time P,55). Furthermore, Bipin Chandra Pal points out, "No one who has not seen this Manipuri Rasha can understand the poetry and purity of the Vanishravic idylls". (Pal, Memories of My Life & Time P,57)

Social life and culture in the nineteenth century were not marked by stagnation and dependence on the past. Yet Bipin Chandra Pal expressed his regret that India was still under the spell of obscurantist medieval thoughts. The social and cultural pattern all over the country was not uniform. The culture and social life of the upper classes was in many respects different from the culture and social life of the lower classes. Above all people were divided by religion, region, tribe and caste. That is why Bipin Chandra Pal wanted to infuse the 'new spirit' of nationalism which would silently transform the ideas and activities of the Indian people and give 'a new meaning to modern life and its varied contents, religious, social, civic and economic.



Charles H. Heimsath has rightly pointed out that “Bipin Chandra’s sensitivity to the intellectual and social currents of history was unmatched among Bengalis writing in English and throughout prolific outpourings of prose, the urgent need for a rebirth of India’s social life was always an important theme.” (Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*, P, 267). It has to be noted also that in spite of socio-religious superstitions and ignorant ways of life, the society was not devoid of social ethics or virtues of a higher order, wrote Bipin Chandra Pal, “I have intensively moved among the English working classes during these three years and have closely watched the good and bad, the strength and weakness of their character. I have never seen that in wisdom they are superior to our masses to understand social, political, economical or religious matters.” (*Pal, Bangadarshan, Phalgun P, 631*)

Bipin Chandra Pal was perhaps one of the first amongst our nationalist leaders who persistently fought to banish exploitation and inequalities, pleaded for the common men, peasants and working classes and demanded a thorough reconstruction of our economic structure. In his views the economic reconstruction must be able to provide healthy food in sufficient quantity for every man, woman and child in India. It must be able to provide sufficient and healthy raiment and healthy habitation for all. The instruments as well as methods of production must be so constructed and regulated that every worker should have ample leisure for the cultivation of the intellect. It is significant to note that Bipin Chandra’s book *The New Economic Menace to India* found a place in Lenin’s personal library. Pal’s remark that “every modern imperialism was essentially capitalism. It was relevant in the context of British Capitalism.” (*Pal, New Economic Menace P, 23*)

Moving away from the precincts of time Bipin Chandra Pal beat his luminous wings in the undawned time of the future. His article of 1901 was, impregnated with a concept that was later sheltered in the inflammable slogan, ‘Quit India’ which was itself a flight from the earlier Gandhi concept of the swaraj. It should be noted that the concept of swaraj was not an innovation of Gandhi. Aurobindo, Bipin Chandra and many others spoke of swaraj in the past. For Pal swaraj was freedom from British Control with a link to British heritage that was bestowed on India. He admitted that the British did much sacrifice to make our lot easy and he was clearly thankful to our friends for the benevolence they imparted on us. Pal in saying was not demanding western civilization as such as Gandhi did in that years. He was launching an attack against the British rule and perhaps more than against the swaraj to Aurobindo was “the fulfilment of the ancient life of India under modern conditions, the return of Satyagraha of national greatness, the resumption by her of his great role of the teacher and guide, self liberation of the people for the final fulfilment of the vedantic ideal in politics...” He asserted: “... this is the true swaraj for India”. (Quoted by Amalesh Tripathy, *The Extremist challenge*, P, 29).

Swaraj, Democracy and federation, Bipin Chandra’s Trinity were concepts which have an organic unity and therefore, must not be thought of as the one separate from the other of these the first, swaraj-meant total rulership and simply not realization of the inner self. From Bankim Chandra Via Rabin dranath to Aurobindo all talked of Atmashakti Process of inner self; even Vivekananda also tried to invoke it. India had, Bipin Chandra felt, an abundance of this

process. What she lacked was its application on the basis of which she could build up her own rulership. Pal wrote: “It was no small thing for Hindu suffering for centuries under what the psychologist call now the ‘inferiority complex’, to be able to challenge aggressive Christianity and Islam by setting up the dogma of vedic. (Bipin Chandra Pal, Memories of My Life & Time Vol. II, P, XXXIX). From the moderate belief of the infallibility of the west Pal to turning to the infallibility of the new Indian belief that She was capable of ruling herself. Her capacity to rule is not by the gun powder but by the higher realization that humanity has an equation with Godliness. In his Uttarpara library speech he propounded his new philosophy. He said: “The ideal is that of humanity, the ancient ideal of the *Sanatan Dharama* but applied as it has never been applied before to the problem of politics and the work of national revival. To realize that ideal, to impart it to the world in the mission of India.” (Quoted by Amalesh Tripathy, The extremist challenge 1967, P-22). Here was Pal breaking a new ground and in doing that he was deviating from his age. *Sanatan Dharama* is not any narrow circumscribed religion of the East. It is an equation between humanity and Godliness. A broad principle of universal humanism was thus enunciated as formula necessary for application in politics but always with an eye to the ulterior end of national regeneration. Pal thus consciously stepped out of all contemporary focus of Indian nationalism that always kept itself soaked with the religion on the one hand and translucent worship of the past on the other. Pal’s principle of swaraj was thus a derivative of the principles of self-determination of humanity.

As a child, Bipin Chandra Pal became conscious of religion as something that stood somewhat apart from his ordinary life, this consciousness came to him from the rites and rituals in his house. In his young days, he had some religious training through ‘playing at religion’. From the age of twelve or so, he was allowed some active participation in the duties of the Pujas, particularly of Durga Puja. The Durga Puja Specially was a great social event. The music of the Puja, chanting of the mantrams, the sonorous recitations from the Chandee were to young Bipin ‘something like the enjoyment of worldless tune’. The colour and contour of the images of the God and Goddesses appealed powerfully to his art sense, He realized afterwards that the soul of image worship, seen through the prism of rational analysis and judgment was really worship of the Nameless and Formless Ultimate reality. In his young days Bipin Chandra enjoyed the festivals from various points of view, he began to lose his fear of the displeasure of Gods. However he had not lost his belief in Hinduism.

The autobiography of Pal reflects all shades of activities of the Odia and Bengali societies i.e. art, culture, literature, religions, social rights and festivals. Pal nostalgically echoes about the process of inter provisional fusion between Bengal and Odisha for more than five hundred years. Constant flow of pilgrims from Bengal to Odisha helped to spread the culture, literature and religion temper of both the regions, the movement of Sri Chaitanya exerted perhaps deeper and wider influences among the people of Odisha than even Bengalis themselves. The element of protest against Brahminical caste and ritualism of Chaitanya’s movement was soon overwhelmed by the influences of Bengal Brahmins, who captured even during the life of Chaitanya, the leadership of the movement. The old process of inter provincial union or fusion

was further advanced under British rule by the establishment of common administration over these two provinces. Regarding Odia language and literature Pal writes “my contact with Odia language and literature created the impression upon me that these represented only an ancient and archaic type of Bengali language and literature itself. The rising generations of Odisha were as eager to study the Bengali language and literature as they were to cultivate their own mother tongue”. (Pal, *Memories of Life & Time* P,294).

The tone of entire autobiography reflects a sense of moderation. It would be more correct to take this view that Bipin Chandra belonged to that resurgent generation, which in spite of its admiration for the noblest and deepest elements of Indian culture had a thirst for liberation from all sorts of restraints and limitations, individually and collectively. He voiced a demand for freedom and self government and protested against any authoritarian or conventional system, be that religious, social or political. In Brahmoism, Bipin Chandra discovered the resurgent spirit of nationalism that found its outlet at the time in moral, religious, educational and social upheavals- Characteristic of the history of Bengal during the closing years of the last century. His career started outside Bengal, first as Headmaster at the Cuttack Academy, and in the same capacity at Arcot Narayan Swami Mudaliar School in Bangalore. In between at the behest of the Sylhet union, Bipin Chandra Pal took to organizing a school in his home district, of which he became the founder.

The period of Bipin Chandra Pal’s Cuttack and Sylhet ventures synchronized with the appointment of Lord Ripon as the Viceroy of India. A true liberal of Gladstonian era, Lord Ripon had a firm belief in peace, self government and *Laissez faire*. Bipin Chandra remarked, “Lord Ripon did not take very long to give practical evidence of the new policy he was charged to initiate”. (Pal, *Memories of Life & Time* P,472). Professor S. Gopal remarks, “Because of Ripon the influences of Gladstonian liberalism became a permanent element in the political scene of British India. During this period the Pan – Islamic movement made a profound impact upon the Nationalist Politics”. (S. Gopal P-83)

After he came back to Calcutta, Pal took to journalism and was put in charge of the *Brahmo Public Opinion*, The English weekly, under the editorship of Bhuban Mohan Das, father of Desbandhu C.R. Das. In fact journalism marked the second, but more important phase of Bipin Chandra Pal’s eventful career. The real training of Bipin Chandra Pal in English and Bengali journalism began with his association with the *Bengal Public Opinion* and *Bharat Sanskarak*, while he was spearheading the problem of his country men, as a journalist, he articulated his views on the political front. In the partition of Bengal agitation, Pal was with the old guards. While addressing a gathering on the occasion of Shivaji Festival, he said, “Though so far in many respects, kept out of our legitimate heritage, we too, Sir are children of the British Empire, and are therefore loyal to its highest and purest interests. And we are loyal, because we believe in the working of the Divine providence in our national history..., because we believe that God himself had led the British to this country, to help in working out its salvation and realize its heaven appointed destiny among the nations of the world. And as long as the

British remain at heart true and faithful to her sacred trust, her statesman and politicians need fear no harm from the upheaval of national life in India.” (Pal, *Memories of Life & Time P, 445*).

The partition of Bengal brought a sea of change in the attitude of Pal towards the British rule. The partition plan motivated Pal to have The English daily in order to intensify their programme and he started the *Bande Mataram*, an English daily. The Swadeshi Movement changed Bipin Chandra Pal from a moderate into an extremist challenge. Pal forcefully advocated the policy of passive resistance. The supporters of this school of thought wanted an all India organ, so as to give the most articulate and effective expression to the new wave that was blowing across the field of nationalism. The *Bande Mataram* opened a new phase in the history of our national movement. It held before the eyes of the people the ideals of swaraj, which was to be attained in a non-violent way. In an article entitled ‘The Shell and the seed’, Pal questioned the basic ideal of Congress. He observed, “Is the ideal of the India National Congress to be an essentially democratic ideal or it is to work for the replacement of the present while and foreign bureaucracy by a brown one composed of home materials...” (Pal, *Shell & Seed P, 17*). He added:

*The political agitations and activities among us of the last quarter of a century, have created a number of what may be called ‘rings’ in the country... who have all these years claimed the right both of representing and controlling the public life and opinion of their respective towns and districts... These rings were like shells that helped to preserve the seed of democracy in the earlier stages of its evolution, but a time comes when for the germination of this seed these rings have to be broken asunder and destroyed, or the seed, confined beyond its time within its own shell and cover, is dried up and destroyed. The time has come among us to break the old layer rings up, and to bring the seed of democracy out of its shell.* (Pal, *Shell & Seed P, 19*).

In other article entitled, the Seditious Bogey, Bipin Chandra Pal gave a resume of the hollowness of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century congress ideal. In an article captioned, ‘The Bed Rock of India Nationalism’ Pal pointed out that the new movement in India was an intensely spiritual movement for the complete emancipation of the Indian people. He gave an analysis as to why a spiritual movement will succeed finally. He maintained:

*A mere economic attempt might be killed by powerful economic combination. A mere political revolt might be easily crushed by superior physical force or diplomatic cunning. But an essentially spiritual movement can not be killed without killing the entire people among whom it takes its birth. It is here that all our hope and all our strength lie.* (Pal, *The Bed Rock of India Nationalism P, 19*)

Bipin Chandra Pal wrote a perceptive article under the caption ‘That Sinful desire’ in the *Bande Mataram* of September 18, 1906. He held that India’s demand for autonomy had driven the Anglo Indian press into hysteria. To quote Pal, ‘Freedom is constitutional in man’ and why

should we alone then deem it as sin and be branded as originals for cherishing this divine desire. Elucidating further, Pal remarked “Our ideal in freedom which means absence of all foreign control; it is a perfectly constitutional ideal in a truer and higher sense...our method is passive Resistance, which means an organized determination to refuse to render any voluntary and honorary service to the government and who will dare say that this is a perfectly constitutional method even in the lower and common acceptance of the term”. (Pal, *Bande Mataram* P,16)

Bipin Chandra made a supreme sacrifice for Aurobindo in connection with the famous *Bande Mataram* case. Pal firmly refused to give evidence before the Court though he issued a written statement before the Court. As Bipin Chandra refused to give evidence before the Court, he was charged with contempt of court. The Magistrate sentenced Bipin Chandra Pal to six months simple imprisonment and thus Aurobindo was saved. Bipin Chandra's sacrifice was eulogised by many newspapers. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* said that he had sacrificed himself for a principle and it shows that he was above the ordinary run of mankind. The *Bengalee* pointed out that there were many who differed from Pal in their political views, but they did admire his honesty of purpose.

The *Bande Mataram* in its editorial part remarked, “Neither the country nor Bipin Chandra himself will suffer by the imprisonment. He has risen ten times as high as he was before the eyes of his countrymen. Posterity will judge between him and the petty tribunal which has treated his honourable scruples as a crime.” (*Bande Mataram* – September 11, 1907) Subsequently, the *Bande Mataram* fell a prey to the Press Act. Its last issue appeared on 29th October, 1908, under the charge of Shyam Sunder Chakravarty, Hemendra Prasad Ghose and Bejoy Chandra Chatterjee. Pal by that time had left for England on a more or less voluntary exile. Even while Bipin Chandra was in England busy in his lecture tours, his ideals, his interest in journalism never flogged. In England he started two fortnightly journals in English named, *Swaraj* and *Indian Student*. It was in the *Swaraj* that Pal wrote an article on ‘The Etiology of the Bomb’. Pal analysed the causes of the ‘Indian Unrest’ and he found that the ruthless repression by the Government brought the ‘Bomb’ on the scene. The entry of ‘Swaraj’ into India was banned. Pal was arrested for writing this article, immediately on his return to India.

Bipin Chandra was indeed a lifelong journalist. It is tragic that at the sunset of his life, he contributed articles in the Anglo-Indian Press in order to meet his essential requirements. As a journalist, Pal's main aim throughout was the projection of the sufferings of his countrymen in Colonial India.

It is sheer irony of history that despite his contributions towards making the India National Congress a power in the country, Bipin Chandra Pal had to be ousted from its mainstream during his last days. Inordinate love for freedom having been the essence of his being, Bipin Chandra Pal broke away from his family and society, and even from his adopted religion. It was for this also that Pal separated himself from one of his dearest friends and cut himself adrift altogether from the Indian public life. Though he was strongly criticized and completely misunderstood for his anti-Gandhi stance, it can not be desired that his political philosophy

proved a permanent asset to India to educate and inspire the generations yet unborn. His political philosophy, the clear exposition and forceful interpretation of the new message of resurgent Bengal at once elevated the province to a pedestal where no other public leader had raised it before. It was for this yeoman's service and contribution to the cult of nationalism alone, if not for anything else, that posterity will cherish the hallowed memory Bipin Chandra Pal.

Each age is a dream that is dying or one that is coming to birth. Everyone is a child of transitional period and embodies ideas of the past groping towards the future. Bipin Chandra Pal was 'the Stormy Petrel of Indian Politics' during the early years of the present century, when the Swadesi and boycott pervaded the political scene in Bengal. He was a nationalist patriot with whom the guiding principle was the liberation of India from the alien subjection. Bipin Chandra Pal himself admitted that he could 'give logic' but not magic', in suggesting that Swaraj would be feasible in a year. Pal was both a passionate journalist and an autobiographer with extraordinary power having it see on the abiding interest of humanity and recognizing the identity of man's permanent well being in every plane and department of life with his ideal of the highest good.

The autobiography *Memories of my life* and Times has revealed that Bipin Chandra Pal wielded a powerful pen in giving expression to his nationalist thoughts, propagation of his social, religious and political views. The edifice of Modern Indian secular nation could emerge only because of the convictions of leaders like Pal for whom the commitment to larger composite nationalistic ideas was much more important than compromises and personal advancement.

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## AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS HISTORY: A PERSPECTIVE ON TWO ODIA AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

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*Autobiographies, also known as life writings or narratives of the self, are presented to the reader as a truthful account of one's own life; yet, they employ structuring devices associated with fictional narratives. They present the common ground between fact and fiction, where authors negotiate between the private and the public; the past and the present. The autobiography, more than any other art form, draws upon the resources of memory and is also vulnerable to the pitfalls of memory. As these are written by public figures, autobiographies convey the spirit of an age; they, therefore, function as an alternative to history. Essentially a western art form, the autobiography came to be adapted to the Indian context after the advent of colonialism. The autobiography in Indian languages therefore provides us with useful insights into the nature of modernity and the way individual identities were constructed in the context of a collision between traditional and modern values. My essay will discuss Godabarish Mishra's art of autobiography and his strategies of constructing a self-image and compare and contrast it with the style of presentation in the autobiography of his great contemporary Nilakantha Das.*

Expectations of factual authenticity pre-dominate readers' interest in autobiographies. For the most part autobiographers seem resigned to the impossibility of recovering their past life and their handy option is to use memory to recreate their past. They fall back on memory on grounds that they are being true to their present conception of their selves rather than to their irrecoverable past. Memory is unreliable but at the same time it provides valuable evidence about their later self image. It has to be admitted that the individual responsible for telling the truth about himself is simultaneously describing himself, thereby restricting the degree of honesty that can be expected. Autobiographers frequently resort to acts of censoring and distorting facts not to speak of concocting ideas to enhance their self image.

<sup>1</sup> Pandit Godabarish Mishra (1886-1956) was an eminent politician and educationalist of Odisha. A social reformer, he strongly opposed the caste system and made huge contributions to Odia literature. His works include essays, stories, drama, novels, poems and biographies. His well-known poems are 'Kalijai' and 'Kishalaya,' his famous dramas include 'Purushottam Deb' and 'Mukunda Deb.' He was awarded the Kendriya Sahitya Academy Award by the Central government for his autobiography titled 'Ardha Satabdira Odisha O Tahinre mo Sthana.'

<sup>2</sup> Pandit Nilakantha Das (1884-1967) was a distinguished freedom fighter and inspirational leader who led the youth to fight against social evils like untouchability. A legendary figure in his lifetime, he was endowed with a profound erudition and led the movement for the unification of the outlying tracts of Odisha. He was a prolific writer, editor and translator and was awarded the Central Sahitya Academy award for his autobiography titled 'Atmajibani.'

Roy Pascal notes, “Leslie Stephen remarked long ago that distortions of the truth belong to the values of autobiography and are as revealing as the truth, and it will become apparent that we are concerned here in the main with untruths which do not damage materially the value of the autobiographies concerned.” Ample evidence can be found within a text to enable an independent assessment in any particular autobiographer. Such internal evidence suggests how autobiographers give themselves away to the reader through unintentional revelations. An unconscious subtext runs through imaginative writing of all kinds, but this subtext assumes special significance in autobiographies because it throws light on author, narrator and protagonist alike.

The same kind of internal evidence can be seen in Godabarish Mishra’s autobiography<sup>3</sup> *Ardha Satabdira Odisha O Tahinre Mo Sthana*. The quality of his self-projection is perhaps most rapidly detected in the style adopted by the author. Style is the key to the central aspect of the personality concerned in any autobiography and is as varied in autobiography as in any type of literature, and it must vary according to the personality of the narrator and his mode of experiencing. The bold and throbbing use of ironic language in Mishra’s autobiography strike the readers immediately as entirely consonant with his introspective theme and thoroughly suited to his winding roundabout style. All his chapters and all important events of his life are precluded with extensive discourses aimed at tunnelling the readers’ vision as much to the incidents described as to the narrator’s viewpoint. The present observing and recording self which he draws on to exhibit his understanding of himself becomes subject to adult reflection and is further distorted during its embodiment in a written narrative. Like, for example, his depiction of poverty is heart touching and pathetic but it bears proof of his tremendous self respect, too. He recalls how before orders came for the stopping of his meals, he declared that he would have his meals elsewhere. Mishra remembers,

“At such times, the place where I had my food was the sea shore and the food that I had was wind.”

Often the distressing account of his early life in adverse circumstances and his expert narration instinctively influence the readers’ minds to unconditional acceptance and spontaneous sympathy.

So completely overcome is the reader with his approach that his first reaction is to respond to the honesty and simplicity of his confessional strain with admiration. Hints of ambiguous feelings of remorse and neglect crop up only when he tries to recreate the complex development of expectation and regret. He writes,

“I have worked hard all my life but I have not earned enough wealth or landed property that I will look towards it for support. As I left behind all sources of acquiring money, in my weak moments I am filled with remorse. My decision was not always mine; Gopabandhu babu was responsible for my decisions to a large extent. My life was shaped like clay at the potters’ wheel at the hands of Shashida and I let go of these opportunities at the instigation of Gopabandhu. In the vast ocean



of this world, he is the steersman of my insignificant life. He is the worshipped lord of my life. Even today during my weak moments I gain solace by keeping his picture in front of my eyes in my imagination. It is difficult to find a friend, philosopher and guide like Gopabandhu.”

Mishra is glad that his life was shaped under the guiding influence of Gopabandhu babu but he also repents the lack of material comforts and worldly ease. The overlapping tinge of irony can hardly be missed.

Let us take the case of his contemporary and friend Nilakantha Das<sup>4</sup>. Both Das and Mishra shared a significant part of their lives together. A dig into the formative periods of their lives reveals similar views and aims. Yet there were differences in their personality and these differences become conspicuous in the different styles adopted by them. Roy Pascal gives credence to this viewpoint, “It is clear that no schematic prescription can be made of the scope of autobiography, since personalities and achievements and their relationships are of such infinite variety- particularly in societies where there is considerable opportunity for a man to develop a personal gift.” Das rarely shows Mishra’s hesitance and censure. His style is marked by a sense of celebratory achievement and unrepentant retrospection. His all-important attitude is exemplified in his sweeping lines. When Prof. Gopal Chandra Ganguly asked him why he needed to study M.A. when he had already decided to be a teacher at Satyabadi, Das’s answer is,

“Satyabadi is a rural place. I will not be doing justice to this important role of headmaster of the school if I am not equipped to clear all doubts of all students. Prof. Ganguly questioned, ‘You have monetary difficulties. Where will you get money from?’ I answered ‘I’m not worried about that? Surely, it can be managed.’ Some days later I received news about my scholarship.”

Such carefree abandon is seldom found in Mishra.

The candour and simplicity with which Das takes credit for his efforts and achievements is an antithesis to the hesitant and sometimes crafty manner adopted by Mishra. Das’s candour is repetitive and becomes representative of his supreme confidence in his own greatness. On the other hand, the continuing apologetics and complacent obtuseness in Mishra are not aimed at a mere historical account of his life and actions. He probes into his feelings, impulses and beliefs in order to lay bare the truth of his personality. He is analytical and his analyses lead him to a web of confession and contrition so that the picture that emerges is that of an extraordinary and real man.

Another example of Mishra’s complex emotions and ambiguous presentation is the portrayal of his father’s character. At first, the reader is likely to miss the writer’s mixed feelings towards his father. Time and again he talks about his father as an extremely pious man given to rituals, customs and worship. He remembers his father’s altruism with studied objectivity and impersonal adulation. On closer inspection however, Mishra’s dubious admiration of his father seems to hide his attempts to reconcile with his father’s memory. Was it that he held his father responsible

for their poverty? The theatrical rhetoric employed in describing their poverty gives away his filial frustration. He writes,

“My father was not a big pundit. But he was highly regarded even in places far from our own place. He was a family man but lived the life of a sanyasi. He spent whatever he earned each day and did not save for the next. His hair was matted and his teeth showed like bones. He never massaged oil on his body. His dress was a small saffron cloth. People came to know him by the name of ‘jatia’ baba’.”

The comic portrayal of his father combined with respectful versions of other peoples’ opinion is a clear indication of his attempt to reconcile with contradictory emotions relating to his father. There are further ambiguities in the father-son relationship. Given that his father believed in renunciation and sacrifice, it seems less likely that he would expect his son to succeed in a life of worldly riches and alien scholarship. With such information, Mishra’s admission that it was his father’s wish that he study English and be a lawyer and his father’s subsequent disappointment over Mishra’s failure to obtain scholarship for further studies comes as a startling jolt. His childhood revolt against rituals and customs steadfastly observed by his father, his adult rejection of social norms, his guilt over his wrongdoings when his father disciplines him and his sad, solitary and senile mumblings of the prayers learnt unwillingly in youth chart his emotional ambivalence towards this patriarchal figure.

Nilakantha Das, on the other hand, hardly makes any attempt to justify or exonerate his father in his *Autobiography*. In his smug narration there is no doubt or denial but pride and satisfaction at having fulfilled his father’s prophecy and expectations. His father presents no contradiction, or so he makes it seem, but silently supports all his son’s public activities and efforts for reformation. He remains uncomplaining even when ostracized from the Brahmin society because of the unorthodox views championed by his son. Unconsciously, Das’s father becomes an epitome of paternal superiority- silent, supportive and sympathetic in all his son’s endeavours. Another prevalent tendency in Das is to oversimplify the complexities of personality. There is an interesting chapter titled ‘Srimati Radhamani Debi’ where he celebrates his wife’s unstinting support in both private and public spheres in terse pithy words. Unlike Mishra he does not attempt lengthy introductions nor does he try to rationalize his wife’s loyalty. His statements are direct and reminiscent of his strict authoritarian presentation. Until her father-in-law’s demise, Das’s wife leads a life of domestic service and homely responsibilities. His death liberates her from household duties and enables her to walk shoulder to shoulder with her husband in public life. Das reminisces,

“After that my wife faithfully followed me in all my political activities. Now she has always remained the president of Satyabadi’s Nari Mangal Samiti. She is also the president of the Girls’ School at Satyabadi.”

Das again turns to her lucid and orderly transition from a housewife to a public activist in the episode where she deftly bails out her husband’s party workers in his absence.

By contrast, Mishra has largely ignored the possibility for the need of his wife's support in his public life. Like the difference in 'badi baigana' and 'pothi baigana', his views on female literacy and women's liberation come out as confused and unclear. He prides himself on his modernity and claims to be the first man to send a Brahmin girl to Cuttack Girls' School and talks at length about the respective importance of boys and girls in society. Yet, two examples suffice to demonstrate just how much evidence can be found within the text about his ambivalent attitude towards women. He comes closest to his ideals of youthful relationship between husband and wife in these lines;

“Youth is the time for the bonds of love between husband and wife; the best things to share are the smile on lips and sweet loving glances. Spreading hands for money parched my lips and dried the water from my eyes.”

Throughout his life he does not hesitate to accept monetary help from several sources, but doing so from his wife becomes a disgrace. Later, when Gopabandhu babu proposes to send one of the senior teachers at Satyabadi to Chakradharpur to carry out the objective of Odia enlightenment, Mishra declares,

“I was the only teacher to have passed B.T. examination and Gopabandhu babu did not wish to send me elsewhere. But Nilakantha babu's father was like a ripe leaf, you could not say when he would fall. Krupasindhu's wife was not willing to go out. My father was dead and I did not ask for my wife's opinion in such matters. Hence, I got ready to go to Singhbhumi.”

The pride of his declaration provides a clue to unintended insights usually recognised as a characteristic of personal autobiographies. The subtext allows the reader to assess for himself the intended and unintended levels of exposure. Thus, when we compare the styles adopted by Mishra and Das, we see that Das adopts an ingenuous style by denying the possibility of using sophisticated, self-reflective responses present in Mishra. He thereby fails to recognize the full opportunities which the genre offers in the form of interpretative truth in addition to factual truth.

This brings us face to face with the problem of interpretation. Interpretation can be as true or false as the facts that are being interpreted. Subjective autobiography at its best cultivates both forms of truth. The meaning the writers attach to events in the lives reveal as much or more about themselves as do the facts in isolation. Imaginative and interpretative acts are integral to the autobiographical process of self-portrayal. A unique feature of the genre is that all the portraits of other people in autobiographies contribute to the central self-portrait. Thus, the reverence with which Das talks about Satyabadi inevitably contributes to his self-portrait. Mishra remains uninvolved with the conception and inception of the school. It quickly becomes clear that Mishra is largely repentant about lost chances in distinctive jobs. He continually feels constrained and out of place. He is the “duckling among the swans.” It is not surprising then that he compares the school's rapid growth in popularity and quick decline to a castor plant. His growing disillusionment with certain aspects of Satyabadi begins as early as his first day there

with the suffocation he feels when he has to share his bed and mosquito net with four others. There is so much hindsight throughout the chapters on Satyabadi that it becomes impossible to overlook the bitterness with which he refuses to go back to the place or accept monetary help from Krupasindhu after his return from Chakradharpur.

One of the rewards the autobiography offers Mishra is the chance to stand up and claim retribution for the hitherto ignored self. A particularly interesting example of dialectic of this kind is seen in the description of the circumstances leading to the handing over of charge of principal to Godabarish Mishra. The need to prove himself noble and unselfish some forty years later prompts him to write an elaborate account of the sequence of events. In his prefatory chapter entitled What Shall I Write, Mishra states,

“While I sit down to write this, I feel that those friends who have repeatedly requested me to write the story of my life and made me put it in writing it have made me appear as a witness in a court presided over by the public and there I say, ‘I solemnly swear that I shall speak the truth, I shall not tell a lie, and except very personal matter, I shall not withhold anything.’”

So, the writing of his autobiography becomes itself an act of self-justification. Author, narrator and protagonist all interact to create an impression of confession and absolution. Even when talking about his guilt, he is looking for some form of remittance. Mishra was perhaps unaware of how much of his writing was directed towards obtaining the readers’ sympathy so as to win absolution from guilt. Conversely, the vehemence with which Nilakantha Das attacks Mishra’s chronology about the handing over of charge as principal to Mishra or the closing of Satyabadi is an outpouring of the hurt he suffered when the school he had nurtured right from its inception broke up. However his overtly pungent remarks against Mishra fail to convince and the reader is automatically put on guard because of the directness of their attack. The subtle and faintly shrewd remarks made by Mishra penetrate deeper so as to take the reader into confidence. The resulting intimacy between reader and author succeeds to win the readers and appeals for their sympathy. His persuasive tone smoothly glides the reader into unsuspecting acceptance. There are hitches in this intimacy when instances from his self-portraiture are compared with reminiscences in other autobiographies. When Mishra talks about his gullibility he says,

“On the whole I am a rustic. On important occasions and during competitions, I have often suffered defeat at the hands of city intellectuals who were actually inferior to me in eligibility.”

The word ‘rustic’ has misleading overtones and when compared with the version of Justice Harihar Mahapatra in his autobiography *My Life, My Work*, the reader is surprised by a stark contrast in impression. Mahapatra looks at Mishra with the eyes of a student - a fashionable gentleman holding the students in awe by his European dress and gentlemanly manners. He is the showman of the school, a magnet who attracted students from all over Odisha. Compared to this picture of modernity and manners, the rustic picture built by Mishra grows faint. Without

intending it, Mishra has provided his readers with evidence by means of which it is possible to achieve an understanding of him that goes well beyond his conscious intentions. Clearly there is a fundamental conflict implicit in his desire to protect his ego by turning his life into a shape that is interesting and acceptable to him and the world. At an unconscious level he wished to impart the rustic impression which in its turn sets up a rewarding dialectic between intended and unintended levels of truth.

Ironic overtones are dominant when Mishra talks about Gopabandhu, too. He says,

“If you have to lose everything and be a homeless beggar, it should be under the influence of a person like Gopabandhu. If it had not been for the blessings of Gopabandhu babu even after these two incidents I would have become a lawyer or would have done something else.”

It is difficult to overlook the sarcasm obvious in these lines. He surely did not aim to be a homeless beggar. Notwithstanding the irony scattered throughout, Mishra remains true to the ideals set up by Gopabandhu babu and accepts him as the steersman of his life. Giving up several opportunities comes easy because he is goaded by Gopabandhu babu's aim of creating an ideal Odia society. He acknowledges the financial help given by his mentor during his post graduate studies and is also disturbed by talks of back biting against him. But we do not find him lying face down at Gopabandhu babu's memory and though he is unquestioningly loyal to Gopabandhu babu all through, he does not forget to add a pinch of salt to his retrospective analysis.

For Nilakantha Das, however, Gopabandhu babu was a foster father, a superior associate and a constant source of strength. His real father plays only a peripheral role in the book. It is Gopabandhu babu who has firm hold on Das. His oath of celibacy and subsequent marriage, his humanitarian service to the poor and needy, his high morals and his magnanimous sacrifice were all inspired by Gopabandhu babu. Das sacrificed his career but unlike Mishra there is not a single instance of remorse or guilt in his version. He does not lament the lost opportunity of earning worldly riches. He becomes a teacher and later jumps into the fray of politics and joins the non-cooperation movement all at the behest of Gopabandhu babu. Das occasionally hints at his frustration with Gopabandhu babu. Remembering the painful incident of the break up of Satyabadi he writes,

“That day in the middle of October, Gopabandhu babu was himself present when he nearly broke the school. The way he sought to appease everyone pacified no one.”

Satyabadi was not simply a school for him. It was an embodiment of his personal enthusiasm and national zeal for the formation of an ideal society. He gave his best to the school and grieved when he was not accepted as the sole disciplinarian of the school. For this he never forgave Mishra. He also held Gopabandhu babu responsible for the breakdown of the school.

Though none of them speaks openly, their autobiographies also reveal that neither Das nor Mishra was anti-British. The eagerness with which they took to European learning and scholarship was exemplary and Mishra even nurtured hopes of holding important offices under the British administration. The first mention Mishra makes about British colonialism is during the Swadeshi Movement in 1905-1906. He writes,

“That day we the students of Puri understood the meaning of Swadeshi. Before that day we had learnt by heart from our English books that God had himself poured the golden kalash on the British to rid our country from the anarchy prevalent during the Mogul and Maratha rule to establish peace in the country. After reading this from our books and listening to its explanation from our teacher we had accepted it as the word of God. Shashida had wiped it away from my heart to a large extent but that day the line was forever crossed with another line in the hearts of all students.”

Though Das was goaded by aims of Odia regeneration and reformation, he was not anti-British either. More than freedom from the British, their attention is centred on the unification of the outlying tracts of Odisha into a single political unit, getting rid of the Bengali hegemony and fighting for the revival of the lost glory of Odisha. For a number of years their nationalist activities were limited to serving the people of flood and famine affected areas and helping people get rid of the clutches of unjust and restrictive social customs. Shashida's influence encouraged revolutionary leanings in Mishra but he does not enter the mainstream movement. Even after the formation of Satyabadi School, they aimed at working in collaboration with the British for the betterment of their community. The Satyabadi School was initially named Victoria M.E. School in honour of Queen Victoria, the then Empress of India. Justice Harihar Mahapatra writes,

“The School had been named Victoria M.E. School after Queen Victoria when it had been started. Gopabandhu babu and his associates had no difference with the government at that time.”

Interestingly none of them mention this fact in their autobiographies. As Brian Finney puts it, “There is the common practice of imperceptibly altering the past over the years so that it answers more closely the needs of the present.” Das had vowed to wear only Swadeshi but Mishra remained devoted to European costume until much later in life. Justice Harihar Mahapatra recalls,

“Gopabandhu babu was the secretary and head of the school. He was always present when officials from the education department visited the school. He was immaculately dressed on such occasions, with a black turban on his head. Nilakantha Babu, Hari Babu and Krupasindhu Babu wore pants, round neck coats and turbans. Godavarish Babu stood out with his pant, coat, tie and felt hat. Who had imagined at the time that these people would switch over to knee-length khaddar dhotis at a later stage to be adored as great leaders of the Congress?”

Mishra's sojourn at Chakradharpur was motivated purely by the Odia movement. It was there when the fierce rumblings of the non-cooperation movement rocked the entire nation that he and the other associates of Gopabandhu Das stepped out of their myopic regional vision and openly embraced the national cause. At first Mishra was not eager about the movement and he admits that he did not have much faith in Gandhi's claim that independence could be had in twelve months of the launch of the movement. He criticizes,

"I have always believed that the non-violent policy has its place in the chaturtharthi ashrami's life in the Vaishnav religion, but not in politics."

Even Das did not endorse Gandhiji's views on spinning. He says,

"After a lot of discussion Gandhiji commented that spinning would lead to a solution of Odisha's and the country's economic problems, but I could not accept this idea."

Das also appears critical about the vegetarian food habits preached by Gandhi.

One of the features of an autobiography is that it reveals secrets vistas of truth that its author never consciously intended to uncover. An autobiographer knows that he is likely to tell his readers more about himself than he intends. There are clues to this hidden content scattered all over the narrative in Mishra. This hidden content is a key element in any autobiography and has to be drawn out on the basis of scraps of information inadvertently incorporated in the text by the author. Post-Freudian studies confirm this kind of unconscious exposure present in self-reflections. Brian Finney aptly remarks that the concept of self-awareness is a searching for the self and can lead to a realization of the self. He says, "Such an autobiography transforms its original excavatory intention into one of self-creation." Mishra's overriding aim is to solicit the readers' sympathy by use of a convincing narrative voice and by resort to oblique references to his expectations and disappointments in order to win absolution for his lapses. These attempts simultaneously inform the reader about the nature of the author who shares an identity with his narrator and his protagonist so that the tone and technique become part of the overall autobiographical design. In short, his style of approaching the details, choice of words and structure of presentation all combine to offer the reader supplementary ways of gauging the degree of honesty in the author. These intra-textual criteria make up for the author's errors in terms of forgetfulness, ignorance, prejudice or even conscious distortions. It does not matter whether the author's depiction of himself as an individual does not correspond to what we get to know about him through other sources. Like Eakin's says, "For an autobiographer, an allegiance to truth is an allegiance to remembered consciousness." External evidence may show him to be deeply mistaken about himself, or competently conniving to deceive us. What counts is that the autobiographer is presenting an order of values that he holds dear and believes to be his own. He tries to establish a sort of perfect self-image and fix facts according to his outline. His self-image is his most precious reality since it gives meaning to his life, it is a self-carefully buried beneath the personality that appears to the world. There are many parallels between the autobiographies of Mishra and Das. They deal with the same set of socio-political events. The

difference lies in the different perspectives adopted by the two writers which in turn create versions of the recounting of events. The technique of aggression adopted by Das lacks the emotive subtext which makes Mishra's book smoulder beneath the apparent coolness of his retrospective retribution. However, this does not alter the truth or validity of their respective autobiographies. After all, autobiographies are not just a log of events, their real value lies in the interpretative truth they offer. They are judged by the amount of psychological insight they show. This brings to mind what Roy Pascal unhesitatingly claims, "If Darwin's or Freud's theories were proved to be false, it would not affect the quality of their autobiographies; or inversely, it is the quality of their spiritual personalities, as recorded in their autobiographies, that provides the sufficient guarantee of the truth of their doctrines." The autobiographies of Mishra and Das together offer unparalleled insights into the mode of consciousness at that point in time when individual identities were crafted in the background of a confrontation between traditional and modern values and by corollary reflect upon the nature of modernity. Even if what they tell us is not literally accurate or only partially exact, they provide true evidence of their individuality.

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## **(RE-)BORN FOR LOVE(?): IMAGERY OF WATER AND FIRE IN PAUL MAYEDA BERGES'S *THE MISTRESS OF SPICES* (2005)**

**Ludmila Volná**

*The imagery of water and fire constitutes a convenient point of departure for an analysis of *The Mistress of Spices* (2005), Paul Mayeda Berges's film adaptation of the eponymous novel by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. There is a dichotomy of re-birth/transformation of the main character(s) symbolized by water and the sacrificial quality of the woman condition represented by fire/sun. As Berges's work with fire appears more ambiguous, the film renders, contrary to the novel, another symbolic manifestation of fire, supported by items and images of red colour, one that can be interpreted in terms of erotic love. The main character's condition results in a self-defined identity and recognition of desire/s.*

Paul Mayeda Berges's film *The Mistress of Spices* (2005) is based on Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's eponymous novel published in 1997. The film is the author's feature directorial debut and the fourth film he has co-written with his partner Gurinder Chadha. Aishwarya Rai plays the part of Tilo, while Dylan McDermott appears in the role of Doug, Tilo's male counterpart. It might also be of interest that one of the minor roles, that of Geetha, is incarnated by Padma Lakshmi. Though no straightforward comparison between the film and the novel is the purpose of this paper, references will be made not only to Divakaruni's novel but also to other Indian works in English. Because if the paper attempts a study of how imageries of water and fire and the dichotomy of the two are presented in the film, it is with an awareness that these are exploited by a great number of Indian novelists writing in English.

Let's start with the presentation of the imagery of water. Water, as Mircea Eliade explains, "symbolizes the whole of potentiality [...] the source of all possible existence." (188) This is clearly reflected by the Hindu cosmology where the universe comes into existence from the waters of the cosmic ocean and is absorbed by them at its end, all this only to let a new universe emerge in a due course again. Water - and its never-ending natural process of circulation - thus also represents the eternal circle of birth, death, and a rebirth of the universe and of all beings who are part of that universe. In order to deal with one or another kind of re-birth or transformation, a dramatic change of their novel characters' awareness, perception or sensitivity, a great number of Indian authors writing in English turn towards the symbolism of water. To indicate that something as immense as a re-birth or transformation is in question, which can also be called "regeneration," to quote Eliade again (188, 189), the writers exploit nothing less substantial than the Hindu cosmological imagery of *maya*. *Matsyapurana* renders the enigma of *maya* through myths dealing with the experiences of two saints, Narada and Markandeya. Narada, eager to grasp the understanding of *maya*, is advised by the God Vishnu to plunge into a pond in one tale, and to go and ask for water to drink in another, after which, as each of the two stories tells, he experiences an entirely different existence with the whole life of his own.

Markandeya, floating on the waters of the cosmic ocean, grasps the understanding of the enigma of existence in an entirely different perspective than that which was his own before, as if moving from the 'interior' to the 'exterior.' They both experience, as Heinrich Zimmer puts it, a "transformation worked by the waters." (34) Transformations of literary characters created according to this pattern can be found, for example, in R. K. Narayan's *The English Teacher*, Salman Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children*, *The Satanic Verses*, and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, but also in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*.

The two latter novels are outstanding examples of how the water imagery is employed as a counterpart of that of fire. In *Fasting, Feasting* fire is alternating with sun, sun not as a life-giver but in its annihilating appearance, a source of terrible heat which, with its deadly power, is devouring the living. (Zimmer 60) As to fire, this element is in the Hindu cosmology often associated with destruction, especially at the end of a world, and with sacrifice. (Zimmer 51, 152, 153) Agni, the god of fire, is known to assume various forms, among them the sun and the sacrificial fire and his role is to "carry sacrificial offering to all of the gods." (Doniger 97, 98) Both *The Mistress of Spices* and *Fasting, Feasting* make the imagery of fire/sun reflect the deadly effects of the patriarchal system on women. Sacrifice, enclosure, and a total suppression of the woman's identity are paralleled with suffocating and burning workings of fire/sun, carried on as far as partial or entire annihilation. Nevertheless, if the water imagery can be said to be used in the above suggested way in the film, as will be shown, i.e. as related to 'transformation' of the main character or a kind of re-birth of her identity, for fire, also used abundantly, the response would not be so straight-forward. The paper will try to examine the ways in which Berges treats the imagery of water on the one hand, and to disclose the more intricate pattern according to which he works with the symbolism of fire on the other.

The beginning of the film shows a sequence of representations of both water and fire. First, we can hear the sound of sea waters without actually being able to see the sea. Instead we are offered a kind of introductory information referring to India's myths, magic, and tradition. This is the very first image of the film. The sound of water merges into the crackling sound of fire before the flames can be perceived on the screen to finally appear in the form of a pyre. Shortly afterwards the spectator's perception is permitted to place the pyre on a seashore where a figure, the First Mother, is sitting on the right side whereas a group of other figures, girls, the future mistresses of spices, are sitting on the left, the two as if divided by the flames. Follows a sequence of images of different foreign cities, places of future assignments of the girls-mistresses, as seen through fire again. Finally, we can see Tilo, one of the mistresses-to-be and the main character of the film, walking through the fire towards the sea to apparently enter it and disappear from our view. Then we are presented with an image of rain, more precisely of falling drops of rain, which turn into sesame seeds falling into hot oil to be fried. Afterwards a flame of a candle is represented twice with an image of red chilies in-between. This sequence

is closed by a sight of the San Francisco bay and the Golden Gate Bridge. What follows now is a flashback which takes us back to the time when Tilo was born. Baby Tilo is held by her parents against the background of pouring rain and rain is again an all-encompassing image when the bandits come who ravage the village and massacre Tilo's family to finally take Tilo away with them in order to make use of her miraculous talents. When taken away by boat she succeeds in escaping while plunging into a river, only to be found afterwards on a seashore of the Spice Island.

The fact that the beginning of the film is so generous in rendering images of water and fire clearly indicates that for the interpretation these are not only important but crucial. And this abundance gives us material enough to establish a solid ground to depart from when actually reading the film. The paper will first attempt to disclose the functioning of the imagery of water as it is rendered in the film; to make the analysis clear the study will proceed chronologically with respect to the progress of Tilo's life. If water is a significant item in depicting the characters' transformation, a passage towards a new, self-asserted identity/existence in the above mentioned novels, this is also the case with Berges's film. However, Berges works with this symbol in a different way. Because while both in Desai's and Divakaruni's novels water is a necessary means for getting out of the burning condition imposed on women by patriarchal order since the very beginning, and the relationship of the two is established as that of the contradictory and counterpart elements also since the beginning (see Vólná) the onset of Tilo's journey in the film is marked just by water. Does fire symbolism acquire a different signification in the film? we have to ask, nevertheless.

The beginning of Tilo's life journey, in fact all her life till she finds herself on the Spice Island, shows a complete absence of any reference to a condition of sacrifice or subordination. We are reminded of pouring rain when Tilo is born while her parents cast embarrassed looks at each other, looks in which question-marks about dowry are more than palpable. Why does Berges leave unnoticed such a marked expression of patriarchal oppression as a birth of an unwanted child just because she is a girl? Further analysis will make clear that he is going in a different direction. Water as a symbol of 'transformation' or (re-)birth is present here to mark the birth of Tilo, a human child, into the first of her numerous identities, or 'existences,' so to say, as if to indicate that they each differ from one another similarly as someone's identity differs from the identity of someone else. Pouring rain again is on the scene as the bandits come and this also changes significantly Tilo's life. But this image of pouring rain may be also understood as a predecessor to, perhaps indeed a kind of counterpart to a 'real' passage through waters which Tilo experiences only by plunging into the waters of the river and, what is not explicitly presented, however, by her consequent passage through the sea waters. This is to indicate that since now on her life is subject to a change not in the least comparable, in its effects upon her identity, to those mentioned above - including her literal birth! As there has been no trace of fire in any representation till now in Tilo's life it can be concluded that water has so far manifested itself in the film as a symbolic device per se and not in any relation to fire.

The paper will now move towards an analysis of water and fire representations with which the film begins and which follow those discussed above (those chronologically associated with the first 'existences' of Tilo's life). The very first auditory and visual images the film mediates to us are to make us a part of the situation on the Spice Island which ends in Tilo's being born into her next existence after leaving the island and receiving her assignment as a mistress of spices in a spice store in the American Auckland. This is an existence which has most consequential and far-reaching effects on her internal Self, first annihilating, but which in the long run turn into an accomplishment. It is an existence which is central and above all the past existences of hers and for which the latter strive. And it is in this situation that water is for the first time (in Tilo's life) put into a dialogue with fire. As has been argued, water has been an accompanying element whenever Tilo's life changed radically and it has its undeniable role to play even more when it comes to what is to happen now. Here water becomes intrinsically bound to fire and it will be attempted to clarify what purpose the representations of fire serve and what kind of signification fire incarnates.

It is as if through fire that the First Mother, seated on the right side of the pyre on the beach, the one who represents authority and order on the Spice Island, addresses the girls - future mistresses - as they are seated on the pyre's left side: "Are you ready to give up your own lives forever, for the spices?" (Berges) Not much longer, more precisely when Tilo walks through fire to depart for her destination, this question acquires a quality of a condition and even a threat: it is the desires and needs of the others the mistresses are supposed to mind while their own should be suppressed. Unconditional obedience has to be paid to the spices, otherwise the mistress will be punished by them. To put things even more clearly, three precise and strict rules have been communicated to the future mistresses already during the period of their apprenticeship: to use the magic power of the spices to attend only to the others' desires and needs, never their own; never leave the store; never touch another person's skin. In other words, an entire suppression of the mistress's Self represented by an enclosure in a limited space without access to any kind of sensual sharing with another human. Sacrifice and denial are terms which express best this kind of situation, and, as is well known, they have annihilating effects on the individual concerned. Clearly then fire is a suitable symbol for them.

What is also of interest here is the kind of relation fire and water attain. As has already been mentioned, the introductory sequence of water and fire images, which deals with Tilo finally departing for her mission in Auckland in the way described above, is organized as follows: first there is the sound of water, followed by the sound of fire, visual image of fire, and visual image of water. Follows another fire image (the mistresses' destinations seen through fire) and Tilo's final walk through fire towards the sea in which she seems to disappear before she reappears in her store in Auckland. What we have here then is a sequence of images which both starts and ends with water and includes both water and fire (water-fire-fire-water[-fire-fire-water]) and creates thus a full circle. This may remind us of a never-ending circle of

coming of a world into existence and its annihilation before a new world repeats the same course, and this goes on and on. This is because it is out of the cosmic waters, on which the God Vishnu reposes, a lotus, god Brahma, and a new world are born, and as Zimmer explains, “fire will annihilate the body of creation, to be itself then quenched by the ocean of the void.” (152, 153) This never-ending water-fire-water circle may also remind us of an analogical circular pattern which captures an endless alternation of scorching heat and torrential rains from which nature and all creatures (in India and elsewhere) suffer again and again. And if we go still a bit further we can even think of a cycle of re-birth of (at least a part of) individual creatures who come to life as from a womb, related to liquid and thus water. And who perhaps, and we can only try and generalize here, experience some kind of suffering in form of sacrifice and self-denial during the course of their respective existences. Because, to quote Heinrich Zimmer once more, “The wheel of birth and death, the round of emanation, fruition, dissolution, and re-emanation, is [...] a fundamental theme of philosophy, myth and symbol, religion, politics and art. It is understood as applying not only to the life of the individual, but to *the history of society* and the course of the cosmos.” (13. Italics added)

Now, the circle of birth-death-rebirth related to “history of society” seems to be of a singular significance for further interpretation of the representations of fire in *The Mistress of Spices*. Here it is difficult to avoid a reference to Divakaruni’s novel. Because if Divakaruni keeps strictly to the association of fire to the burning and annihilating effects of patriarchal oppression, to which a close reading of the novel clearly testifies, Berges’s symbolism of fire can be studied as falling apart into more significations. Divakaruni employs fire already at Tilo’s birth as Tilo is born as an unwanted child because a female, and later on fire is present to indicate Tilo’s bonds with spices, bonds which can be identified in terms of marriage: Tilo’s relationship with the spices defined as Tilo’s mastering their secret powers and magic only dissimulates the real relation as that of power of the spices over Tilo, the same power and authority to which women are subject under the patriarchal order: “[T]heir [the spices’] love winds around me heavy as the sevenfold gold Benarasi that women *must* wear at their wedding [...] so much love, how will I breathe?” (74, 75. Italics added)

The way in which Berges works with the symbolism of fire seems at first to be going against the grain of the way Divakaruni does. Though it is apparent that Tilo agrees to her sacrificial and self-denying condition before she starts working in the store, Berges does not follow this line any further. In an interview when he was asked to give a synopsis of the film in his own words, Berges explains: “It’s a magical, romantic film about how TILO lives her life for the Spices, which represent tradition. TILO gives her customers Spices to help them with their problems and *everything is fine until* she starts falling in love with DOUG [...] It’s an immigrant’s tale about how we all try to keep the magic of our homeland alive as we move to another country.” (Aano and Berges. Italics added) As Berges himself then makes clear, for him the

spices do not represent the patriarchal order but tradition. A tradition which is cherished and kept alive by Tilo, an Indian, till Doug, an American and a half-Native American, arrives on the scene and inevitably brings with him elements of another culture, to repeat Berges's words, "everything is fine until she starts falling in love with Doug." If the first sentence Tilo utters after her arrival in the store is "I love being the mistress of spices" (Berges) it may well be both the reference to tradition she cherishes ("everything is fine") and the first allusion to her internal inclination for love (the word 'love' is pronounced with emphasis). And there is also a visual reference to red chilies as they are presented as a forefront of this scene. Which can hardly not remind us of what follows the full circle of representations of water and fire at the very beginning of the film: the image of rain where the falling drops are progressively turning into the sesame seeds falling into hot oil to be fried, followed by a double representation of a candle flame with an image of red chilies in-between. To decipher this and summarize, once Tilo is in the store this new existence of hers, symbolized by water and the sesame seed (Tilo means sesame seed), puts on a different shape as concerns fire, an appearance which will have something to do with red chilies.

Now the red chilies become very significant in the film and that precisely as related to fire and the representation in which it appears since now on. If they are always present the interpretation of this symbol cannot but depart from Divakaruni's writing: "The dry chilli, *lanka*, is the most potent of spices. In its blister-red skin, the most beautiful. Its other name is danger. ... *lanka* was born of Agni, god of fire. I dripped from his fingertip to bring taste to this bland earth. *Lanka*, I think I am most in love with you. [...] For when there is no other way." (37) Berges starts working with fire in a different way while adopting the ideas quoted above as his point of departure but he changes Divakaruni's concept of fire entirely when he makes it acquire another signification. Fire, chilies and the red colour of the two are since now on carried in a direction which is first verbally expressed by Geetha's grandfather when he comes to the store for the first time. Complaining about, in his opinion, too loose manners of his granddaughter with men he refers to carnal attraction between man and woman as fire: the coming of the two together will inevitably burst into desire. It is at this occasion that Berges brings Doug to the store and lets him communicate his name to Tilo, and thus identify himself, and he lets Tilo do the same in response.

Fire as associated with sexual desire and love is nothing new. As Maria Popczyk clarifies: "Contact with fire tells us of the fieriness of emotions [...] Carl Gustav Jung explains the dream of a patient who saw a whole room of fire and blood: Blood is red, red means love, fire is red hot [...] Fire, too, means love." (187) Red colour, which in the patient's dream is related to fire and blood, finds in Berges's *The Mistress of Spices* no less expressive representation in fire and red chilies. Both blood and chilies can be easily associated with physical sensations, as fire can, and fire is what interests us most here. As Popczyk goes on she refers to the origins and mythology

of Western culture when mentioning Mircea Eliade's explorations: "Primitive imagery links the ritual of kindling fire with the sexual act. [...] Hephaestus, the divine blacksmith whose domain is smelting, appears on a similar plane of sexual symbolism. He works with the hot furnace, the stoking of which represents the carnal relationship between a woman and a man." (189) As concerns the Hindu imagery, we can go as far as *Atharvaveda* and we'll find Kama, the god of desire (though not of sexual enjoyment) identified with the god Agni. And it is also *Atharvaveda*, more precisely its highly interesting part which consists in a large number of all kind of mantras, which furnishes us (or rather men) with a mantra supposed to win the love of a desired woman: Kama is to send his *flaming* arrow composed of *love* and *desire* towards the heart of this woman, hit it and set it *ablaze*. (III/25. 42, 43) Both Indian and Western imagery associate then fire with desire, carnal attraction, and love.

Once this interpretation of the fire symbolism is clearly established it is not difficult to follow Berges's further work with fire. It is not surprising then that when Tilo and Doug first touch each other's hands in the store the redchilies, present as they always are, are set ablaze. This is how the first rule is broken: never touch another's skin. The second, never leave the store, is broken shortly afterwards when Tilo and Doug go together for a trip and cross, on Doug's motorbike, the Golden Gate Bridge. This brings back to our memory the image of the Golden Gate Bridge as seen by Tilo from her enclosure in the store and impossible to reach. This crossing of waters, indeed Tilo's last and in a way more pronounced contact with water, is the accomplishment of Tilo's transformation, her re-birth into a new and free existence. Carnal accomplishment follows when Tilo, dressed all in red accompanies Doug to his apartment where nothing stands any longer in their way towards the fulfillment of their most intense desires. This is represented by an image of Tilo and Doug lying in the bed of redchilies.

Berges employs two more images of fire after that. The fire which is supposed to bring Tilo back to the island as a punishment for her having broken the laws has no effect and Tilo's freedom is now unconditional. The laws she has broken are in Berges's view clearly those of tradition, not of patriarchy (contrary to what Divakaruni suggests), and the freedom she acquires is also that from one-sided views of one tradition, which would keep people in an enclosure and discourage them from approaching other cultures. That is also why the very end of the film offers us the image of the First Mother sitting on the beach next to a pyre as a lonely person. Her loneliness marks the difference between this image and the introductory one. Suffering and desire, both represented by fire, are understood by Berges as each other's counterparts, as two sides of one coin because both associated with carnal bonds. (See also Zimmer 35) Suffering in the form of sacrifice gives way to love and sexual desire and gratification when Tilo and Doug meet, when, paraphrasing Berges's words, 'nothing is fine any longer,' or those of Divakaruni, 'there is no other way.' Crossing of the San Francisco bay via the Golden Gate Bridge represents Tilo's final and most significant transformation, nevertheless can also be interpreted as a liberation from the cycle of her 're-births' within this life.

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## O. HENRY: A SPOKESPERSON OF THE MARGINALISED

Manu C. Skaria

*A review of criticism on O. Henry can enable an academic to realise how neglected O. Henry is in comparison to many other writers. The neglect could solicit one to view his work from newer stand points, applying modern theories of criticism. O. Henry's stories have enchanted a huge mass of readers across continents, through a century. The simplicity and grace of the stories, with their surprise endings – or O. Henry ending – have made them irresistible. But beneath the superfluous simplicity of the stories, lies a humane vision of life.*

*This article is an attempt to prove that O. Henry is a spokesperson of the marginalised; of his own times as well as of all times. An analysis of Henry's short fiction, focussing on the depiction of binary oppositions which operates in the structure of society and could result in marginalisation, is attempted here. A student's understanding of his stories could become more meaningful if the author is viewed as a spokesperson of the marginalised, rather than as an author who was just sympathetic towards the downtrodden.*

O. Henry's stories have enchanted a huge mass of readers across continents, through a century. The simplicity and grace of the stories, with their surprise endings – or O. Henry ending – have made them irresistible. But beneath the superfluous simplicity of the stories, lies a humane vision of life. Most of the stories are set in his own time, the early years of twentieth century, and deal for the most part with ordinary people. He has transcended time with the charm of his stories. But he was chased by the fate of popular writers - the title of 'pulp' writer, a term that tend to push them out of the literary centre - along with the affection of the huge mass of readers who took his stories to their heart. In literary circles O. Henry has not received the 'critical acclaim' he deserved, probably because of the "popular" tag; yet this does not mean that his stories did not have any impact.

A review of criticism on O. Henry can enable an academic to realise how neglected O. Henry is in comparison to many other writers. The neglect could solicit one to view his work from newer stand points, applying modern theories of criticism. The following is an excerpt from an interview given by Katherine Fullerton Gerould, a known writer of her times, to Joyce Kilmer:

“Well,” she answered with a smile. “I hear O. Henry is being used in the schools and the colleges. I hear that he is held up as a model by professors of English. The effect of this must be pernicious. It cannot but be pernicious to spread the idea that O. Henry is a master of the short story. O. Henry did not write the short story. Henry wrote the expanded anecdote. In a short story there are situation, suspense and climax. O. Henry gives the reader climax – nothing else.” (Kilmer)

Eugene Current-Garcia does not conform to this view and suggests that censuring O. Henry's craftsmanship based on his intentions rather than his achievements and "hasty and ill-considered" judgements based on individual stories has not done justice to his art (136).

What needs to be done, on the contrary, is to recognize first...that O. Henry is a minor classic who occupies a permanent, unique spot in American literature; and, second, to seek to understand his uniqueness in the light of its total accomplishment...One way to account for this mysterious afflatus is to recognize that at the core of O. Henry's being lies an element of surprise or wonder,...The most obvious technical manifestation of O. Henry's delight in the unexpected is, of course, in his famous surprise endings; for scarcely a single story among his three hundred fails to meet his specifications for a conclusion other than the one the reader is apparently being prepared for. (Current-Garcia 136-38)

Whether the critics acclaim or condemn Henry, they still tend to dwell on the most popular techniques used by him in his short fiction – surprise endings, intricacies of plot, form, structure etc. There are many critics like Alphonso Smith, B.M. Eichenbaum etc. who studied the structure of his stories and appreciated it. In his work *O. Henry and the Theory of the Short Story*, Eichenbaum studied in detail the devices he used to produce what is popularly called as 'O. Henry effect'. Though these are educating and valuable, there needs to be a more concentrated effort from the literary critics to explore the subtle world of O. Henry. Erica Davis in an article posted in the internet says, "O. Henry's short stories often give analysts little to work with aside from his ever present sentimentality and surprise endings." But she goes on to analyse one of his stories, '*The Last Leaf*' and reaches the conclusion, "O. Henry's beautifully written story is not lacking in depth or detail, it only appears that way to those who have no passion to look any further." (Davis)

There are a few critics who pondered over the portrayal of life in Henry's stories. In his noted work *O. Henry, the Man and His Work*, E. Hudson Long discusses the world Henry depicted, the sociological import of his stories and so on.

...because of this interest in the unfortunate, especially the victims of environment, the stories of O. Henry take on sociological import. He presented the shop-girl, the derelict, the woman of the street, the gangster, against the background that produced them. He knew that environment could cause tragedy, and he realized the injustice of a system which would permit an employer to pay a clerk only six dollars a week (121-22)...He was never unsympathetic, except with those who sought to deprive others of their rights as human beings and his writings have in them feelings of compassion for the weakness of man. (136-37)

Though there had been many critics who appreciated O. Henry's sympathy for the downtrodden, Hudson Long seems to be the first one to look into the deeper sociological

significance of this author's intentions and its import. This article is an attempt to prove that O. Henry is a spokesperson of the marginalised; of his own times as well as of all times. An analysis of Henry's stories and an understanding of the social realities of Henry's times can enable one to do this. A student's understanding of his stories could become more meaningful if he is viewed as a spokesperson of the marginalised, rather than as an author who was sympathetic towards the downtrodden. It is here that the question whether he was consciously giving voice for the marginalised arises. Considering the bulk of his stories in which there is a discourse against the dominating 'centre', one might be correct in assuming that he was conscious about his giving voice to the downtrodden. A humane insight into the social conditions of Henry's age could be a reason for his doing so.

Henry was born at the time of the American civil war and lived through the age of industrial expansion and national reconstruction. The Larousse encyclopaedia of history gives a picture of the state of affairs in the USA during that time.

The South was in ruins. The war had taken a dreadful toll and the economy was shattered. Hatred still smouldered and the Negroes freed since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1863 by Lincoln were far from being able to profit from their unfamiliar liberty. In 1866, they received civil rights and two years later the franchise. These rights could not, however, of themselves achieve the integration of former slaves with a society which kept them at arm's length and found their presence a constant source of disturbance. (Larousse 321)

Though the late nineteenth century was a period of the construction of the most powerful nation of twentieth century, it is also considered a period of greed and guile: "of rapacious Robber Barons, unscrupulous spectators, and corporate buccaneers, of shady business practices, scandal plagued politics etc. It is easy to caricature this age as an era of corruption and unfettered capitalism. More importantly, an agrarian society of small producers was transformed into an urban society 'dominated' by industrial corporations" (Gilder Lehrman).

This is a brief account of the background information one can obtain about what O. Henry saw around him; superficial wealth and prosperity, with the substrata of society striving to move up. When somebody like C. Alphonso Smith says that Henry wrote about ordinary men, it means that he had more interest in the substrata of the society that can be seen in the descriptions above: oppressed workers, displaced farmers etc in a giant stride of industrialisation. As quoted from E. Hudson Long elsewhere, Henry understood the system that could not but produce tragedies. But these tragedies were not tragedies of the nation; just those of a lower middle class. These tragedies of marginalisation get represented in Henry's work.

To understand the representation, one might have to look at the dynamics of the process-marginalisation-itself. There are in operation some binaries in the process of marginalization (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 135). We can consider '*margin*' itself as a binary opposite to

'*centre*'. The binary structure of dominant discourses creates marginalization, since the first term among the binary opposites is always preferred over the other. But this should not mislead one since the '*centre-margin*' binary opposition has a geometrical implication. The dominant of the binary can engulf the dominated of the binaries in a social structure. In such a situation, where the marginalised is engulfed by the dominant, the marginalised could not often voice their opinions. Spivak has expressed her views on whether the subaltern can speak or not. There could be some certainty that 'speaking' is not easy for them. Here is the importance of a spokesperson. A rational analysis of O. Henry's stories can show us how he exposes the marginalization in his society and how through his stories, he becomes the voice of those who could not often speak.

One fact to be kept in mind, while analysing Henry's stories in order to identify his approach and techniques as a spokesperson of the marginalised, is the significance of binary oppositions that can create marginalization. One can look for the ways in which such binaries are depicted in his stories and further effort can be put in to theorise the modes with which he gives voice to the marginalised. An analysis of Henry's short fiction, focussing on the depiction of binary oppositions which operates in the structure of society and could result in marginalisation, is attempted here and the binary oppositions of ability-inability, upper class-lower class, lawfulness-lawlessness, and urban-rural are the most apparent ones illustrated in these stories.

#### **ABILITY- INABILITY**

In a competitive world where survival is a privilege of the fittest, the weak and the feeble have less significance. It is said that history is the story of the victors, and the under-achievers are expelled from mainstream. In his stories, O. Henry has given a special place to losers or under-achievers. His sympathetic treatment of such characters and the depiction of their struggles to 'do well' speak for the marginalised 'losers'. 'Nothing New Under the Sun' is a story about a poor journalist who wanted to write one beautiful article; an original one. This character reminds one of the celebrated character, Behrman, of one of the most popular Henry stories – 'The Last Leaf'. But Behrman succeeds in painting his masterpiece. The protagonist of 'Nothing New Under the Sun' (20) does not. He thinks he wrote an original article but in the end it turns out that someone else had written an exactly similar article long way back. Henry's depiction of the struggles of the protagonist is insightful.

Among the huge output of stories by O. Henry, there are numerous that speak about the inability of the protagonists in achieving something. It is not a mockery, but a realistic representation of the inability of multitudes. By providing space for losers rather than achievers, O. Henry inverts the order of the binary opposites of the society. Further examples are 'A New Microbe' (22), in which a scientist who badly wanted to discover a new microbe is depicted; 'Art and the Bronco' (209) which speaks about the inability of Lonny Briscoe to paint a picture; 'Jack the Giant Killer' (23) which shows a news paper crew who could not convey the story of

‘Jack the Giant Killer’ to a five year old kid; ‘A Ghost of a Chance’ (204) which tells us about a noble man who could not express his love; ‘The Dissipated Jeweler’ (49) which speaks about the failure of a detective; etc. By depicting in his stories the characters that fought and lost, he is giving them a space in a discourse.

### **UPPER CLASS- LOWER CLASS**

Civilised societies do differentiate people with their social status and cultural affiliations. Some are considered elite or the upper-class and are preferred over the non-elite, low-class. The opening sentence of a story titled ‘An Odd Character’ (57) stands witness for the presence of a multitude of the poor and desolate, against the history books that speak about the birth of modern wealthy U.S.A. from the reconstruction period after the Civil War: “The reporter turned and saw a magnificent specimen of the genus tramp” (57).

‘Whistling Dick’s Christmas Stocking’ (71) and ‘A Blackjack Bargainer’ (109) speak about the inherent goodness in the poor; which is often not seen by the dominating wealthy class that consider the slum dwellers as a typical nuisance. In the story ‘The Caliph and the Cad’ (445), the hypocrisy of the upper class is directly attacked. The story depicts the non-elite as better human beings than the dominant elite class. It is about a truck driver who used to disguise as a gentleman and his realisation that he is a true gentleman while many of them in the elite circle are not. The story ends with a comment by Corny Brannigan to a wealthy man:

“You’re my best friend,” said Corny exultantly. “You don’t understand? Well, listen. You just put me wise to somethin’. I been playin’ gent a long time, thinkin’ it was just the glad rags I had and nothin’ else. Say – you’re swell, ain’t you? Well, you trot in that class, I guess. I don’t; but I found out one thing – I’m a gentleman, by \_\_\_ and I know it now.” (447)

### **LAWFULNESS- LAWLESSNESS**

Law and order and obedience of law are always deemed central in any civilised human society. Often the marginalised are stamped with the title of ‘trouble-makers’ or ‘outlaws’. O. Henry has written many stories about outlaws, confidence-tricksters, crooks, gangsters, robbers, and so on. Most of the stories reveal the author’s deeper understanding of the background of the outlaws and produce an alternative picture of the outlaws.

‘A Retrieved Reform’ (263) and ‘A Chaparral Christmas Gift’ (346) are similar stories in that the protagonists of both stories are outlaws and they save the lives of someone else, running risks. In the former an ex-thief saves a child from a locked safe running the risk of being caught, while in the latter a ‘local-terror’ forgives an offender for his old sweet-heart and in the act loses his life. Henry, by etching these characters succeeds in pointing out that the outlaws can create happiness and peace without the support of laws, is challenging the primacy of the concept of legitimacy and order in civilised societies.

There are many other stories that deal with the same theme where the readers might feel that the society and the characters of the stories would be more contented without the legal machine interfering into the harmony of their lives. There are other stories where laws need to be broken for preserving the spirit of the laws, like 'Georgia's Ruling' or 'Friends in San Rosario'. The description of the meeting of the not so law-abiding Major Kingman and the strictly law abiding bank inspector in the latter story is a confrontation between law and lawlessness. Henry gives the impression that lawlessness is, at times, better. "Two men of very different types shook hands. One was a finished product of the world of straight lines, conventional methods and formal affairs. The other was something freer, wider and nearer to nature. Tom Kingman had not been cut to any pattern" (142).

### **URBAN- RURAL**

The urban can be considered a binary opposition which is usually favoured over the rural. The metropolis and the margin can be well-depicted by the representation of the contrast between cities and villages. Henry wrote stories about life in both urban and rural areas. It is an interesting fact that even when he wrote about the life in urban areas, he focused on the downtrodden masses there. How he used the binary opposition of – urban-rural – in his stories to give voice to the marginalised is noteworthy.

In the story 'Pride of the Cities' (495), he mocks at the conceited nature and vanity of cities and city dwellers through the conversation of two men from New York and Chicago. O. Henry had been called the story teller of New York by many critics. To understand this as Henry's partiality for cities would be an error. There is a strong critique of the cities' or urban civilizations' constructed image in the story 'Defeat of the City' (492) which begins thus;

Robert Walmsley's descent upon the city resulted in a Kilkenny struggle. He came out of the fight victor by a fortune and a reputation. On the other hand, he was swallowed up by the city. The city gave him what he demanded and then branded him with its brand. It remodelled, cut, trimmed, and stamped him to the pattern it approves. It opened its social gates to him and shut him in on a close-cropped, formal lawn with the select herd of ruminant. In dress, habits, manners, provincialism, routine and narrowness he acquired that charming insolence, that irritating completeness, that sophisticated crassness, that overbalanced poise that makes the Manhattan gentleman so delightfully small in his greatness. (491)

The superficial glitter of cities and urban civilization is destroyed and the cultural and social slavery imposed upon a city dweller is exposed here. This is a direct attack on the center/metropolis by Henry. In this story he goes on to depict that rustic behaviour and tradition are more natural and better than the artificial masks which are imposed on a city dweller by its standards and culture. A letter from the rustic parents of the protagonist is described; which shows Henry's support for marginalised, undeveloped villages.

It was an unerudite letter, full of crops and motherly love and farm notes...It was a letter direct from soil, straight from home...(492)

The culmination of the attack on urban culture and sophistication comes at the end of the story when Robert and his urban wife go to the village and Robert loses his inhibitions and acts like a rustic. His wife is silent throughout the evening seeing an unfamiliar man out of her husband. When Robert comes to her room in the end, she speaks to him.

“Robert,” said the calm, cool voice of his judge, “I thought I married a gentleman.”

Yes it was coming and yet, in the face of it, Robert Walmsley was eagerly regarding a certain branch of the apple tree upon which he used to climb out of that very window. He believed he could do it now. He wondered how many blossoms there were on the tree – ten million? But here was someone speaking again:

“I thought I married a gentleman” the voice went on, “but” – Why had she come and was standing so close by his side? “But I find that I have married” – was this Alicia talking – “Something better – a man – Bob, dear, kiss me, won’t you?”

The city was far away. (495)

He has mocked the constructed behavioural pattern of city dwellers in many other stories like ‘Ulysses and the Dogman’ or ‘Champion of the Weather’. Each of these attacks through mockery is Henry’s victory for the marginalised rustics over the dominating or marginalising metropolis. The process of “othering” created by the metropolis is dealt with in the story ‘A Little Local Colour’ (379). It is about a newspaper reporter who tries to find out a real New York slum-dweller to research about their dialect. But it turns out that such a dialect exists only in fictional works.

There are many other binary opposites like healthy-sick, pious-sinner etc. in the dominant discourses that can create marginalization and can be observed in Henry’s stories. After such a reading of Henry’s stories which reveals the inversion or deconstruction of many binary opposites, one can reach the conclusion that O. Henry must have had consciously focussed on the process of marginalisation and the marginalised and given voice to the ‘subalterns’ as Spivak mentions. The modes, by which he gives voice for them in the stories, can be listed as follows: (i) By speaking about the marginalised and thus giving them a space. (ii) By depicting the inherent order in the apparent disorder of the marginalised. (iii) By negating the difference between the centre and the margin through his stories. (iv) By depicting the centre’s ways of domination over the margin. (v) By depicting the attack of the margin over the centre. One or more of these modes can be seen in each of the stories studied.

He did not give voice to the marginalised of his period alone. The binary opposites in social discourse, and marginalization, were there in all ages and are still there. It is just that these

terms were coined for the concerned concepts only in the latter half of twentieth century. By negating such binary oppositions through his stories, and by giving his readers a vision of the metropolis and the margin, the gentleman of city and the tramp, as essentially equal, he becomes the voice of the marginalised of all ages.

Critical appreciation of Henry's stories almost always focussed on the entertainment value of it. As Eugene Current-Garcia said, each of his stories is designed to entertain his Sunday morning readers with the oddities he found among the lowly (114). To incorporate a voice for the downtrodden or the marginalised in it along with the entertainment is a great achievement; and it is this humane and ideological nature of his stories that makes it worthy of serious academic study.

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## RAVINDRANATH TAGORE AND HIS GITANJALI

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*It is Tagore's point of view that beauty, joy, love, hope and despair act on the mind profoundly when one is young and his poems reflect these transcendental abstractions almost in ceaseless abundance. 'Gitanjali' very well communicates particular experiences and special subtle feelings. Tagore also appears saying that Europe got the message of peace and solace in the poems of 'Gitanjali'. "The west may believe in the soul of Man, but she does not really believe that the universe has a soul. Yet this is the belief of the East, and the whole mental contribution of the East to mankind is filled with this idea. Being a human being Tagore gives the highest place to God in a man's life and also talks about the God-man relationship in the most poetic manner. God does not remain an abstraction in Tagore's poetry but becomes a living breathing reality. All human beings possess the innate capacity to inhabit and reside in their myths and engage in their imagined worlds as the real world. The captivation of the heart in the endless network of God's music and the intimate relationship between human life and God as life suggests a sublime consciousness. Tagore tries to keep the closed conceptions of thought (regarding finality) tightly tied to the openness of them in numerous engaged contexts. This implies that for a textual truth it must be translated, interpreted and brought to life. The central theme of 'Gitanjali' is the realization of the supreme through self purification, constant prayer, dedication and complete self-surrender through service to suffering humanity and total detachment from worldly pleasure and desires without renouncing the world.*

Imbued with deep religious feeling patriotism and love of his countrymen Rabinranath Tagore communicates us through his writings, art and music which compel us to call him "Gurudev" with reverence and open the minds of our youth countrymen to the world of truth. By close contact with nature, music and poetry, with which he surrounded himself his pupils, he awakened their imagination to the world of beauty, greatness, and wide sympathy. It is Tagore's point of view that beauty, joy, love, hope and despair act on the mind profoundly when one is young and his poems reflect these transcendental abstractions almost in ceaseless abundance.

When we talk of Tagore's poems, we can not resist ourselves without discussing the poems of his immortal classic 'Gitanjali' which brought honor and world wide recognition for him and earned the Nobel Prize for Literature for him in 1913. 'Gitanjali' which means "Songs Offerings", is a wonderful translation of Bengali to English poems made by Tagore himself. Writing in English was a new experience for Tagore. During the English translation of 'Gitanjali', he was fearful. He confided to Indira Devi, "That I can not write English is such a patent fact that I never had even the vanity to feel ashamed of it. If anybody wrote an English note asking me to tea, I did not feel equal to answering it... You may wonder why such a crazy ambition should possess one in such a weak state of health. But believe me I did not undertake the task

in a spirit of reckless bravado. I simply felt an urge to recapture through the medium of another language the feelings and sentiments which had created such a feast of joy within me in the days gone by.”<sup>1</sup> Of course, tradition often fails to convey the exact suggestive meaning evocative power of words used in the original. But ‘Gitanjali’ very well communicates particular experiences and special subtle feelings. In this connection Rathindranath (Tagore’s son) said that ‘Gitanjali’ poems were “poems reborn in another garb; they were not mere translations” but “the utter simplicity of the language in the English translation, subtle in its artlessness, which, I believe, (was to move) Yeats so strongly.”<sup>2</sup>

‘Gitanjali’ has a very beautiful tale regarding to its success as Tagore carried his manuscript of translations with him on the ship to England. When he arrived in London in June, it got left behind on the train and was declared lost. Rabindranath never guessed that these translations of ‘Gitanjali’ would earn him the Nobel Prize for Literature the very next year. We cannot ignore few names during the discussion of ‘Gitanjali’. They are William Rothenstein (the artist) and his friend Paul Nash, W.B. Yeats and his American friend Ezra Pound, Fox Strangways, C.F. Andrews, Stopped Brook etc.

It was William Rothenstein with whom Tagore shared and showed his manuscript of translation. Through Rothenstein W.B. Yeats came to know this manuscript and carried it with him for days. Yeats was so much impressed that he kept on reading at top omnibuses, on trains, in restaurants, often dodging inquisitive eyes and finally he decided to write its Preface. He opens his heart in this manner:

I have carried the manuscript of these translations about with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it lest some stranger would see how much it moved me. These lyrics-which are in the original, my Indian tell me, full of subtlety of rhythm, of untranslatable delicacies of colour, of metrical invention, display their thought a world I have dreamed of all my life long.... Lovers, while they await one another, shall find, in murmuring them, this love of God a magic gulf wherein their own more bitter passion may bathe and renew its youth.<sup>3</sup>

Besides he also reads some translations from ‘Gitanjali’ in soirees organized by Rothenstein and attended by many literary luminaries. In this soiree Tagore along with Yeats, sang the songs in the original (Bengali). Fox Strangways and C.F. Andrews were sitting among the audience. They could not resist themselves without uttering something specially, the noted musicologist Fox Strangways who remarks thus, “To hear him sing is to realize the music in a

way that it is seldom given to a foreigner to do. The notes of the song are no longer their mere selves, but the vehicle of a personality, and as such, they go beyond a specific system of music to a core beauty of sound, which all systems reach out to seize. These melodies are such as would have satisfied Plato..."<sup>4</sup> C.F. Andrews also felt the profound impact of the poems delivered by Tagore on him and writes, "I walked back along the side of Hampstead Heath. I wanted to be alone and think in silence and glory of it all. The night was cloudless and there was something of the purple of the Indian atmosphere about the sky. There, all alone, I could think of was the wonder of it:

On the seashore of endless worlds, children meet

.....

On the seashore of endless worlds is the great meeting of children. (Gitanjali)

It was hunting, haunting melody of the English, so simple, like all the beautiful sounds of my childhood that carried me completely away. I remained out under the sky far into the night, almost till dawn was breaking."<sup>5</sup>

'Gitanjali' made Yeats so much enthusiastic and he passed on his enthusiasm to his American friend Ezra Pound who found the message of peace and solace in the poems and also stated that the poems in 'Gitanjali' seemed to be "a sort of ultimate common sense, a reminder of one thing and of forty things of which we are ever likely to lose sight in the confusion of our Western life, in the racket of our cities, in the jabber of manufacturing literature, in the vortex of advertisement."<sup>6</sup> Similarly Paul Nash, Rothemannstein's friend candidly writes, "I am glad to find my confused thoughts and feelings expressed so clearly and so beautifully that I have sometimes laughed for joy, sometimes felt tears come. I would read Gitanjali as I would read the Bible for comfort and for strength."<sup>7</sup> In this connection Stopford Brook wrote to Tagore about 'Gitanjali', "they make for peace, peace breathing from love and they create for us, too storm-tossed in this modern western world, a quiet refuge... It is well for us to have a book which, without denouncing (sic) us, leads us into the meadows of peace and love and refreshes us where we are weary."<sup>8</sup> Tagore also appears saying that Europe got the message of peace and solace in the poems of 'Gitanjali'. "The west may believe in the soul of Man, but she does not really believe that the universe has a soul. Yet this is the belief of the East, and the whole mental contribution of the East to mankind is filled with this idea."<sup>9</sup> At another place Tagore said, "...when a Man does not realize his kinship with the World, he lives in a prison-house whose walls are alien to him."<sup>10</sup>

Being a human being Tagore gives the highest place to God in a man's life and also talks about the God-man relationship in the most poetic manner. He states that every moment and every age, everyday and every night, "He comes, comes, ever comes". (Gitanjali, 45) Man is as necessary for God as God is for man that it is through man that God's love fulfills itself.

At one place Tagore also remarked, “God with us is not a distance God. He belongs to our homes, as well to our temples. We feel his nearness to us in all the human relationship of love and affection and in our festivities. In seasons of flowers and fruits in the coming of the rain, in the fullness of the autumn, we see the hem of His mantle and hear his footsteps...”<sup>11</sup> God does not remain an abstraction in Tagore’s poetry but becomes a living breathing reality. Sometimes he is the bridegroom, at other times the bride, or the traveller, or the sailor, or the guest who comes to visit the poet unexpectedly. All human beings possess the innate capacity to inhabit and reside in their myths and engage in their imagined worlds as the real world. Tagore too indulges in myth making. For instance, when Tagore sings:

...Ah! Thou  
 hast made my heart captive in the end-  
 less meshes of thy Music, my master! (Gitanjali, 3)

Life of my life, I shall ever try to  
 keep my body pure, knowing that Thy  
 living touch is upon all my limbs. (Gitanjali, 4)

The captivation of the heart in the endless network of God’s music and the intimate relationship between human life and God as life suggests a sublime consciousness. Here the privileging abstract conception of proximity to God is not a universal given, as only the poet appears to be enmeshed in it. As the engagement with music and God is an on-going process the thought is on the lines of a never-ending Divine discourse. Further he writes:

I shall ever try to keep all untruths  
 out from my thoughts, knowing that  
 thou art that truth which has kindled  
 the light of reason in my mind. (Gitanjali, 4)

In the oft-quoted lines Tagore tries to keep the closed conceptions of thought (regarding finality) tightly tied to the openness of them in numerous engaged contexts. Thus defining a truth is either to believe in the myth of finality (a truth that states what it means independent of action, context and interpretation) or the myth of finally possessing a truth that one arrives at in action, (where the truth arises and lives in such a way that it is re-contextualized and re-opened to be re-written and understood again and again. This implies that for a textual truth it must be translated, interpreted and brought to life.

Tagore’s poetry has always been an inspiration to people. When the personal belongings and papers of the famous war poet Wilfred Owen after his death in the World War were sent to his mother, it was found that Wilfred Owen had great love for Tagore’s poetry which inspired him immensely as some valuable lines from ‘Gitanjali’ were written in his note book:

When I go from hence let this by my parting word, that what-

.....  
My whole body and my limbs have  
thrilled with his touch who is beyond  
touch; and if the end comes here, let  
it come let this be my parting word.(Gitanjali,96)

After going through such lines of Tagore's 'Gitanjali' Owen's mother expressed her gratefulness to Tagore personally. The Modern Review observed that "here is in Bengali no cultural home where Rabindranath's songs are not sung or at least attempted to be sung... Even illiterate villagers sing his songs."<sup>12</sup> Tagore's songs have a unique place in the world of music and due to uniqueness his songs are comprised as typical "Rabindranath Sangeeta" which in 'The Music of Hindustan', is called "a vehicle of personality"... "that go behind this or that systems of music to that beauty of sound which all systems put out their hands to seize."<sup>13</sup> As Dhurjati Prasad Mukhopadhyay puts it, "The myriad tones of religious emotions and love, of feelings for nature and man, are all touched surely and truly, in his songs. He has not only struck all the relevant emotions in the schedule of a psychologist but also communicated new combinations of feelings which have enriched the life of the devotee, lover, poet, humanist, tiller of the soil and vendor in the "market place." Indeed among Bengali his songs have passed into the "parlance of the soul" and "entered into our unconscious and conscious cerebration"<sup>14</sup>

Tagore composed roughly 2,230 songs and around 103 songs have been included in 'Gitanjali'. All the songs are profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse. It is on this collection of his lyrics that his reputation as world poet chiefly rests. The central theme of 'Gitanjali' is the realization of the supreme through self purification, constant prayer, dedication and complete self-surrender through service to suffering humanity and total detachment from worldly pleasure and desires without renouncing the world. Tagore was very conscious of the treatment of 'feelings' in his songs. So his songs are also a splendid example of the creation of an independent genre of music which grew out of the composite influences of the day-urban classical and rural folk, Bengali and regional, western folk and classical musical traditions from all of which he drew, to form a unique blend.

The Indian literary sensibility in poetry has kept a steady gaze on the theme of death right from Henry Derozio to Chandrasekhar Patil. The early poets like Derozio and Toru Dutt look at death not as doom but as a way to new life. He yearns for a complete merger of his finite soul with the infinite God. Similarly, the great visionary poet Tagore harmonizes with life and death. To him death is not a negation of life but is a door through which life constantly renews itself. Tagore's views of life and death is tremendously optimistic. In the poem by heart Tagore waits for a union with Death, believing that this union will render the union with the Lord

possible. Similarly the 18<sup>th</sup> century devotional poets of Orissa, and the Metaphysical poets of England, Tagore engenders in him the qualities of a bride to be wooed by the Lord-the eternal bridegroom for whom:

The flowers have been woven and the  
garland is ready is ready for the bridegroom  
After the wedding the bride shall leave  
her home and meet her Lord alone in the  
solitude of night. (Gitanjali,91)

With death's summons clanking at the door, the poet is ready for a journey into deathless, with empty hands and an expectant heart. The poet considers that death is the fulfilment and completion of life. In death nothing is lost but it is the channel through which life ceaselessly flows and renews itself.

Tagore first regards Death as a messenger or servant of God. He is ready to welcome this messenger at his door. In his honor he takes up the lamp and opens the gate with humble salutations:

I will worship him with folded hands,  
and with tears. I will worship him  
placing at his feet treasure of my heart. (Gitanjali,86)

Being a humanitarian Tagore asks the question from human beings what they will offer to death when it, as a guest, comes at their door. As the lines reveal:

On the day when death will knock at  
thy door what will thou offer to him? (Gitanjali, 90)

Immediately he answers of this question by placing himself before the guest (death) with the full vessel of life:

I will set before my guest the  
full vessel of my life. (Gitanjali,90)

As a typical Indian host the poet further says:

..I will never let  
him go with empty hands.  
All the sweet vintage of all my  
autumn days and summer nights, all  
the earnings and gleanings of my busy  
life will I place before him at the close  
of my days when death shall knock at  
my door. (Gitanjali,90)

Neither fear nor contempt for death nor wish to beg a life appears in Tagore's poems but there is a willing acceptance of the things. According to him, in rhythm of life, death has its place, so also evil and imperfection and ugliness have their own necessity and significance. The poet longs for having perfect kinship with death as he appears saying:

...because I love this life, I know I shall  
love death as well. (Gitanjali, 90)

His perfect kinship with death brings him to close to Indian philosophers who welcome death as a companion and surrender themselves before him. Similarly Tagore crowns him:

Thou hast left death for my companion  
and I shall crown him with my life. (Gitanjali, 52)

The way of Tagore's dealing with death is to win it in place of getting defeat. In the very opening lines the poet describes death in the image of the renewal of life and informs that death makes him endless and fills his life with freshness:

Thou hast made me endless; such is  
thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou  
emptiest again and again and fillest it  
ever with fresh life. (Gitanjali, 1)

Here the idea of being "endless" and being filled "ever with fresh life" of the timeless zone are in contrast to the "frail vessel" of the time zone. The reference to the timeless activity of rebirth (punarjanma) in keeping with a physical image makes the circle a spiral, for God's activity of making "endless" goes on and infinitum.

When death is the 'last fulfillment of life', the inevitable fruition of life, what can the mortal do save honestly saying:

Day after day have I kept watch for  
thee; for thee I have borne the joys  
and pangs of life. (Gitanjali, 91)

Like all mystics Tagore is a firm believer in the unity of man and God, he has no faith in absolute identity. He is a dualist who believes in a mysterious identity in difference. So in his poetry, there is a constant synthesis of opposites. To him freedom means freedom from bondage, but it can be realized only through bondage. Just as the string is bound to the harp and it produces music so also life realizes the freedom in the midst of bonds, just as the string and the harp realize it in being bound to each other. Let us mark some lines of 'Gitanjali' in which how nicely the very idea is expressed

Deliverance? Where is this deliver-  
ance to be found? Our master himself  
has joyfully taken upon him the bonds,  
of creation; he is bound with us all forever. (Gitanjali, 11)

Here the idea of deliverance from the world (the myth of finally attaining liberation by being freed from physicality of being) does not arise for it is an occasions taken upon by God Himself, for He himself willfully bodies forth to be bound with us eternally. Thus deliverance is not is renunciation but in the fullest enjoyment of God's creation. He lives with "the poorest, and lowliest, and the lost."

Being a perfect lover of freedom Tagore describes a perfect freedom which our country requires that is Freedom of mind and spirit which he calls Heaven of Freedom. The only freedom worth having is the freedom of mind and spirit. If we have that, no one can prevent us from winning all other forms of freedom. If we are not free and independence in spirit, outward political independence will be of no value. Tagore describes this sort of freedom in his well known patriotic poem 'Where the Mind is Without Fear'. Some editors of Tagore's poems have given the title 'Longing' to this poem because here Tagore longs for an Indian free from fear and narrowness.

Actually Tagore composed this poem when Indian was under the British rule. The very opening lines of this poem point out:

Where the mind is without fear and  
the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken  
up into fragments by narrow domestic  
walls,  
Where words come out from the  
depth of truth. ;( Gitanjali, 35)

In these lines Tagore expresses his heartiest wish to see India free from all fears so that the head is held high with a sense of pride and none is afraid of anything Tagore wants India to be free from all bondages where all knowledge is available to the people freely, where they are allowed to read and discuss freely. Tagore longs for a world which has not been broken into isolated parts but which is free from the narrow ideas or considerations of caste, creed nationality etc. True freedom comes only when all of us are free from the feelings of narrowness. Real freedom is achieved when our words and speech reflect deep truth.

In order to get this freedom Tagore prays to God, our Father to awaken the Indians into such a state of freedom where there will be harmony of love and no narrow selfishness to



cause differences, where truth and reason will reign supremely, where all will try hard for perfection and the horizons of their mind will be blessed with ever-widening thought and action.

Actually Tagore wants to make his countrymen 'abhay' that is without fear. He does not like his country to be divided into fragments because of narrow thinking exists on the consideration of caste, creed, nationality etc. Freedom from narrow thinking is real freedom. Such freedom makes the people peace-loving, truthful and honest and also prays to God to make India a heaven of freedom, a country of peace and happiness. This is Tagore's wish for his motherland 'Bharat Mata.' In fact Tagore's poetry exhibits his humanism, spiritual realism as well as his cosmopolitanism. The poet does not pray the 'heaven' of material prosperity in India but for fearlessness, truthfulness and unity. He pays for a country from the clutches of superstition, narrowness and fear.

Where tireless striving stretches its  
arms towards perfection;

.....

Where the mind is led forward by  
thee into ever-widening thought and action-  
Into that heaven of freedom, my  
Father, let my country awake. (Gitanjali, 35)

Conscious of living in a new age where old ideas were being scrutinized and new thoughts and concepts emerging with western thinking, Tagore was among the first to bring this introspection in his songs. Western concepts could be freely grafted into Indian context in contrast to the Indian emphasis on the context, where in thought is understood to be 'context-sensitive.' Tagore himself states:

Deliverance? Where is this deliverance  
to be found? - Our master himself  
has joyfully taken upon him the bonds  
of creation; he is bound with us all for  
ever. (Gitanjali, 11)

Tagore precisely recontextualizes not only in thought but in action too. Tagore himself wished that "some of his songs be performed by Westerners so that his music received recognition in the West."<sup>15</sup>

For this purpose the poet seeks "the help of artistic personalities like Danielou to build bridges of cultural cooperation between Visva Bharati and the West."

The movements-religious started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Literary started by Madhusudan Dutt, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Dinbandhan Mitra and natural

movements for independence influenced Tagore vastly and found superb expression in his creations.

As a social reformer Tagore has composed a few poems on untouchables with a view to convince the orthodox Indians to accept the downtrodden people as the tallow human beings with human dignity. Tagore championed the cause of the underdogs and vehemently condemned all religious, rituals and fanaticism that divide man from man. To convince his humanitarian ideas, he says God is always with the abject, downtrodden. In one of the 'Gitanjali' poem, he describes the presence of God:

Here is thy footstool and there rest  
thy feet where live the poorest and  
lowliest, and lost. (Gitanjali, 10)

During 1910, Outcasts were the biggest mass of the poorest, lowliest and lost. To explain the importance of Outcast as human being, the poet thus describes at the end of the poem:

My heart can never find its way to  
Where thou keepest company with the  
Companionless among the poorest, the  
lowliest and the lost. (Gitanjali, 10)

Tagore has criticized the way of orthodox upper caste to get God and he has dignified the way of an Outcaste to get God. In his lyric Tagore advises the devotee of God:

Come out of thy meditation and  
leave aside thy flowers and incense!  
What harm is there if thy clothes  
become tattered and stained? Meet  
him and stand by him in toil and in  
sweet of thy brow (Gitanjali, 11)

Through this poem Tagore advises all the worshippers to emancipate themselves from the narrow confines of restricting religion as they are chanting of hymns sitting in the lonely dark corner of a temple. He says:

Leave this chanting and singing and  
telling of beads! whom dost thou  
worship in this lonely dark corner of a  
temple with doors all shut? open  
thine eyes and see thy God is not before  
thee! (Gitanjali, 11)

Tagore is absolutely sure that he can come face to face with God not within the four walls of some temple but in the world of struggle and toil:

In this laborious world of thine,  
tumultuous with toil and with struggle  
among hurrying crowds shall I stand  
before thee face to face?(Gitanjali,76)

Each and every line of the poem is meaningful and reveals a grudge against the hypocrisy of proud cast man of our country. In the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century the concept of cast was in air and had become a great issue of discussion especially in Indian society. Then Tagore's poems proved to be a better suggestion to the cast based shallow minded mobs. Tagore aimed at exposing the hypocrisy of the orthodox and openly threatening for their 'crime' towards fellow beings. The poet conveys even his agonized cry for meeting with God so gently that the peace and quiet atmosphere is not disturbed. The secret of the peculiar charm and fascination of the 'Gitanjali' lies in its quiet and calm atmosphere. The diction of 'Gitanjali' is very simple, economical and much in contact with earth. There are no long involved sentences and no complexity of any kind. There are constant references to the simplest objects of Nature and life. By the use of such imagery the poet succeeds in verifying highly abstract concepts. All the poems are comprehensive and universal. 'Gitanjali' should be looked upon as a location of engagement that may reveal the truths that need to be heard and practice.

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# **SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES IN ERITREA: A CASE STUDY OF HIV/AIDS IN ZOBA MAEKEL**

**MohammadAfsar Alam  
and Zubairul Islam**

*Since the dawn of human civilization on the earth man has faced and still facing problems of many diseases particularly sexually transmitted diseases. The term sexually transmitted diseases can be described as a disease that can be transmitted through sexual intimacy. Sexual intimacy includes oral, genital and anal sex as well as vaginal intercourse. The pathogen that cause such diseases can be transmitted from person to person by way of sexual contact. The person who has made sexual relationship with the person who is infected with the disease is also infected by the same. Sexually transmitted diseases have been referred to by a variety of terms, such as venereal disease (VD) is an older term that was primarily used to refer to Syphilis and Gonorrhoea. In the present paper an attempt has been made to discuss the spatial distribution of sexually transmitted diseases, such as AIDS, Syphilis, and Gonorrhoea in Eritrea, in general and a case study of HIV/AIDS in Zoba Maekel in particular. The study also extends to the conditions whether these diseases are increasing or decreasing in number, its historical background, the growth rate of infection throughout the country and the effective measures that could control these diseases.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are one of the most serious diseases and are spreading at an alarming rate. In fact, it has become a major concern at global level. As its name indicates, these diseases spread throughout the world by sexual contact. For the first time sexually transmitted diseases, especially Syphilis was noticed with French soldiers at a place called 'Naples' in 1495. According to Italians, this disease is called as 'French Sickness' (Michael Elta, 1994, p.482). Since it's starting till now these diseases are continuously increasing because of regular sexual contact. Some countries have higher incidence while the others have a lower one. The reason for such difference is obvious at the first instance, but on further inspections these are extremely complex. Say for instance, lack of awareness about sexually transmitted diseases, and in fact in some countries that is the case.

Among sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS is most threatening worldwide. The most common sexually transmitted diseases are AIDS, Syphilis, Gonorrhoea, Genital herpes, Hepatitis B, Chlamydia, Human Papillomavirus, Pubic Lice, and Trichomoniasis etc. There are also diseases of sexual organs referred to as sexually related diseases (SRDs), which are diseases of the reproductive tract that occur in both active and sexually abstinent individuals. These can be caused by organisms that live in the healthy body, but under certain conditions, such as stress, diabetes, drug use and other health related problems of sexual organs, it could be transmitted to a sexual partner. Such diseases are caused by both bacterial as well as viral

infections. Those caused by bacteria can be cured and are known as curable sexually transmitted diseases. Others are caused by virus and the body cannot fight with them completely and are known as incurable sexually transmitted diseases as the antibiotics are useless against these viruses.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objectives of the study are to present a general picture of the most common types of sexually transmitted infectious diseases that are generally found in Eritrea. The study also takes into account spatial distribution of sexual transmitted diseases in Eritrea in general and a case study of HIV/AIDS in Zoba Maekel in particular. The main causes responsible for spreading these infectious diseases throughout the country since the historical times till now is also one of the objectives of the study. The other objectives of the study include: identification of the target groups and the problems associated with them in the society. In addition to this, the study also deals with the solutions to the problems caused by sexually transmitted diseases.

### **DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY**

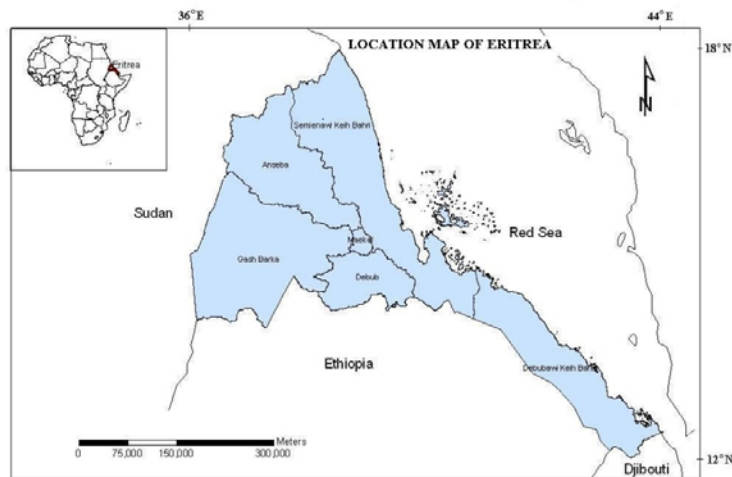
The present study is based on both the primary and secondary data. The compiled data on different subjects have been tabulated. Synthesis, perusal and analysis of data have been carried out wherever it can explain the trend with the outcome of results and facts. Personal interviews were conducted with various authorities, viz concerned officials in the Ministry of Health and various organizations like HAMSET, MAHBER BEDUHO etc. Besides, questionnaires were distributed to the people both males and females to collect information about HIV/AIDS, Gonorrhoea, and Syphilis in Eritrea in general and the incidence of AIDS infections in Zoba Maekel in particular. Secondary data pertaining to present study was collected mainly from published documents of Ministry of Health, different journals, magazines, pamphlets and also from the Internet.

Descriptive method is used for data analysis. The obtained data sets were analyzed by percentage calculation. Equally, graphs and tables are also presented in an appropriate manner.

### **THE STUDY AREA**

Eritrea is one of the countries in horn of Africa which covers an area of about 1,24,000 sqkms, lies in the north of equator. It sprawls between 12° to 18° north and 36° to 44° east. Eritrea shapes like a hatchet and the handle of the hatchet is on the Red Sea in the east. She is bounded by Sudan in the north and northwest, Ethiopia in the south, Red Sea in the northeast and east, and by Djibouti in the southeast. Fig. 1. As the horn of Africa is the worst affected part of the African continent by sexually transmitted diseases and so is the case with Eritrea also. According to medical sciences, sexually transmitted diseases are of two types i.e, curable and incurable as has been mentioned earlier. In Eritrea, incurable sexually transmitted diseases can be identified as foreign diseases which proved historically its arrival in Eritrea in 1988 at the Assab Port town. This disease, especially HIV/AIDS initially identified in the United States of America around 1980s and later it spread throughout the world. As a result of this, within a decade it was noticed in Eritrea in 1988 at Assab because of the arrival of foreign traders and

tourists. On the other hand, curable sexually transmitted diseases have been found in this country since historic times even in our ancestors as well. Since 1988, a total of 19,188 HIV/AIDS cases and 2,164 deaths were reported in the hospitals and health centres of the country. An average of about 1,500 cases has been reported from 1988 to 2003 and about 2,500 from 2004 to 2006 and about 2,000 in 2007 (NAT COD).



*\*National Tuberculosis Control Division*

The reported numbers of new cases of HIV/AIDS are decreasing starting from 2006. At the same time in 2005 and 2007, HIV survey indicated that the prevalence of HIV out of total population was 2.38 and 1.28 respectively with variations in different subgroups and regions. The positive rate in Voluntary Counseling Test Clients (VCTC) in 2007 was 3.17 per cent lower by about 27 per cent from that of the 2003 (4.34 per cent). Similarly, the positive rate in clients in 2007 was 0.88 per cent which was also lowered by about 65 per cent from that of 2004 (2.5 per cent). The number of voluntary counseling and testing and the prevention of mother to child (PMTCT) centres have grown from 15 in 2001 to 110 in 2007 and from 3 in 2002 to 73 in 2007 respectively. The number of clients who used VCT and PMTCT centres has also increased from 1,510 in 1999 to 84,593 in 2007 and from 2,080 in 2004 to 40,211 in 2007 respectively (Natcod\* 2007 Report).

### **YEARLY CASES AND DEATH REPORTS OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES IN ERITREA**

Based on the reportage of Health Management and Information System (HMIS), the number of cases and deaths caused by sexually transmitted diseases in Eritrea has been varying in each year. According to the available statistics from 1989 till 2009, the number of cases and deaths at the initial stage was very large but slowly it declined due to improvement in medical services and facilities, increasing knowledge of people towards sexually transmitted diseases, increasing number of organizations which provide health education and general awareness in the society about the STDS plus periodical check up of sex workers by the government.

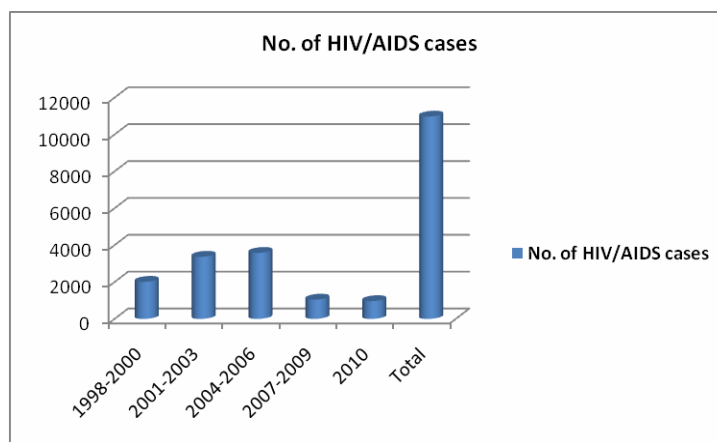
The most recognized sexually transmitted diseases in Eritrea almost in all zobas are HIV/AIDS, Gonorrhoea, and Syphilis. However, the Gonorrhoea and Syphilis patients are controlled through vaccination. But in case of AIDS as it cannot be cured, so only the numbers have been declining through preventive measures.

**CASES REPORTAGE OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES IN ERITREA**

According to the statistical report of Health Management and Information System (HMIS), the number of cases in Eritrea declined from the previous years. The most common sexually transmitted diseases in each Zoba are Gonorrhoea infection, Syphilis, and HIV/AIDS. According to the report, in Eritrea the people of all ages and sex are victimized by sexually transmitted diseases. For instance, in Zoba Anseba, The number of cases in Gonorrhoea infection in all ages and sex at the beginning of 1998 was 620. This figure gradually declined and finally reached up to only 8 cases in 2008. In case of Syphilis (Congenital syphilis, early Syphilis, and other Syphilis), the number of cases in all ages and genders in 1998 was 6. However, this number declined to zero level in 2008 (HMIS), while in case of HIV/AIDS, the number of cases in Zoba Anseba in 1998 was 27 only. But with the passage of time the number of cases increased particularly in 2006, when it reached at maximum level of 236 cases. But from this onwards, the number of cases drastically declined and in 2008 it reached to only 87 cases. The number of cases in other zobas has also the same trend.

Since the identification of HIV/AIDS in Eritrea for the first time in 1998 till now, the number of HIV/AIDS cases in the Hospitals and Health Centres are neither increasing nor decreasing continuously, but it is highly erratic. Say for instance, from 1988 to 2000, the number of cases was 2,012 throughout the country. From 2001 to 2003, the number of cases increased and it reached to 3,370, and between 2004 to 2006 it reached to 3,580, the maximum then onwards the number of cases started decreasing and between 2007 to 2009, it declined to only 1,046 cases and in 2010, it reached to 965. The total number of cases since beginning until 2010 was 10,973 (HMIS), Fig. 2

**Cases Reportage of HIV/AIDS in the Hospitals and Health Centers (1998-2010)**



**Fig. 2**



## DEATHS REPORTAGE OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES IN ERITREA

According to the reports of Health Centers, before 1998, particularly Gonorrhoea and Syphilis were more common in Eritrea and many people died of these diseases. However, since 1998, the Ministry of Health started surveying about these diseases. As a result many people cured and ultimately both the rate of infection as well as the deaths declined. In some Zobas these diseases totally disappeared. Syphilis instance especially congenital Syphilis in Zoba Maekel reached at zero level (Ministry of Health 1998).

Since the identification of HIV/AIDS for the first time in Eritrea in 1998, a total of 2,164 deaths were reported in the hospitals and health centers. The cumulative AIDS epidemic in the country has so far reached to 2,838. The average annual AIDS deaths reported are about 230 in a year. As this report is a health facility based report, it shows only the iceberg of the epidemic, but is useful for planning purposes and support needs of HIV/AIDS infected people. In the first six months of 2008, a total of 125 people died of AIDS, as it is shown in the given table-I.

**Table I**  
**Number of AIDS deaths reported from different zones and referral hospitals**  
**(January 1998-June 2008).**

Zones	Number of Deaths caused by AIDS	Per cent
Anseba	09	7.2
Debab	11	8.8
Southern Red Sea	07	5.6
Gash Barka	01	0.8
Middle Zone	59	47.2
Northern Red Sea	05	04
National Referral Hospital	33	26.4
Total	125	100

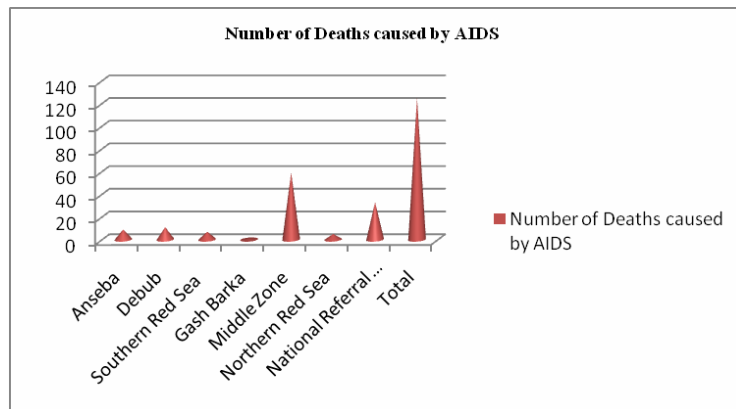
**Source: NATCOD**

The above table shows that the highest AIDS deaths were reported from the middle zone which was 59 followed by Asmara where 33 deaths were reported from the National referral hospital. But this does not mean that all the AIDS deaths were from the middle zone only as many patients from other zones are formally or self referred to Asmara to get better services. The lowest AIDS deaths reported are from Gash Barka and Northern Red Sea zone i.e. 1 and 5 respectively. The remaining Zobas like Zoba Debub, Zoba Anseba, and Southern Red Sea zone, AIDS deaths were 11, 09, and 07 respectively. Fig 3. It clearly shows that a number of people lost their lives because of sexually transmitted diseases which led to sterility, deaths of children and their mothers, ectopic pregnancies etc. (NATCOD June 2008).

## A CASE STUDY OF HIV/AIDS IN ZOBA MAEKEL

Zoba Maekel is one of the six zones of Eritrea. It is the central zone of Eritrea, in which Asmara, the capital city is located. It lies between 15° 6' 59" to 15° 35' 11" north latitude and 38° 41' 33" to 39° 2' 9" east longitude. In terms of area it is the smallest of all zones. This Zoba is characterized with fantastic weather condition. In fact, weather is the strongest and most attractive factor for the arrival of the tourists throughout the year. Asmara city is worldwide recognized as it is a planned city which has a high care of sanitation of streets, friend and frank relationship of the natives with the foreigners. Culturally, Eritrea is highly appreciated by the foreigners, especially tourists. This country is known for its fantastic security situation for the foreigners. Thus, many factors, i.e, security, hospitality of the people and of course the wonderful weather conditions together are enough for the tourists to visit the capital city-Asmara. As a result, the sex workers are fully encouraged in this region. This condition led towards the prevalence of HIV/AIDS infections, Fig.4

### Zoba wise number of deaths caused by AIDS (January 1998-June 2008)



Source: NATCOD

Fig. 3

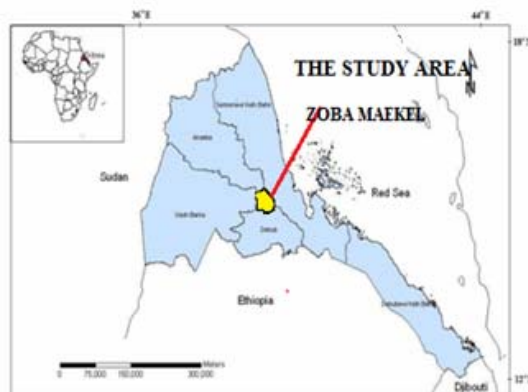


Fig.4

So far as the spatial distribution of HIV/AIDS in Eritrea is concerned, no doubt, it varies from one zone to the other. Say for instance, in comparison with other zones, Zoba Maekel is the most vulnerable for the HIV/AIDS infection. According to the statistical information (HMIS), Zoba Maekel has the highest and devastating risk of growth rate of infection since 1998-2008. At the beginning in 1998, the number of AIDS patient was only 38. But just after a year, it rose to 220. This was surprising of infection growth rate, with an increase of almost hundred in each year. In 2005, it reached at the maximum level of 1,502. However, the infection rate of HIV/AIDS decreased in 2006 to 2008 and it reached to 1015, 544, and 225 respectively. As the data for the year 2009 and 2010 were not available, so the given data is the projected one (Personal observation and discussion with the medical officers), fig. 5

Based on the research report of (NAT COD) and Ministry of Health, out of 272 commercial sex workers of Asmara city, only 22 were HIV positive. According to this study HIV infection rate in commercial sex workers were found to be 8.08 per cent. In addition, this study also reveals the HIV prevalence in prisoners and high school students, the rate of infections were 2 per cent and 0 per cent respectively.

To generalize the distribution of sexually transmitted diseases infection in Zoba Maekel at the initial stage, especially in HIV/AIDS infection it was in the bad condition, but later, it shows encourageable decrease because of the effective preventive measures, (table II).

**Table II**  
**Yearly Reports of HIV/AIDS in Zoba Maekel (2001-2010)**

Year	Reported No. of HIV/AIDS Patients	Per cent
001	490	8.20
002	487	8.15
003	646	10.81
004	810	13.55
005	1502	25.14
006	1015	16.99
007	544	9.10
008	225	3.75
009	130 (Projected figure)	2.17
010	125 (Projected figure)	2.09
Total	5974	100

**Source:** Health Management Information System, Asmara

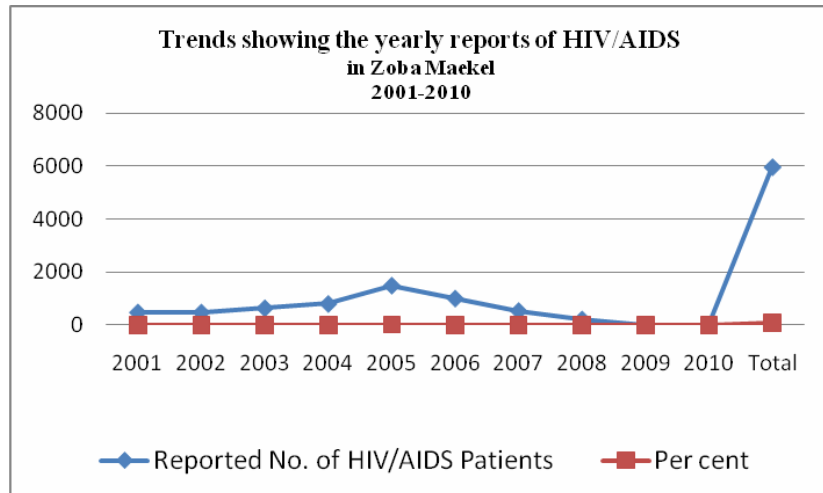


Fig. 5

## CONCLUSION

The above study reveals that among the sexually transmitted diseases in Eritrea, the most dominant curable diseases are Syphilis and Gonorrhoea, whereas HIV/AIDS is still considered as incurable. In fact, in the beginning the growth rate of infection was very high due to various reasons, such as lack of appropriate knowledge and awareness about such diseases in the society, lack of health care facilities and absence of counseling and test centres. But later on the growth rate of infection declined rapidly as a result of growing public awareness, increasing rate of literacy, and establishment of different organizations for educating the people about such diseases. For example, deaths through HIV/AIDS in 1998 were 4 per cent and in 2008, within a decade it reduced to 2.8 per cent in Eritrea. In the same way in Zoba Maekel in 1998, 59 deaths were caused by AIDS, but in 2008 death level reduced to almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> and reached to only 21 deaths. If we compare the whole country with Zoba Maekel in terms of growth rate of HIV/AIDS infection and number of deaths caused by AIDS, we find that in both the cases, Zoba Maekel out numbers all the Zobas on the one hand and the country as a whole on the other hand. The reason why Zoba Maekel is more affected than the other parts is because of the culture of the country in general and frankness and open-mindedness of the people about the sex in particular in Zoba Maekel. Besides, higher incidence of poverty and above all maximum arrival of foreign tourists in Zoba Maekel are the other strongest factors. However, in order to check the higher incidence of HIV/AIDS infection, strongest preventive measures are required. In Eritrea, the most important preventive measures adopted are known as ABC strategies in which

- A- Refers to abstinence from sex
- B- Being faithful with uninfected partner and the third option
- C- Condom

In short, it can be concluded that among the sexually transmitted diseases in Eritrea, Gonorrhoea and Syphilis are almost controlled, whereas in case of HIV/AIDS, only the number of cases and deaths has been reduced at appreciable level.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

With regard to the above findings, the important recommendations for further prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS are as follows:

- Public education in relation to sexually transmitted diseases should be emphasized.
- Government should not relax with good results of declined number of cases and deaths.
- Establishment of Organizations should be encouraged.
- Marriage legality should be approved only after blood testing.
- Periodical check up of sex workers should be made compulsory, and lastly
- Great material and moral support should be given to the sexually transmitted diseases centres by the Government

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## ARCHAEOLOGY BEFORE HISTORY AROUND KARDI, DISTRICT BOUDH, CENTRAL ORISSA

Daitari Sahoo

*This paper is the outcome of an intensive and systematic archaeological exploration in and around Kardi area of Boudh district on the Middle Mahanadi Valley of Central Orissa. The systematic investigation in the said area carried out under the auspices of the P.G Department of Anthropology (Prehistoric Archaeology Branch), Utkal University during January 2003 has resulted in the discovery of nine sites with various antiquities from Stone Age to Early Historic periods suggesting the archaeological potential of the region. Out of these nine sites, six sites have yielded a good number of Mesolithic artefacts, two sites have yielded a few specimens of Neoliths, and one site has yielded an interesting protohistoric implement on horn or antler. Various early historic elements such as remains of ceramics, terracotta objects, and iron objects of different shapes and forms have been collected from four sites out of the entire sites discovered. Besides, a peculiar copper figurine has also been collected from a site out of the four early historic sites. Here the present author has made an integrated attempt to summarize the discoveries from the sites of the study area.*

### INTRODUCTION

The district Boudh, located in the central part of Orissa is widely known for its ancient historic to early medieval archaeological remains (Banerjee 1931; Panigrahi 1981; Mohapatra 1986). It derives its name from its headquarter town Boudh that contains a statue of Buddha sitting on a lotus throne in *Bhumisparsa mudra*. Besides that, the region has great importance for its archaeological remains and relics of Buddhism, Tantric Buddhism, Vaisnavism, Saivism and Saktism. It is famous for its early historic urban centre of Manamunda (Banerjee 1929; Mohanty and Mishra 1998:215), the twin temples of Gandharadi or Hari-Hara dedicated to Nilamadhava and Siddheswara near the village Jagati, the temples of lord Dadhibamana and lord Suvarnameru in Manamunda proper, goddess Bhairabi of Purunakatak, Nikpada Cave at Talbahal as well as the seat of the Bhanjas of Khinjali Mandal, the subordinate to the Bhauma Karas (Senapati and Kuanr 1983, Mohapatra 1986).

The prehistoric research in the region was initiated by G.C. Mohapatra during the early 1960s with a discovery of one early Stone Age site on the river Mahanadi at Tikrapada located to the north east of the district Boudh. His collection from the site included a solitary early stone age tool found embedded in the gravel deposits of the exposed cliff section on the left bank of the river Mahanadi (Mohapatra 1962:50). Afterwards from 1970s for systematic research the district attracted the attention of scholars like K.C. Tripathy (1972) and S.B. Ota (1982-83, 1986). As far as the early historic culture is concerned, the district also got little attention (Banerji 1929; Behera 1992) and the early mediaeval period (Beglar 1875-76; Banerji 1929; Donaldson 1985; Mahapatra 1986). A broad outline of the archaeological heritage of the district recently has been mentioned with interesting discoveries from Mesolithic to Early Historic

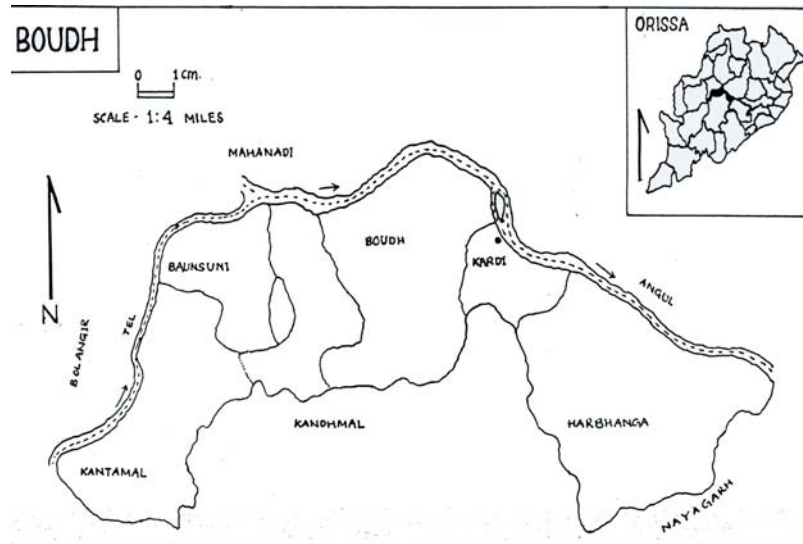
period (Dash 1985:102-129; Ota 1986:47-45; Tripathy 1996-97: 42-54, 2000:392-417; Behera 2000-01: 13-34, 2002:493-532). Besides the archaeological and historical potential of the region has mentioned in the accounts of foreign travellers in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Watters 1988) which reveals about the trade contact and mineral deposit of the region in ancient India (Majumdar 1927). The Kautilya's famous Arthashastra (500 B.C.) has identified one of the important rivers the Tel as Telavaha in the region and mentioned about its importance in ancient India (Kangle 1965:115). In comparison to the research in historical periods in macro area approach, not much emphasis has been given on the archaeology before history attributed to the remains of prehistoric, protohistoric and early historic cultural traditions in micro area approach in the area.

### THE REGION

The Central Orissa consists of the area covered by Boudh, Kandhamal (Phulbani), Dhenkanal and Angul districts. Geographically, the recently formed district of Boudh is located in the central zone of Orissa and lies between 20<sup>o</sup> 22' 00" to 20<sup>o</sup> 54' 00" Northern latitudes and 83<sup>o</sup> 34' 00" to 84<sup>o</sup> 34' 00" Eastern longitudes (Figure-1 & Figure 2). It covers an area of 3456 sq. km. and is bounded by the Mahanadi and Angul district in the North, the districts of Nayagarh and Cuttack in the East, Sonepur (Suvarnapur) and Bolangir in the West,



**Fig.-1: Map of Orissa**



**Fig.-2: Map of Boudh District.**

and Phulbani in the South. The river Mahanadi and its major tributaries like the Tel, Bagh, Salunki and their numerous small streams, considerably drain the district. Physiographically, the entire region consists of two parts—(i) Riverine Plain drained by the Mahanadi and its numerous tributaries and (ii) Hilly Zones in the frontier of the district. The region is formed by the northernmost extremities of the Eastern Ghats and has an average elevation of 130 m. to 150 m. a.M.S.L. In this area the hills and mountains are mostly distributed with vegetation of either dry or moist deciduous type of forest characterized by Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and Teak (*Tectona grandis*) interrupted type vegetation belong to Eastern Ghats Characteristic features.

Geologically the district Boudh lies within the Deccan plateau to the west of the Eastern Ghats. The lithostratigraphic components of the region are khondalite, leptynite, charnokite, cataclases, biotite granite-gneiss of Archean formation with the intrusive veins mainly of milky quartz and pegmatite. The Gondwana formation occurs in the form of shales and sandstones in patches. Besides the above lithic units, quartz, chert, chalcedony are also found in the region as veins. The Pleistocene to recent geological formations in the area is laterite, alluvium and soil. The former in forms of porous and pitted laterite occurs extensively capping almost all the hills as well as on the plains of the district. The latter alluvium and soil varies in colours from light grey to brown and is a product of disintegration and weathering of khondalite, charnokite and biotite-gneiss. Red soil, locally known as 'Rangamati' or 'Geru', is overlying the deposit of primary laterite in most of the areas of the district. So far as the 'gem stone belt' is concerned the district of Boudh as graced with two belts namely, Manamunda-Sagada (16 km) comprising mostly of aquamarine and rose quartz, pegmatite and the Boudh-Kelakata tract (18 km) consists



of gem laden gravels. Gems that retrieved from the gravels comprise diamonds cat's eye, sapphire, alexandrite, ruby, star ruby, garnets, agate group of gem, topaz, moonstone, and other varieties.

Climatic points of view, the district comes under a tropical climate zone and characterized by four seasons: summer season (from March to May); south-west monsoon season (from June to September); short post-monsoon season (October to November) and the winter season (from December to February). Here the driest part of the year is summer when humidity goes below 30%. The average rainfall in this region is 1500mm per annum. May is the hottest and December the coldest month. Humidity is high in the south-west monsoon and post-monsoon months (Senapati and Kuanr 1983; Tripathy, 1996-97; 2000).

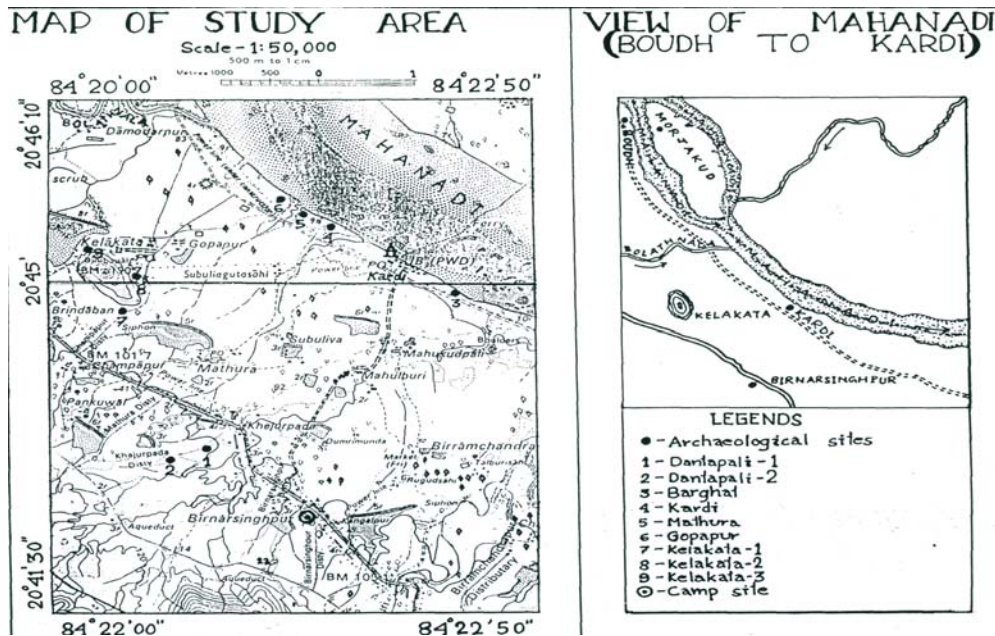
The area has a population of 3,73,372 according to 2001 Census and out of those 46,557 belong to scheduled tribes. The tribes of the district are the Gonds, Khonds, Kandha Gaudas, Kotia, and Saoras etc. whose prime occupation is hunting-gathering and shifting cultivation. The traditional culture has been well preserved amidst these tribal communities since time immemorial.

#### **PRESENT WORK:**

The twenty days of intensive survey in the area resulted in the discovery of nine sites pertaining to prehistoric and historic (Early Historic) evidences characterized by lithic tools, ceramics, terracotta relics, metal objects, and objects on faunal remains. The details of the study area and the located sites associated with their recoveries as well as plausible interpretations are given in following lines. However, this account of analysis and interpretation of archaeological data collected from the study area is made through proper comparison and correlation with the previously reported sites and the recoveries of antiquities from such localities of the mid Mahanadi valley as well as from other parts and neighbouring areas respectively in and outside the state of Orissa.

#### **STUDY AREA AND ITS ENVIRONMENT:**

An archaeological survey was conducted in and around the neighbouring localities of Bimarshingpur and Kardi village area between the 20° 41' 30" Northern latitude to 20° 46' 10" Northern latitude and 84° 22' 00" Eastern latitude to 84° 22' 50" Eastern latitude (of the topo sheet No 73 D/5 and 73 D/6 Survey of India, Scale 1:50,000) in the district of Boudh, Central Orissa (Figure-3). The present survey was concentrated in an area extended up to (6.75 X 4.85) sq. km. around the said localities. The area is situated about 8 km. to the southeast of the district headquarters Boudh town. It lies in the northernmost extremities of Eastern Ghats at the altitudes between 100m to 120m a.M.S.L. The benchmarks of the area are found to be located at Champapur (101.7m) and Birnarsinghpur (105.1m).



**Fig-3: Map of Study Area with a not to scale view of the river Mahanadi from Boudh to Kardi.**

The Mahanadi River bound the area on the north-north west, Kelakata, Pankuwal village areas on the west, the localities of Birnarsinghpur, Birramchandrapur village areas and its backdrop Dantapalli forested area on the south and by Mahakudpali and Birramchandrapur localities on the west. The area is significantly marked with a hilly, mountainous forests and eroded land to its south and south west in one hand and the narrow alluvial tract along the right bank of the river Mahanadi and the drained basin of the Mahanadi itself to the north-north east on the other. Most important hillock in the area is Bhimpabali (otherwise known as Kelakata Pahada). It has been observed from the survey that the area is considerably drained by some known and unknown perennial and seasonal mountain streams on which a number of minor irrigation projects are constructed. They originate from the south and southwesterly-located high lands and run to meet the mighty river the Mahanadi.

The archaeological exploration in the area was intended giving much emphasis on the pre and protohistoric relics and it was resulted in the discovery of prehistoric Mesolithic sites with abundant microliths of various types, protohistoric and early historic antiquities from different localities. The sites having archaeological importance located in the study area have been named after the name of important villages and localities near by.

#### **LOCATION OF SITES:**

The present surface investigation in the study area resulted in the discovery of nine archaeological sites and the details about their archaeological importance as follows:

### **1. BARGHAT:**

The site is located in the right bank of the Mahanadi about 300m to the east of Kardi village. It is an extensive habitation mound just above the right bank of the river at the sloped tract to the Barghat bathing place of the locality. The approximate size of the site is (90x45) sq. m. There is a big banyan tree at the site and the site is called as such after this tree. A good number of pottery remains of different types of wares and matrix and only one unidentified copper figurine recovered from this site.

### **2. KARDI:**

The site of Kardi is located on the right bank of the river Mahanadi. It is situated about 1 km. to the North West of present Kardi village and close to the revenue area of Mathura village. There is a mound of ancient habitation dotted with some kinds of indigenous plants. It is found to be highly distributed with various ceramic remains and other terracotta and iron objects at its different directions and mostly on the eroded slopes at its south-to-south-western fringe. The wide distribution of ceramic remains found at different directions at the site suggests that there was an extensive early historic settlement. The surface survey in the site has yielded different types of ceramic remains including parts of various pots, lids and different terracotta objects as well as some iron objects. From this place, antiquities have been collected by means of the grid layout method by segmenting a patch of highly concentrated area (10x7) sq. m in the site into 70(1x1) sq. m equal square grids and accordingly materials have been collected grid wise.

### **3. KELAKATA-1:**

The site is located on the southwestern foothills of Kelalata Pahada (Bhimpabali) near Aravindo Purnanga Sikshya Kendra of Mathura revenue village. The site is extended up to an area about (200x150) sq. m. It is highly disturbed due to the recent earth quarrying in the localities. However, the sections formed by quarrying of earth provide the information about geological deposit and occupational layer. An exposed section has been recorded from this site. A few microliths have been discovered from the implementiferous deposit of the said section. To the north and west, the site is dotted with huge knobs of granites and charnokites (weathered sandstones). At places, microliths have been found distributed and associated with brown silt soil mixed with fine quartz pellets deposit. Microliths are scattered over exposed surface. Altogether 96 microliths including both shaped tool and simple artifacts have been collected at the site. The simple artifacts comprise 05 flake core, 04 fluted core, 01 worked nodule, 01 blade core, 07 simple flakes, 27 end flakes, 08 side flakes, 01 chip, 04 simple blades, 04 double sided blades, 01 broken blade, and the shaped tools include 02 utilized blades, 02 backed blades, 01 side scraper, 05 side cum end scrapers, 01 round scraper, 02 notches, 01 borer, 01 burin and 01 lunate.

#### **4. KELAKATA-2:**

The site is located on the eastern foothills of the Bhimpabali hillock. The village Kelakata is located close to the north of the site. The landmass of the area is highly eroded and distributed with khondalite gravels and grits. At places, microliths have been found distributed over exposed surface and associated with brown silt soil mixed with fine quartz pellets deposit. A few microliths and a fragment of a Neolithic implement have been yielded from the area. Altogether 14 numbers of microliths have been collected from the site that includes 01 flake core, 04 fluted cores, 01 worked nodule, 02 simple flakes, 06 end flakes.

#### **5. KELAKATA-3:**

The site is located on the northwestern foothills of the Bhimpabali hillock and close to the eastern bank of the Kelakata Minor Irrigation Project. It has a rocky undulated landmass and sloped towards the Kelakata MIP. The site is extended up to an area about (300x150) sq.m. Moreover, it is found to be highly eroded and distributed with khondalite gravels and grits due to degradation of surface soil. At places in the site, microliths have been found distributed over exposed surface and associated with brown silt soil mixed with fine quartz pellets deposit. Altogether 59 microliths including 02 flake cores, 22 blade cores, 04 simple flakes, 03 end flakes, 07 side flakes, 02 utilized flakes, 05 simple blades, and 14 chips have been collected from the site.

#### **6. DANTAPALI-1:**

The site is an open area located inside the forested land of Dantapali hill near the Laxmi Narayan Banashrama. It is situated on the right bank of a mountain stream that has originated from the Bankamundi Reserve Forest and merged with the Mahanadi to the north of Hatgan. The site is dotted with indigenous plants found in the locality. Altogether 43 numbers of microliths have been collected from the site that includes 01 worked nodule, 03 blade cores, 08 simple flakes, 09 end flakes, 03 side flakes, 05 chips, 01 backed blade, 02 side scrapers, 01 end scraper, 01 side cum end scraper, and 01 notch.

#### **7. DANTAPALI-2:**

The site is located inside the village forest of the Dantapali hill. It is situated about 500m to the west of the site Dantapali-1. It is an eroded landmass distributed with calcareous kankars and pebbles of quartz and quartzite. Altogether 38 number of microliths have been collected from the site which include 01 worked nodule, 05 flake cores, 01 blade core, 01 simple flake, 11 end flakes, 04 side flakes, 04 chips, 05 simple blades, 01 scraper, 01 side scraper, 02 end scraper, 01 round scraper, and 01 lunate.

#### **8. GOPAPUR:**

The site is located on the right bank of the Mahanadi and about 2km to the northwest of the Kardi village. The area is dotted with elevated lands cultivated with red grams. There are some indigenous plants are also found around the site. A good number of pottery fragments of

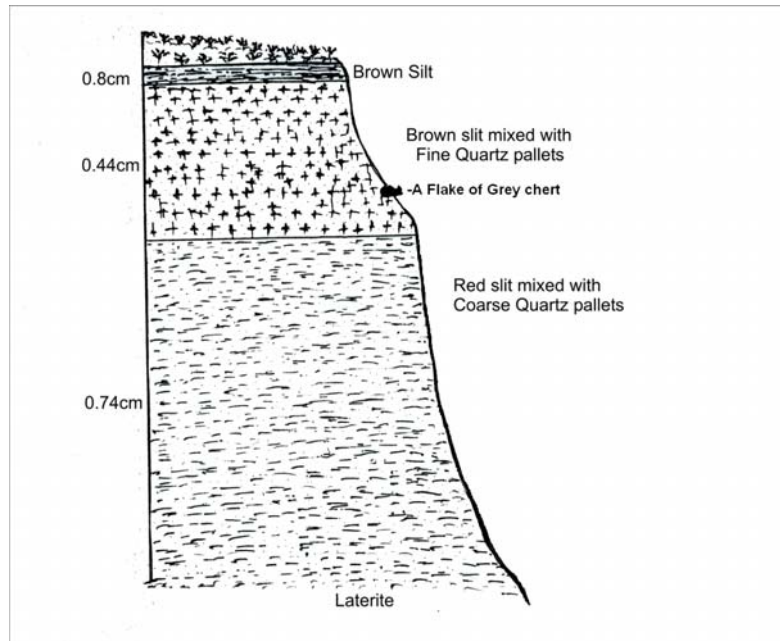
various colours and shapes were found to be scattered over the site. In addition to this, the site was found to be sparsely distributed with different types of microliths. Altogether 22 microliths and a few representative samples of ceramic remains have yielded from the surface survey in the site. The microliths, which have been yielded from the site, included 03 worked pebbles, 01 flake core, 01 blade core, 05 simple flakes, 03 end flakes, 02 utilized flakes, and 07 chips.

#### **9. MATHURA:**

The site is located on the right bank of the river Mahanadi about 1 km to the north west of the village Kardi. It is a fallow land extended up to an area approximately (500x250) sq.m. The area is dotted with some indigenous plants found around the locality. The surface soil of the locality is composed of fine silt-clay and grey in colours. Various types of potsherds and some unidentified terracotta remains are found to be scattered on the surface of the entire site. The wide distribution of ceramic remains and remains of terracotta objects found at different directions at the site suggest that there was an extensive early historic settlement in the past. Numerous ceramic remains and a few remains of terracotta objects have been collected from the site. The terracotta remains in the collection from the site are mainly characterized by red ware, black and red ware, and black polished ware etc. A beautiful tanged-point on horn or antler presumably an implement of protohistoric period losing its context has been collected from the right bank river terrace of the Mahanadi at the site. In addition to that, only two Neolithic artifacts (including a complete chisel and a broken piece of the same type tool) have also been discovered from a rain gully, deeply eroded towards the Mahanadi.

#### **STRATIGRAPHY:**

To understand the geochronology of the Mesolithic culture in the area an attempt was made to study a section facing west exposed measuring 1.26m at a deep cut moorum quarry at the site of Kelakata-1. From top to bottom in the section a three-fold stratigraphy have been recorded with its metric and depositional variations. The topmost layer, Layer-1 is composed of brown silt clay soil of 0.8m. thick; Layer-2, composed of the brown silt soil mixed with fine quartz pellets of 0.44m. thick is an implementiferous layer that has been yielded a significant Mesolithic artifact. This implementiferous layer-2 is found to rest over the Layer-3 of 0.79 m. thick, which is composed of red silt mixed coarse quartz pellets and lateritized granules. The Mesolithic artifact, which has been found *in situ* from the layer-2, is a sizeable flake of grey chert retain with cortex and a previous flake scar on the obverse, and a flat surface characterised by a bulbar scar at its proximal end close to the striking platform on the reverse. Therefore, it is clear that the layer-2 (brown silt mixed with fine quartz pellets) is the occupational horizon of Mesolithic culture in the area (Figures-4).



**Fig. 4: A Stratigraphy (section facing west) studied at the site of Kelakata-1**

**CULTURE SEQUENCE:**

Giving much emphasis on the archaeological remains of Prehistoric to Early Historic periods an attempt has been made to establish the culture sequence of the area. Based on typotechnological and morph-functional analysis the entire antiquities collected from the surface of the study area may be categorized as of Prehistoric, Protohistoric, and Early Historic periods. The Prehistoric period include the Mesolithic culture and Neolithic culture in one hand and the Protohistoric period is evidenced with an object made of faunal remain like horn or antler on the other. Besides the remains of the Early Historic period consist of various secular artifacts like ceramic of different type, terracotta objects, metal objects.

**MESOLITHIC REMAINS:**

From the present survey, altogether 273 Mesolithic remains characterized by simple and shaped artifacts have been collected from the six sites. Almost all the Mesolithic sites in the area have yielded microliths characterized by worked nodules, flake cores, blade cores, flakes, chips, scrapers, blades, points, burins, borers, notches and lunate. This suggests that both non-geometric and geometric forms of microliths were produced during the Mesolithic period for various functional purposes. These microliths are generally made of cryptocrystalline and crystalline rocks of opaque, translucent in nature, and characterized by chert of different shades, quartzite, jasper, agate, chalcedony, and carnelian as well as mineral like quartz (Figures-5). The microlithic industry of the area is found to dominate by core, flake, and blade. Site and type

wise distribution of discovered microlithic artefacts and distribution of raw materials used for the production of such microliths are given in the following tables (Table-1 & Table-2).

It has been observed that various flakes and blade flakes were primarily made out of selected cores of different rocks by means of pressure flaking and fluting techniques. Then all these flake blanks and blade-flake blanks were converted into different type tools by means of techniques of secondary working or retouching either in unifacial or in bifacial manners. The microlithic industry and the typologies from the study area can be compared with sites reported already earlier from the same region (Ota 1982-83, 1986:47-45; Tripathy 1996-97:42-54, 2000:392-417).



**Fig. 5: Mesolithic remains (various types of microliths) of different sites around Kardi Area.**

#### **NEO LITHIC REMAINS:**

Altogether only three Neolithic artifacts have been yielded from the two sites like Mathura and Kelakata-2 out of the nine sites surveyed in the study area. The sites, which have evidenced the Neolithic remains, are significantly located on the right bank of the Mahanadi. While a complete chisel of fully chipped, partially pecked and ground variety and a fragment of the similar type tool have been collected from the site of Mathura (**Figure-6**); the site of Kelakata-

2 has yielded the remnant of the body part of a similar type that of found from the site of Mathura. All these three are made of dolerite rock, a kind of raw material chiefly used for manufacturing of different Neolithic tool types. Typological point of view, the complete chisel that is found from Mathura has a trapezoidal general shape having a bibevelled, straight, and medial working edge as well as a quadrilateral butt end. The tool type has a rectangular cross-section and an oblong longitudinal section. From the kin examination of the Neolithic remains of the area, it has been derived that the types were fashioned by applying flaking-chipping, pecking, and grinding stages of the Neolithic manufacturing technique. The tool types found from the study area have typo-technological similarities with the similar kind of artifacts have already been reported from the sites around Banei of Sundargarh (Behera 2000:222-263, 2001:13-34); Pallahada of Angul (Basa *et al* 2000:265-284) in the central northern regions of Orissa.



**Fig.6: Neolithic artifacts (a complete chisel & two fragmentary of the similar type tool) from surface survey around kardi area.**

**PROTO HISTORIC REMAINS:**

A typical tanged point made up of horn or antler has been found from the site called Mathura (particularly from the bottom of the right bank terrace of the Mahanadi). The tanged point has two parts – the smooth conical pointed end and the unpolished narrow tanged. The tip of the point is broken. However, the total length of the point is 5.5 cm. (length of tang 2 cm. and pointed body 3.5 cm.) (**Figure-7**). The object found from the site has close similarity with the bone tanged point found from the site of Khambeswaripali-P.IB of Suvarnapur district in the Middle Mahanadi valley, Orissa (Behera 2002:493-520) ; from the explored region between Kolaghat and Haladia and certain point up to Contal on the right bank of the river Rupnarayan in Midnapore, West Bengal (in course of explorations conducted by the Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre, Tamruk under the guidance of Dr K.P. Sen Gupta, Secretary of the Centre) ; from Periods I to III at the site of Chirand in Ranchi district of Bihar (Agarwal 1984:245-247) and in the Chalcolithic and the iron bearing horizon from the site of Pandurajar Dhibi in the Burdwan district of West Bengal (Dasgupta 1964; Banerjee 2000:97-98).





**Fig.-7: A typical tanged point made on horn / antler from Mathura.**

**EARLY HISTORIC REMAINS:**

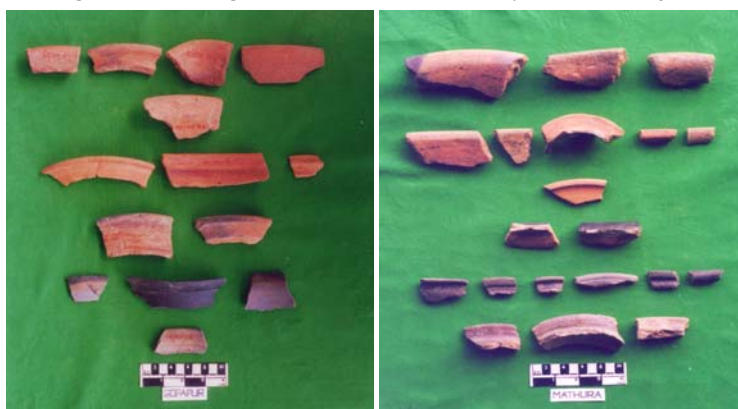
Out of nine sites, only four sites namely, Barghat, Gopapur Kardi, and Mathura have yielded Early Historic evidences. The early historic relics from these sites include various types of ceramic remains, terracotta remains and metal object.

**CERAMICS:**

The ceramic remains of the area include various shapes and forms of pots and vessels of dull red ware, red ware, black and red ware, black polished ware, ochre coloured pottery etc. (**Figure-8 a & b**). The forms of the ceramic remains include vessels like vase/*handi*, bowl, dish, basin, vase, lids.

**TERRACOTTA OBJECTS:**

The surface survey in and around Kardi has yielded the fragmented terracotta objects of various forms and colours found from four sites namely Bargath, Gopapur, Kardi, and Mathura. The terracotta remains includes lid of different shapes, lid shafts, smoke stands, toy wheel, hoptchcos/ discs, leg of animal figurine and unidentified cylindrical objects (**Figure-8 c & d**).



**(a) Potsherds from Gopapur. (b) Potsherds from Mathura.**



(c) Fragmented terracotta objects from Kardi. (d) Fragmented terracotta objects and potsherds from Mathura.

Figure-8: Potsherds and fragmented terracotta objects from surface survey around Kardi Area.

**METAL OBJECTS:**

A few metal objects have been discovered and collected from the surface survey in four sites, namely Barghat, Gopapur, Kardi, and Mathura in the study area (Figure-9). The metal objects in the collection include an interesting female figurine made of copper from the site of Barghat and five number of highly corroded iron objects comprising two pieces of iron nails from Gopapur, 02 pieces of iron nails from Kardi and a half of 01 iron ring from Mathura.



Figure-9: Metal objects from surface survey around Kardi.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Afore said accounts of the archaeological investigation in and around the localities of Kardi village area in Boudh district, Central Orissa apparently reveals the evidences of early adaptation to the area by the Mesolithic final hunter-gatherers; subsequently Neolithic food producing incipient agriculturists and early farming village communities as well having permanent settlement had occupied the area. Finally, the early historic colonization had been there in the Middle Mahanadi valley of central Orissa. These archaeological evidences suggest a settled population, which evolved culturally from lithic to metal age or successive occupation of this area by people with different material culture, subsistence and stages of technology over producing incipient agriculturists and early farming village communities having permanent settlement as well had occupied the area; a considerable span of time. If any copper resources are not located near by, the figurine made of copper may suggest use of the material and trade with neighbouring areas.

The absolute absence of early Stone Age tools from the survey in the area beside microliths refers to the prehistoric colonization in this natural region of the Boudh started since the post Pleistocene changes. The stratigraphic evidence of implementiferous layer of Mesolithic period - Layer-2, composed of the brown silt soil mixed with fine quartz pebbles over the Pleistocene detritus lateritic deposit at Kelakata-1 strengthens the said view. However, the Neolithic artefacts including only a complete chisel of fully chipped, partially pecked and ground variety from the site of Mathura and a few fragments of the similar type tool one from the site of Mathura and another from the site of Kelakata-2 are the testimonials of the existence of a food producing Neolithic tradition in the study area. A typical tanged point made up of horn or antler which is a diagnostic component of the protohistoric periods in eastern India, from the site called Mathura (particularly from the bottom of the right bank terrace of the Mahanadi) having close similarity with the bone tanged point found from the site of Khambeswaripali-P. IB of Suvarnapur district in the Middle Mahanadi valley, Orissa (Behera 2002:493-520); from the explored region on the right bank of the river Rupnarayan in Midnapore, West Bengal (in course of explorations conducted by the Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre, Tamluk under the guidance of Dr K.P. Sen Gupta, Secretary of the Centre); from Periods I to III at the site of Chirand of Bihar (Agarwal 1984:245-247) and in the Chalcolithic and the iron bearing horizon from the site of Pandurajar Dhibi of West Bengal (Dasgupta 1964; Banerjee 2000:97-98) suggests the presence of a protohistoric settlement elsewhere in the study area.

The association of early historic ceramics and metal objects (highly corroded iron objects) in the uppermost silt clay soil deposit in fact also reveals that the technologically advanced early historic people occupied the area during the recent times. Though it is difficult to give an absolute date to the early historic occupation but the relative dating with a kin comparison of ceramic remains, terracotta and iron objects earlier reported from other neighbouring areas of the region like Belpunji in Angul district, Kartang, Pankital, Tenda, Khajeripali, Hikudi, Khambeswaripali, Kumershingha and Nuagarh in Subarnapur district, and Jamtangi, Tentulipali, Maryakud, Krishnamohanpur, Karadi, Hatgaon, Pargalpur, Dholpur, Manamunda, Manmaunda -II and Gabjuri in Boudh district (Behera 2000-2001:13-31) one can reach at a conclusion that the post Pleistocene adaptation by the hunting gathering Mesolithic people of the area with the

ravages of time gradually tended to transformation towards a food producing permanent settled village community and the early historic colonization in the middle Mahanadi Valley. Further it was because of the conducive environment with full of resources for hunting gathering, food producing and early trade route in the hills and forest bounded alluvial plains as well as a navigable drainage basin of the great Mahanadi river system.

Thus, the present survey yielding various cultural relics would help to solve the problem of an important aspect of Archaeology of Orissa 'bridging the gap between the Pre-historic and early historic periods'.

**Table-1: Site and type wise distribution of Microliths from surface around Kardi.**

Types of Artifacts	.....Sites.....						Total	
	Kelakata-1	Kelakata-2	Kelakata-3	Dantapali-1	Dantapali-2	Gopapur	N	%
Worked pebble	—	—	—	—	—	03	03	01.09
Worked nodule	01	01	—	01	01	—	04	01.46
Flake core	05	01	02	—	05	01	14	05.12
Blade core	05	04	22	03	01	01	36	13.18
Simple flake	07	02	04	08	01	05	27	09.89
Utilized flake	01	—	02	01	—	02	06	02.19
Side flake	08	—	07	03	04	—	22	08.05
End flake	27	06	03	09	11	03	59	21.61
Chips	17	—	14	05	05	07	48	17.58
Simple blade	04	—	05	04	05	—	18	06.59
Utilized blade	02	—	—	—	—	—	02	00.73
Double sided - blade	04	—	—	—	—	—	04	01.46
Backed blade	02	—	—	01	—	—	03	01.09
Broken blade	01	01	—	03	—	—	05	01.83
Side scraper	01	—	—	02	01	—	04	01.45
End scraper	—	—	—	01	02	—	03	01.09
Side-cum-end scraper	05	—	—	01	—	—	06	02.19
Round scraper	01	—	—	—	01	—	02	00.73
Notch	02	—	—	01	—	—	03	01.09
Borer	01	—	—	—	—	—	01	00.36
Burin	01	—	—	—	—	—	01	00.36
Lunate	01	—	—	—	01	—	02	00.73
<b>Total No.</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>99.97</b>
%								

**Table-2: Site and type wise distribution of raw materials of Microliths from surface around Kardi.**

Types of Raw materials	.....Sites.....						Total	
	Kelakata-1	Kelakata-2	Kelakata-3	Dantapali-1	Dantapali-2	Gopapur	N	%
Agate	19	03	07	09	04	01	43	15.5
Black chert	03	–	06	01	–	–	10	03.66
Brown chert	10	01	02	05	04	05	25	09.15
Carnelian	01	–	–	02	–	–	03	01.09
Chalcedony	–	01	01	01	02	–	05	01.83
Cherty quartzite	11	01	09	–	04	03	28	10.25
Grey chert	42	08	27	14	16	05	112	41.02
Jasper	03	–	05	01	02	01	12	04.39
Milky quartz	–	–	–	–	01	–	01	00.36
Pitted chert	–	–	–	01	–	–	01	00.36
Quartz	06	–	02	05	04	03	20	07.32
Quartzite	01	–	–	02	01	02	06	02.19
Unidentified	–	01	–	–	–	02	03	1.09
Weathered chert	–	–	–	02	–	–	02	0.73
<b>Total No.</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>99.97</b>
%								

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## **STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN UNORGANISED SECTOR OF ODISHA: A CASE STUDY**

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*Education plays a vital role in raising the socio-economic status of women workers in the informal sector. In most of the developing countries, a very high proportion of female employment is absorbed by the informal sector. Women who are engaged in skilled work are to be found in low paid jobs like tailoring, weaving, embroidery and food production. In agriculture and construction industry women often do much of the unskilled labour on the whole, women earn less than men. In this context it is necessary to raise the literacy status of women workers through female education, non formal education and training.*

*The objective of this paper is to assess the literacy status of girls and women in informal sector of Odisha. Keeping in view the objective of the study a sample survey was conducted in district like Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Cuttack and Puri. Hundred (100) women from each district were randomly selected and supplied with structured questionnaire pertaining to their availability of educational facilities implemented by the Government of Odisha. In Odisha different schemes like National Literacy Mission, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Saakshar Bharat Mission for female literacy are launched to ensure literacy measures at state level. But everywhere, they are deprived of various literacy measures which are available in organised sector.*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Education holds the key to the progress of an individual and is the most important intervention for social transformation. Education along with health and nutrition is a very strong instrument for human resource development. Therefore, the degree of women's participation in social economic and political life largely depend upon her educational status. In the context of women's development, it is necessary to study women's education from different angle formal, non-formal etc. Women have a much lower literacy rate than men. Far fewer girls are enrolled in the Schools and many of them drop out. According to report of 1998 by U.S, Department of Commerce, the chief barriers to female education in India are inadequate school facilities (such as sanitary facilities), shortage of female teachers and gender bias in curriculum (majority of the female characters being depicted as weak and helpless. Conservative cultural attitudes, especially among muslims, prevent some girls from attending school.

The number of literate women among the female population of India was between 2-6% from the British Raj onwards to the formation of the Republic of India in 1947. Concerted efforts led to improvement from 15.3% in 1961 to 28.5% in 1981. By 2001 literacy for women



had exceeded 50% of the overall female population, though these statistics were still very low compared to world standards and even male literacy within India. Recently the government of India has launched Saakshar Bharat Mission for female literacy. This mission aims to bring down female illiteracy by half of its present level.

### **IMPORTANCE OF GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION**

Gender inequality in education is extreme. Girls are less likely to access school, to remain in school or to achieve education. Education helps men and women claim their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Education plays an important role as a foundation for girls' development towards adult life.

Everybody has the right to education, which has been recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The right to free and compulsory primary education, without discrimination and of good quality, has been reaffirmed in all major international human rights conventions. Many of these same instruments encourage, but do not guarantee, Post Primary education. These rights have been further elaborated to address issues like quality and equity, moving forward the issue of what the right to education means and exploring how it can be achieved. As a minimum state must ensure the basic education is available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable for all. The right of girls to education is one of the most critical of all rights because education plays an important role in enabling girls and women to secure other rights.

Basic education provides girls and women with an understanding of basic health, nutrition and family planning, giving them choices and the power to decide over their own lives and bodies. Women's education promotes better reproductive health, improved family health, economic growth, for the family and for society as well as lower rates of child mortality and malnutrition.

Educating girls and women is an important tool for eradicating poverty since women comprise the majority of the population below the poverty line and are very often in situation of extreme poverty. In the present era, education is important to obtain gainful, productive and remunerative employment. The educational profile of workers reveal that the average years of education received by the workers in the unorganized sector (6.6 years) is about 3.5 years less than that received by workers in the organized sector (10.1 years). The gender difference in average year of education is striking – women received fewer years of schooling than men in all segments of the workforce. Casual workers are at the bottom of the educational ladder. Similarly, rural casual non-agricultural workers and rural agricultural workers have the lowest level of education and literacy.

## **WOMEN EDUCATION AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

In the developed world women have surpassed men at many levels of education. For example, in United States in 2005-2006, women earned 62% of Associate Degree, 58% of Bachelor's Degree, 60% of Master Degree and 50% of Doctorates. Education for women with handicaps has also improved in 2011. Giusi Spagnolo became the first woman with Downs syndrome to graduate college in Europe (She graduated from the University of Palermo in Italy). In the poorest countries of the world, 50% of girls do not attend Secondary School. But it has been estimated that every extra year of school for girls increases their lifetime income by 15%. Improving female education, and thus, women's earning potential, improves the standard of living for their own children, as women invest more of their income in their families than men do. Yet many obstacles prevail to girls' education.

In some African countries, such as Burkina Faso, girls are unlikely to attend school for such basic reasons as a lack of private latrine facilities for girls. In China, women were reluctant to be treated by male doctors of western medicine. This resulted in a tremendous need for female doctors of western medicine in China. Many Arab Countries like Saudi Arabia do not allow women to work but still there are separate schools and Universities for women. In Islam, women are allowed to be educated so that they can teach their children and if their husband passes away, they can then work so they and their families can survive in society. According to ILO (2001), in developing countries women tend to be less educated and trained than men or average their access to productive means and resources are more limited than men's and they spend less time during their lifetime to work in the labour market given the heavier family responsibilities that they carry than men (with the average number of children being high in many developing countries). There is, therefore, clear linkage between the inadequate quantity and quality (or decent work deficits) for women and their higher incidence of poverty, as compared to men.

### **INDIA LEVEL (Women Education)**

A high literacy rate especially of women correlates with improvement in several socio-economic indicators, namely low birth rate, low Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and increase in life expectancy. The recognition of this fact has created awareness on the need to focus on improving literacy and universalizing elementary education. The task of providing basic education to all was realized only after the introduction of National Policy of Education (NPE) in 1986 and revised in 1992.

Primary education was earlier a state matter under the cancellation but it has been brought under the concurrent list to enable both, the centre and state, to undertake measures to achieve universalization of primary education. The Supreme Court of India in the Unnikrishnan Case (1993), declared Primary education to be a fundamental right. The constitution (86<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Act, 2002 was enacted by the Parliament of India making education a fundamental right. The Right to Education Act was enacted in 2006 to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

With the world declaration on Education for All (EFA) adopted in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, basic education in all its facets – Early childhood care and Education (ECCE), Elementary Education, Education for Adolescents, Adult Education, Gender Equality and Quality improvement was recognized as a fundamental right of every citizen. The nation is firmly committed to provide Education for All, the priority areas being free and compulsory primary education, covering children with special needs, eradication of illiteracy, vocationalisation, education for women's equality, and special focus on the education of SCs/STs/OBCs and minorities.

Major programmes of the Department of Education are sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary level, Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh, National Institute of Open Schooling (NOS), Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Mahila Samakhya, National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day Meals), and other schemes which accord priority to areas of concentration of SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities.

The literacy rate has been going up steadily, and the Census of India (2001) revealed that while the total literacy rate was 65 per cent for women and girls, it was 54 per cent.

The literacy rate at the population aged 7 years and above in India is 75.85 per cent for male and 54.16 per cent for female by census 2001. Similarly in Odisha, it is 75.95 per cent for male and 50.97 per cent for female. The Gross Enrollment Ratio in India in the age group of 6-11 years for classes I – V is 14.42 per cent for boys and 107.84 per cent for girls. Similarly in the age group of 11-14 years for classes VI-VIII is 77.41 per cent for boys and 69.51 per cent for girls. For classes IX-XII in the age group of 14-18 years is 44.42 per cent for boys and 36.41 per cent for girls.

The School dropout rate for classes I-V is 24.4 per cent for boys and 26.6 per cent for girls. The dropout rate for classes I-VIII is 46.6 per cent for boys and 45.3 per cent for girls. Similarly, for classes I-X, 58.6 per cent for boys and 61.5 per cent for girls.

#### **EDUCATION AT STATE LEVEL**

Odisha has done reasonably well on the literacy front. The literacy in Odisha has increased 4 times from 15.80 per cent in 1951 to 63.08 per cent in 2001 whereas male literacy has increased 2.76 times from 27.32 per cent in 1951 to 75.35 per cent in 2001, female literacy has grown much faster i.e. (11-17 times) from 4.52 per cent in 1951 to 50.51 per cent in 2001. Though both male and female literacy are fast approaching national averages, there is still a gender gap of 25 percentage points in literacy. According to 64<sup>th</sup> round of NSS data the literacy level in Odisha was 68.3 per cent in 2007-2008 in comparison to 71.7 per cent at all India level. The School attendance rate in Odisha and India are respectively 83.5 per cent and 85.2 per cent in 2007-2008. The ST female literacy has increased from a very low level of 4.76 per cent in 1981 to 23.23 per cent in 2001, which is significantly lower than SC and general female literacy. The rural female literacy has more than doubled from 21.90 per cent in 1981 to 47.22 per cent in 2001.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this paper is to assess the literacy status of girls and women in informal sector of Odisha.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Keeping in view the objective of the study, a sample survey was conducted in districts like Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Cuttack and Puri. Accordingly 100 women from each district were randomly selected and supplied with structured questionnaire pertaining to their availability of educational facilities implemented by the Govt. of Odisha. Further to supplement the survey, secondary data are used from the published articles, journals and reports.

This paper is divided into four sections. Section-I depicts the need for raising the literacy status of women worker in informal sector. Section-II deals with different educational programme available at international, national and state level. Section-III covers the primary data which are collected from the unorganized women workers of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Cuttack and Puri district. This Section depicts the status of educational programmes in the informal sector of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Cuttack and Puri district. Finally Section-IV focuses the findings and conclusions of the investigation.

## **SECTION-I**

Women in informal sector : Need for raising their literacy status.

In most of the developing countries, a very high proportion of female employment is absorbed by the informal sector. In India, 94% of the female workforce are engaged in various informal sector or in household activities. These informal activities for women range from subsistence farming petty trading and hawking, through wage employment in unregulated small enterprises or home-based contract work for larger formal sector firms to ownership of small businesses.

Most women are involved in various kinds of low-income activity in casual or seasonal work with unskilled and low productivity long hours and little opportunity for upward mobility. Women who are engaged in skilled work in the informal sector are to be found in low paid job like tailoring, weaving, embroidery and food production. In agriculture and the construction industry, women often do much of the unskilled labour. On the whole, women earn less than men.

In this context, it is necessary to raise the literacy status of women workers through female education, non-formal education and training.

## **FEMALE EDUCATION**

Female education comprises following elements – Primary Education:

## **SCHOOL ENROLMENT:**

Despite constitutional provisions of universal primary education for the children up to the age of 14 years, enrolment at the elementary education level. Particularly for women is far from satisfactory. 80 per cent of all recognized schools at the elementary stage are government run or supported making it the largest provider of education in the country.

However, due to shortage of resources and lack of political will this system suffers from massive gaps including high pupil to teacher ratio, shortage of infrastructure and poor level of teacher training. Education has also been made free for children for 6 to 14 years of age or up to class VIII under the Right of Children to Free and compulsory education, Act-2009). This Primary Education Scheme has also shown a high Gross Enrollment Ratio of 93-95 per cent for the last three years in some states. Significant improvement in staffing and enrollment of girls has also been made as a part of this scheme. The current scheme for universalization of Education for All is the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which is one of the longest education initiatives in the world. Enrollment has been enhanced, but the level of quality remain low.

## **SECONDARY EDUCATION**

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, has provided for environment awareness, Science and technology education, and introduction of traditional elements such as Yoga into the Indian Secondary School system. Secondary education covers children 14-18 which covers 88.55 million children according to the census 2001. However, enrollment figures show that only 31 million of these children were attending schools in 2001-2002, which means that two-third of the population remained out of school.

Similarly, despite little improvement rate for dropout is higher among girls than the boys. The reasons for gender gap in school enrollment or dropouts are attributed to the following

- i. General Social Attitudes
- ii. Early Marriages
- iii. Girls involvement in labour-paid or unpaid
- iv. Distance of the School
- v. Problem of Security
- vi. Absence of female teachers etc.

## **NON-FORMAL EDUCATION**

Non-formal education is designated as a Planned and Properly co-ordinated activity to provide education which is not as rigid and structured as formal mode of education. As a result non-formal education is rather flexible in its organization and methods of teaching which focuses on the convenience of students that comprises of a range of clientele groups. The method of instruction, age group of learners duration of teaching, syllabus and contents and process of evaluation are customized to suit the targeted students. This is the reason why non-formal

education has spread through out the country and reached the children and youth, who were unreachable through formal education. The main focus of non-formal education is to provide education to all citizens of the country, both in urban and rural areas.

In 2001, the Government launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Programme with the objective to provide education to children of age group from 6-14 years, those who have constraints in attending regular schools and also for girls and other children who have disruptive social and financial conditions.

## **SECTION-II**

Literacy programme at international level for women worker (UNESCO aims at education for all by 2015).

According to ILO, Vocational Education and Training are essential to reduce the poverty among poor classes. In this context, ILO has launched a major drive to help its constituents rethink human resource development policies, in partnership with United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The ILO has also collaborated closely with UNESCO on the preparation of a new revised recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education, adopted in 2001 by the UNESCO General Conference. ILO has highlighted the following key issues

- (i) Recognition that the Primary responsibility for investment in training rests with government but has to be shared with enterprises, the social partners, and individuals so that education and training are closely linked to economic and employment growth strategies and programmes.
- (ii) Urgent reforms are needed to improve basic education and literacy of women and men in the poorest countries. The development of core work skills (such as communication and problem solving) is an important part of a reform package to prepare individuals for the knowledge and skill based society.

## **NATIONAL LEVEL LITERACY PROGRAMME**

The Indian literacy rate grew to 74.04 per cent in 2011 from 12 per cent at the end of British rule in 1947. In 2011 literacy rate for women is 65.46 per cent whereas for men it is 82.14 per cent.

Kerala has the highest literacy rate among the states of India, followed by the state of Mizoram.

Government Scheme to raise the Literacy Rate are –

### **(i) National Literacy Mission**

The national literacy mission launched in 1988 is aimed at attaining a literacy rate of 75 per cent by 2007. It imparts functional literacy to non-literates in the age group of 15-35 years.

The total literacy campaign is the Principal Strategy of the NLM for eradication of illiteracy. The continuing education schemes provides a learning continuum to the efforts of the total literacy and Post Literacy Programmes.

### **(ii) Sarva Siksha Abhiyan**

The Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (Hindi for total literacy campaign) was launched in 2001 to ensure that all children in 6-14 years age group attend school and complete eight year of schooling by 2010. An important component of the Scheme is Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education meant primarily for children in areas with no formal school within a one kilometre radius. The centrally sponsored District Primary Education Programme launched in 1994, had opened more than 160 000 new schools by 2005, including almost 84,000 alternative schools.

### **NON –GOVERNMENTAL EFFORTS**

Several non-governmental organizations such as ITC, Rotary Club, Lions Club have worked to improve the literacy rate in India.

Recently, the Government of India has launched “Saakshar Bharat Mission for female Literacy” This mission aims to bring down female illiteracy by half of its present level.

### **STATE LEVEL**

According to 2001 census, literacy rate of Odisha was 63.1 per cent. As per NSS data of 64<sup>th</sup> round literacy of Odisha in 2007-2008 has been estimated at 68.3 per cent compared to the national average of 71.7 per cent.

### **PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Presently, 10,868 new schools have been set up and 23,042 more teachers added between 2000-2001 and 2009-2010. There are 52,972 functional Primary Schools with 1.38 Lakh teachers and 44.93 lakh students in 2009-2010. The Government has also engaged 52,000 more Siksha Sahayaks.

### **UPPER PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Upper Primary School has been increased to 22,209 with 56,758 teachers and enrollment of 21.28 Lakh in 2009-2010. According to Odisha Primary Education Programme Authority (OPEPA), the overall dropout rate at the UP level is highest in Nabarangpur district (13.66%) and lowest in Jagatsinghpur district (4.63%).

### **MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR PROMOTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

1. Norms for establishing new Primary and Upper Primary School in the state relaxed in terms of requirement of minimum number of children in one habitation and distance from the habitation.

2. Grant in aid released to 599 teachers in 218 Primary Schools and 1568 teachers in 691 Upper Primary School.
3. Government provides GIA (Block Grant) to 867 eligible Upper Primary (ME) Schools.
4. 14,089 Sikshya Sahayaks regularized as Primary teachers.
5. Block grant benefit extended to 'Madrassa' teachers at Primary Level.
6. Free text books have been supplied to all students of Class-I-VIII of Government and Government Aided School including Class-VIII during 2010-2011. 972 DPEP Phase 1 Para Teachers engaged as Sikshya Shayayaks and Gana Sikshyaks.
7. 21661 EGS Volunteers rehabilitated as Gana Sikshyaks.
8. Remuneration to Sikshayaks and Junior Teachers enhanced.
9. During 2010-2011 it is targeted to enroll 64.61 lakh children (6-14 years age group) in elementary education.

## **SECONDARY EDUCATION**

By the end of the 2009-2010 there were 6,193 Government and Aided Secondary Schools, 849 recognized High Schools and 151 permitted High Schools in Odisha.

### **INITIATION FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Rastriya Madhyamik Sikshya Abhiyan (RMSA) is a national flagship Programme that aims at affordable and assessable education of students aged between 14-18 years by 2017. Funding of Rs.207.18 Crore has been proposed for RMSA in Odisha during 2009-2010. There is proposal to provide special incentives to 32,859 girls students under the national scheme.

1500 Schools are expected to benefit under the information and communication technology programme during 2009-2010.

Besides these, the programmes like Mass Education, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Sarva Sikshya Abhiyan (SSA) have been successfully implemented by the state government in rural areas of Odisha. Under SSA Scheme 157 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) were made operational for 15,632 girls students. Similarly (NPEGEL) (National Programme for Education for Girls at Elementary Level) programme is implemented in 3159 clusters of 190 Blocks in 27 Districts to encourage skills development and education for girls. Under this programme, 27,873 girls have been given vocational training and remedial teaching undertaken in 2,711 clusters for low achievers among girls.



**SECTION –III: Educational Status of women in Informal Sector of the sample :-**  
**Table-1 Educational status of women workers of coastal and tribal areas of Orissa**

SI No.	Level of Education	Coastal	Tribal	Total
1.	5 <sup>th</sup> Pass	58.7%	51.4%	54.4%
2.	8 <sup>th</sup> Pass	17.3%	30.8%	25.3%
3.	8 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> Pass	13.3%	14.0%	13.7%
4.	Above 10 <sup>th</sup>	10.7%	3.7%	6.6%
5.	Continuing study	16.0%	9.4%	12.0%
6.	Discontinuing study	84.0%	90.6%	88.0%
	<b><i>Reason for discontinuity</i></b>			
1.	School far away	-	20.4%	13.7%
2.	Transport not available	-	0.7%	0.4%
3.	Education considered unnecessary	8.0%	0.7%	3.1%
4.	Engaged in house work	41.3%	67.1%	58.6%
5.	Unsafe Boys' schools for girls	1.3%	4.8%	0.4%
6.	Male teachers not preferred for students	2.7%	9.2%	.9%
7.	Lack of finance	41.3%	11.2%	21.1%
8.	Superstition	5.3%	-	1.8%

This Section deals with the descriptive statistics of the survey. The results are obtained from 400 hundred samples taken from four districts like Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Cuttack & Puri of Odisha. Around 100 percent of respondents are interviewed with structured questionnaire. Around 60 per cent of women in informal sector were interviewed at their workplace. Rest 40 per cent are contacted at their household.

Several variables measure the educational status of women. Level of education, continuing study and reasons for discontinuity are some of the measures taken to measure the educational status .

The highest percentage of tribal women have qualified upto 5<sup>th</sup> class is 51.4per cent as against 58.7per cent for women in coastal areas. Similarly 3.7per cent of tribal women have qualified upto 10<sup>th</sup> class as against 10.7per cent of coastal women. Highest percentage of women are under discontinuing study which stood at 90.6per cent in tribal areas and 84per cent in coastal areas.

Similarly percentage of women are under continuing study is 9.4per cent in tribal areas and 16per cent in coastal areas.

It is a general feature that the girl children who are enrolled in the school do not continue their education. As a result the rate of dropout gradually increases with the level of education. It has been observed that most of the girl children in all the villages could not continue their studies because of their financial constraints, household work, non-availability of transport, long distance of the schools from the village and shortage of female teachers.

### **SUGGESTION**

- (i) Government should provide adequate infrastructure facilities like sufficient number of classrooms, drinking water and toilet facility especially for girl students in rural areas.
- (ii) According to UNESCO, India has the lowest public expenditure on higher education per student in the world. In this context, Government should allocate more money towards education. During the financial year 2011-2012, the Central Government of India has allocated Rs.38,957 Crore for the department of school education and literacy which is the main department dealing with primary education in India. Within this allocation major share of Rs.21,000 crores is for the flagship programme “Sarva Siksha Abhiyan”. However, budgetary allocation of Rs.21,000 crores is considered very low in view of the officially appointed Anil Bordia Committee recommendation of Rs.35,659 for the year 2011-2012.
- (iii) Efforts are being made to make women conscious of their rights and abilities. In decision making process at all levels from family to society being shared by both sexes must be emphasized.
- (iv) Steps should be taken to reduce the poverty level in rural areas. It is well recognized that employment leads to poverty alleviation if it is accompanied by a reasonable level of income. Workers in unorganized sector, agricultural labourers and many self-employed in agriculture and other informal activities constitute a majority of poor, not only because they are unemployed but because their productivity and income are low, and often irregular and uncertain. Because poverty is the major cause of lower female literacy in India.
- (v) Special attention should be given for enrollment of women in adult education centers. A higher women literacy rate improves the quality of life both at home and outside of home by encouraging and promoting education of children, especially female children in reducing infant-mortality rate.

## CONCLUSION

The focus of the study is to examine the educational status of women workers in informal sector. It has been found that status is yet to be developed, through proper implementation of government education policies. It has been further recommended that government and non-government organization should encourage the informal sector activities especially when they show performance and expansion.

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## **List of Faculty Members of University Evening College /DCC/DDCE**

University Evening College (University Evening College operated from BJB College  
and its Principal acted as the In- Charge Principal)

Sri Ramchandra Rajguru

Sri Damodar Mishra

Sri Baidyanath Mishra

Sri Siva Charan Panda

### **Vice-Principal (Full time)**

Sri Purnachandra Pattnayak

Sri Ashutosh Pattnayak

Sri Khitish Chandra Dev

Sri K.P.A. Pillai

### **Directorate of Correspondence Courses**

Established on 29th November, 1974. First batch of students were admitted in 1975.

### **Director of DCC**

Dr. Rama Shankar Rath (OSD and Director from 29.10.1975 to 31.05.1993)

Sri Achyutananda Mishra (Director)

Dr. Susmit Pani (Director)

### **Teaching Staff : O dia Department**

Dr. Ashutosh Pattnayak

Dr. Gangendra Nath Dash

Sri Kanhu Charan Kar

Dr. Banamali Rath

Dr. Bibhuti Bhusan Pattnayak

Dr. Dolagovind Sastri

Dr. Ratnakar Sahoo

Sri Nabakishore Prusty

Dr. Upendra Nath Dhal

Smt. Kamala Sahoo

Dr. Anand Kumar Pattnayak

Dr. Kamala Kant Panigrahi

Dr. Bhagirathi Biswal

Dr. Nabakishore Mohanty

Dr. Snehalata Pattnayak  
Dr. Nityananda Nayak  
Dr. Bhima Dash  
Dr. Sitakanta Mohanty  
Dr. Narayan Sahoo  
Dr. Santosh Kumar Tripathy

#### **ENGLISH**

Sri Satyabrata Choudhury  
Sri Hrushi Kesh Mishra  
Sri Pranakrushna Giri  
Sri Dibakar Panda  
Sri Nigamananda Mohanty  
Sri Krushna Kumar  
Sri Nityananda Ray  
Sri Kali Krishna Sharma  
Smt. Renukanha Bera  
Sri Inayat Khan  
Dr. A.J.Khan

#### **ECONOMICS**

Sri Nanda Nandan Mishra (I.P.S)  
Sri Bijay Kumar Mohapatra  
Dr. Ajit Kumar Mitra  
Dr. Surendranath Mishra  
Sri Sarat Chandra Choudhury  
Dr. Bhagabat Mishra  
Sri Abani Bhusan Mishra  
Sri Bahnu Shankar Mishra  
Sri Basant Kumar Das  
Sri Prahlad Padhi

#### **POLITICAL SCIENCE**

Dr. Mahindra Kumar Mohapatra  
Dr. Brundaban Chandra Patel  
Sri Gopal Nanda (I.P.S)  
Sri Muralidhar Pattnayak  
Sri Bibekananda Pattnayak

Smt. Harapriya Kar  
Dr. Amareswar Mishra  
Smt. Bani Mohanty  
Dr. Anil Kumar Pattnayak  
Dr. Niranjana Pani

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Sri Ramesh Chandra Pattnayak  
Sri Mayadhar Samantray  
Sri Pratap Chandra Das  
Sri Chitta Ranjan Das  
Sri Dhruv Jyoti Chatterjee

### **DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

Sri Achyutananda Mishra.  
Dr. Biswarup Das  
Sri Sibaprasad Swain  
Sri Iswari Prasad Mishra

### **SANSKRIT**

Dr. Gopinath Mohapatra  
Sri Ramachandra Tripathy

### **Mathematics**

Dr. Nirod Kumar Mohanty  
Dr. Siba Charan Behera  
Sri Rangadhar Das

### **Commerce**

Sri Umakanta Panda (D.C.C)  
Sri Ranjan Kumar Bal (D.C.C)

### **Academic Consultant**

#### **Past :**

Ms. Roopa Mishra (Mgt)  
Mr. Ansuman Tripathy (Mgt)  
Ms. Sasmita Behera (Mgt)  
Mr. Sujit Kumar Acharya (Mgt)  
Dr. Sarita Mishra (Ngo Mgt. /Mgt)

Ms. Bhargavi Lok Janani (Banking and Insurance)  
Mr. Baibhab Nayak (Mgt )  
Ms. Pankajini Mishra (Mgt)  
Ms. Amrita Pani (Mgt)

**Present :**

Mr. Subash Chandra Mishra (MCA)  
Ms. Rashmi Ranjita Das (Mgt)  
Mr. Binod Bihar Satpathy (History)

**Faculty at present:**

Prof. Susmit Prasad Pani (Professor –cum-Director)  
Dr. Mamata Rani Behera (Lect. In Odia)  
Dr. Prajna Paramita Panigrahi (Lect. In English)  
Dr. Sujit Kumar Acharya (Lect. In Business Management)

*(We may have missed some names. Suggestions for correction are welcome.)*



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