

FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN ORIYA LITERATURE

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This dissertation entitled, "FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN ORIYA LITERATURE" submitted by BISWESWAR BHOI is in partial fulfilment of the total requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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This dissertation is original and has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma of any other University. We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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P R E F A C E

The ninth clause of the Manifesto of the Progressive Writer's Association published in the year 1934 read like this; " It is the object of our association to rescue literature and other arts from the priestly, academic and decadent classes in whose hands they have degenerated so long; to bring the arts into the closest touch with the people; and to make them the vital organ which will register the actualities of life, as well as lead ¹ is to the future". Here we get a glimpse of one view of the task of modern literature. Literature moves with the age. It not only reflects the society at a particular time but also projects the idea of a better society. In the words of Humayun Kabir, "The poet is the seer who responds to values which have not yet entered into the texture of common experience. He is thus sensitive to reality which has not yet become empirical and it whose incursion into experience is imminent". ² Ideas have played an important role in history. According to Hegel ideas the sovereign of this world develops throughout the history of this world. Literature, the most explicit record of the human spirit, is the communication of this idea of one to the many.

1 Carlo Coppola, " The All India Progressive Writers Association; The Early Phases", in Carlo Coppola (ed.), Marxist Influences and South Asian Literature, New Delhi, 1988.

2 H. Kabir, Poetry Monads and Society, University of Calcutta, 1941, p. 24.

Agreeing with this view, this study aims at the nurture of nationalism in Oriya literature through the struggle of a portion of human race against subjugation by another.

The treatment of this topic by Sakuntala Baliyarsingh in her Ph.D. thesis under Utkal University is a brilliant work.³ But she has failed in discussing various aspects of the national movement because of the period she had taken up for study. Also being a student of Oriya literature she has seen it from a literary angle.

Another painstaking effort by Gopal Chandra Mishra, his essay contributed to the two volumes of "Contributions of Writers to Indian Freedom Movement", is deficient in the same respect. It is more of a literary essay than a historical research work. Failure to give the sources he has used is the weakness of his work.

In this M.Phil. dissertation, more or less I have tried to overcome some of these weaknesses. The emphasis has been put in Oriya literature of the 20th century, particularly poetry, and some major works of fiction. The experience gathered from this work will lead me, I hope, to undertake an extensive inquiry into the subject in my Ph. D. thesis. Seen from a historical angle, perhaps this work is one of the first of its kind. If it

3 S. Baliyarsingh, Nationalist Consciousness in Oriya Literature" (Oriya) Cuttack, 1985.

succeeds in making the reader feel that the facts which I have brought to light are significant, my purpose would be amply served.

It would have been difficult for me to complete this work without the vigilant guidance of Professor Bipan Chandra. Also I am indebted to my friends Surya, Abhay, Dhiren, Arvind, Amit, Maheswar and Munniswamy for their timely help. I am thankful to Mr. T.S. Negi for neatly typing the thesis. In the end my parents and other family members rendered me constant help without which I could not have finished this work

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CHAPTER I

GROWTH OF CONSCIOUSNESS (1880 - 1909)

I

The famine of 1866 marked the starting of a new phase in the history of Orissa. The step-motherly attitude of the Bengal Government was replaced by concern for Oriya people's problems. Also, the then Commissioner of Orissa division, T.E. Ravenshaw, began to pay attention to education, the most neglected part of social development. The Cuttack Zilla School was changed to a second grade college in 1868. This college later became the premier educational institution of the province. After the famine, marked improvement took place in the field of vernacular education. In 1870 - 71, there were 28 vernacular schools in Balasore district. In cuttack district, the progress was still more remarkable. Instead of 3 schools with 168 pupils in 1856 - 57, there were 50 schools in 1870 - 71 with 2,755 pupils. Prior to this period, the people showed a marked apathy towards Government educational institutions. Conservatism, lack of resources and lack of a feeling of necessity had kept the people at a distance from English education. Education was then

1 J.K. Dwivedi, "Origin of Higher Education in Orissa." in M.N Das (ed.), Sidelights on History and Culture of Orissa, Cuttack, 1977, p. 744.

2 P. Mukherjee, History of Orissa in the 19th century, Utkal University, Bhubaneshwar, 1964, p. 440.

3 P. Mukherjee, History of Orissa in the 19th century, Utkal University, Bhubaneshwar, 1964, p. 440.

confined to some private institutions where scriptures and elementary mathematics were taught to students of a limited class. In the last quarter of the century, vernacular education went through a remarkable change in the districts of Cuttack and Balasore.⁴

Immediately, the growth of education had an effect on literature. Till this time devotional literature occupied an important place in society. The last of the devotional poets, Bhima Bhoi (1850 - 1895) belonged to this period. Poets were still part of the courts of feudal chiefs ruling in different parts of Orissa. Prose literature was unpopular. Fakirmohan in his autobiography has written about people's reaction to prose literature - if someone was given a piece of prose writing, he would start reading it like poetry. Upendra Bhanja, the seventeenth century poet, who wrote his long narrative poems with ornamental vocabulary, was looked at with the highest esteem.

By 1860 Orissa had a single printing press at Cuttack run by the missionaries. The second printing press came to

4 P. Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 441. The following table gives a better picture:

<u>District</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of School</u>	<u>Pupils</u>
Balasore	1875	217	5972
Cuttack	1875	539	10,196
Balasore	1885	2305	37,707
Cuttack	1885	4739	65,000

Balasore in 1868 by the private efforts of Fakirmohan and his associates.⁵ This increased printing activities and a number of journals came into existence, Growth of English education and communication of ideas through journals led to the growth of political consciousness. Bengali agitation for replacement of Oriya with Bengali as the official language in Orissa and their domination of the higher appointments resulted in the formation of political associations.⁶ Orissa had become a part of Bengal province from the time of British occupation. Easy access to English education, the only criterion for Government jobs, put the Bengali bhadraloks next to the sahibs in the administrative hierarchy. The Zamindari system of land settlement made them, a go-between between the Government and people. The growth of absentee landlordism which was the offshoot of this system placed them in a dominant position. The Bengalis threatened the existing elites by winning the competition for Government and professional employment. At the same time by the example of their adaptability and the attractiveness of their culture, they became a model for the cultivation of a language-based nationalism by the local Oriya elites.⁷

5 F. Senapati, Fakirmohan Granthavali, Vol. I, Cuttack, 1963, pp. 46-50.

6 H.K. Mehtab, op. cit., p. 117.

7 P.K. Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 26.

Between 1868 and 1872, there was an attempt made by some Bengalis to replace Oriya with Bengali as the medium of instruction in schools.⁸ This attempt was vehemently opposed by the Oriyas. Its result was Bengal Government's conferring discretionary power on commissioner of Orissa division to exclude Bengali from the schools and make oriya the sole medium of expression.⁹ The reaction against Bengali domination started in the last quarter of the 19th century, Madhusudan Das took a leading part in the formation of Orissa Graduate and Undergraduate Association. Orissa Association or Utkal Sabha was formed in 1882 with Gaurisankar Roy as its first secretary. The first meeting of Orissa Association was held on 21st July, 1882 for considering the best means of introducing local-self¹⁰ government in India.

On 15th January 1895, the chief commissioner of the Central Provinces directed the abolition of Oriya as the court language of Sambalpur and introduced Hindi in its place to facilitate the posting of officials all over the province. A memorandum against the decision was presented by before Lord Elgin, the then

8 H.K. Mehtab, op. cit., p. 117.

9 P.K. Mukherjee. op. cit., p. 27.

10 H.K. Mehtab., op. cit. p. 119.

Viceroy, but it produced no result. Oriya thus was temporarily banished as the court language from Sambalpur.¹¹ The result of these developments was a deep conception among the Oriya that their language and culture were no more safe in the outlying areas; and they now demanded the unification of all Oriya tracts so that a separate province might be formed.

These developments may give the impression that political developments in Orissa were entirely regional in character. But in fact they did not necessarily mean that Orissa was completely cut off from the national mainstream. For example, on 3rd March, 1886, a public meeting consisting of people of all communities was held in the building of Cuttack Printing Company where the resolution passed in the first session of the Indian National Congress was unanimously accepted. In a meeting of Utkal Sabha, Madhusudan Das, Kalipada Banerjee and two other members were elected to represent the association at the annual session of the INC to held at Calcutta in December 1886.¹² Different persons from various newly emerging political associations participated in the proceedings of the national political association. The spread of English education and the study of western literature in the later half of the 19th century

11 C. Mishra, Freedom Movements in Sambalpur, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 147-168.

12 H.K. Mehtab (ed.) op. cit., p. 122.

produced remarkable phenomena in political, cultural and literary spheres. Simultaneously, with little variations, there appeared changes in various regional languages and literatures. It was the age of renaissance in Indian literature whose basic feature was adoption of new techniques in place of traditional literacy forms.

The particular causes responsible for the renaissance in other Indian languages were also operating in the case of Oriya literature. One of the most remarkable change in the Oriya literature of the renaissance period was its shifting from traditional devotional and philosophical themes to literature of the people in their own language. Fakirmohan Senapati (1843 - 1918) was the pioneer of this aspect. He, Radhanath Roy (1848 - 1912), and Madhusudan Rao (1853 - 1912), constituted the formidable trio in renascent Oriya literature. Radhanath was hailed as a supreme artist of beauty and human passion while Fakirmohan was recognised as the pioneer of Oriya fiction and story writing. Madhusudan Rao came to be identified as the superb singer of human emotions.

13 Mayadhar Mansingh, History of Oriya Literature, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi. 1962, p. 169

II

Fakirmohan's autobiography, under the title "Atmajivan Charita". Which was written towards the last part of his life, is an unique piece of literary work. Along with his own life history it gives valuable information about the socio-political and economic conditions of Orissa in the second half of the 19th century. Fakirmohan came from a poor family and lost his parents at a very early age. The sole responsibility for his upbringing lay with his grandmother. His paternal uncle sometimes came to his help. Due to the family condition, he had to assist his uncle in the work stitching the sails of the boats coming to Balasore's shores during his school-going age. This accounted for his low formal education. Prevailing condition of education, as described by Fakirmohan in his autobiography, was itself unfavourable for a poor student like him to continue education. By sheer dint of intellect and thirst for knowledge, he could acquire mastery over three other Indian languages like Bengali, Sanskrit and Persian - along with English.

The first literary activity which Fakirmohan undertook was the translation of the Ramayana and the Mahabharat, a few Upanishads and the Gita from Sanskrit to Oriya. He also wrote a poetical treatise on the message of the Buddha called the 'Buddhabatara Kabya.' His prose works of this period included some text books such as grammar and mathematics for elementary schools.

As mentioned before, there was a continuous effort from the side of the Bengalis to eliminate Oriya language as the medium of instruction in Orissa. They claimed that Oriya was only a dialect of Bengali.¹⁴ The counter agitation which sprang up among the Oriyas was led by Fakirmohan. The title 'Ringleader' was conferred on him by the Bengalis for his leadership in this counter agitation. Due to Fakirmohan's efforts and support of John Beams, the collector of Balasore district, and T.E. Ravenshaw, to the then commissioner of Orissa, Oriya was restored as the official language in that part of Orissa. The hostile attitude of Bengali bureaucrats towards Oriya language and culture incited him to set up an Oriya printing press in Balasore. Despite many adverse circumstances and having little resources, he succeeded in his effort in 1868.

This press was the second one in Orissa, the first one being the Cuttack Missionary Press. People from remote villages used to come to Balasore to see the Press. The press also helped him to launch two journals, "Bodhdayini" and "Balasore Sambad Bahika" - both in Oriya. Bengali language acted for him like some sort of model for the betterment of Oriya language. He

14 A Bengali Headmaster named Kantichandra Bhattacharya led the movement with the slogan that "Oriya is not special language," Fakirmohan Senapati, op. cit., p. 53

mentioned in his autobiography that whenever he came across a new book in Bengali he used to see it very minutely imagining of such a book in Oriya. During this period he could feel the necessity of text book in Oriya, lack of which acted as a major hindrance for the advancement of education in the province. Thus started his writing career which bloomed during the last part of his life.

Roughly Fakirmohan's literary work can be divided into two parts- first, the translations and poems; and second, the works in prose mainly short stories and novels. "Utkal Bhramanam " (Journey Through Orissa - 1892) deserves an important place among his poetic works. It presents a picture of the prevailing life in contemporary Orissa which he painted out of his wide experience. He pointed out the dismemberment of Oriya speaking areas and the lack of cultural identity as the causes of various problems faced by the Oriyas. Talking about the disunity of Oriya's, he wrote :

But this country, getting into pieces,
Has lost all its beauty.
South captured by Kamas,
North by Bengalis,
About the rest in an unending tale,
It has gone to the Marathas. 15

"Utkal Bhramanam" is a conglomeration of satirical remarks on different institutions and individuals. As the Darbar of Radhanath came much later, it is the first modern satire in Oriya literature.

Throughout his life, Fakirmohan was haunted by the lower status of Oriya languages and culture in comparison with others. Besides his individual efforts to raise them to a respectable position, he inspired others through his writings. Throughout the poem "Utkal Bharamanam", he praised the sons of Orissa, who had done their best for the upliftment of the mother tongue. He marked the unhealthy development among some Oriyas, who out of inferiority complex were speaking other languages. He compared these people with stray dogs. As he said:

What's the need of a rich mother tongue ?

It is managed from hither and thither.

Dog need not make home,

Wanders licking leftovers. 16

Spread of English education had produced a group of youth who thought themselves to be part of a different society. Thus there developed among them apathy towards their own culture

and tradition. They were the Blind imitators of Western culture within a thoroughly traditional society. Criticizing this outlook and behaviour of the educated youths, he wrote :

Mutter English day and night,
Even though don't touch water after defecation.
Put on overcoat although it is summer,
Biscuit against Cheese and Bada you prefer.

xx xx xx

Never you will change from Oriya to English
Don't go adding a peacock feather,
You will remain crow not peacock. 17

But it does not necessarily mean that he was against English education. He was against blind imitation at the cost of one's own tradition and culture. Throughout his life he remained a loyal servant of the British Government. Particularly, he was full of praise for John Beams, the Balasore collector, through whose recommendation he was appointed as dewan to various feudatory mahals. But, unfortunately, John Beams did not mention Fakirmohan, even once, in his lengthy description
18
of Orissa in his memoir. In Fakirmohan's autobiography we come

17 Ibid., p.211.

18 John Beams, Memoirs of a Bengal Civilian, New Delhi, 1989.

across his lenient attitude towards Christianity. He also saw it as a better religion than Hinduism. He had become a Brahma Samajist for sometime.¹⁹ His appeasement of the colonial rulers at the cost of the interest of the people is seen in various incidents. Taking a major role in suppressing the rebellion in Keonjhar, collecting more taxes from stonecutters in Nilgiri and suppressing the Prajameli in Dompada²⁰ are some examples.

Along with "Utkala Bhramanam", "Abasara Basare" (Through the Leisure Hours, 1908) contains Fakirmohan's nationalistic poetry. In this poetry collection, poems concerning various social problems are also found. Women's problems like widow remarriage and child marriage are important among them.²¹ As mentioned earlier, during Fakirmohan's time, literature for the common man appeared for the first time. Fakirmohan was the pioneer in this aspect. In the poem "Utkala Krisak" (Oriya Peasant), he said "The people at the helm of affairs think about industrial development, some think of Swadeshi and there are also some who say that enrichment of mother tongue is the most important thing to do, but no one has time to look at the plight

19 The Samaj Fakirmohan joined, he was to write later, deteriorated a lot. People used to drink wine there Fakirmohan Senapati, *op. Cit.*, p. 63.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 74, p. 110 and p. 95.

21. The poems like Hindu Bidhaba (Hindu Widow), Ramaratha Katha (Tale of Ramarath), Chandrapravara Nirjala Akadasi (Chandraprava's Fasting) depict the problems.

of the farmer.²² Some of his poems also spoke of the inequalities and the contrasts, the indifferences and apathies among the classes in the existing society.

Towards the later part of his life Fakirmohan switched over to prose writing. He claimed that he wrote a short story named "Lachmania" in 1868 in one of the journals he had launched. If that short story comes to light, it will be the first written short story in Indian literature.²³ He has the first written short stories and four novels to his credit. The life that is depicted in these stories is that of the ordinary universal man, the man with all his excellence and foibles, the man whose horizons are choked by social predicaments, the man who has to struggle his way amidst the conflicts between the old and the new,²⁴ sometimes vanquished but always full of hope, full of faith.

"Chha Mana Athaguntha"(Six Acres and Eight Decimals.1902) is regarded as one among the best pieces of literary works. In this novel Fakirmohan depicted the victimization of a weaver couple by their village zamindar. The story is based on the 19th century social structure where zamindar acted as the agent of

22 Fakirmohan Senapati., op. Cit., p. 409.

23 Ibid., p. 195.

24 C. Das, A Glimpse to Oriya Literature, OSA, Bhubaneswar, 1982, p. 171.

exploitation. The novel gave a real picture of the acquisition of zamindari by men of no consequence and no antecedents. By sheer dint of their cunning. Ramchandra Mangaraj is the typical representative of this class who could acquire the Zamindari of "Sarsandh" from a pleasure loving bankrupt zamindar, who stayed away in far off Bengal and used to come to the estate only for collecting the rent. The fortune hunting Mangaraj, who happened to be an orphan, after becoming the master of the large estate was bent upon acquiring the small piece of land of the helpless innocent ryots. Through treachery he succeeds in taking over the land of the issueless weaver couple, who were prepared to do anything for a son. The wife died at the door step of Mangaraj and the husband turned mad. At last Mangaraj was dragged to the court on the charge of killing the weaver woman and duly punished. The novel was published in a local journal and when the chapters concerning the court proceedings were being published, people from villages came to Cuttack to see the trial.

Fakirmohan's "Mamun" (Uncle) depicted the greed of a clerk working in Cuttack, the provincial capital, to exploit his sister's family to appropriate its property by using his access to Government officials. It is a story of the conflict between the good and evil and the tantalizing freak of fate in which the

25 Fakirmohan Senapati, op. Cit., p. 196.

ordinary mortal was virtually bound to move with the chance outcomes of that conflict. In "Six Acres", Fakirmohan depicted the exploiters who were living on the ruins of the so-called peaceful rural society. How this group had entered the towns and established themselves there was depicted in " Mamun." So the latter was seen as an urban reflection of the former.

"Prayaschita " (Expiation), written in 1915, was the last piece of fictional work of Fakirmohan. Here he depicted the lives of an English educated youth who tried to fight against the traditional social values and was defeated in the end. It reflected the duality of life of the youth having one foot in the progressive modern society, his college, and friends, and the other in the traditional society-the family in his villages. The novel also discussed social evils like caste system, prohibition of education to women and selection of a marriage partner. In the course of the novel he also gave an account of the emerging political-cultural associations of the educated youths in later nineteenth century.

"Lachhma " is a historical novel and gave a ruthless pictures of the situation that then prevailed in Orissa when the Maratha bargis came to rule and run over the land. Lachhma is the name of a girl who escaped that attack of the bargis and took shelter in a fort of northern Orissa called Raibania. The

protector of the fort, Raghav Mandhata, came into conflict with Maratha bargis and took the side of the Bengal Nawab Alivardi Khan. Later a battle ensued between the Marathas and the Nawab of Bengal. After a prolonged battle lasting three years, the two sides agreed to a peace treaty. At the place of compromise, the Maratha leader Bhaskar Pandit was killed and his side was defeated.

The description of the fall of Raibania fort signified the picture of the fall of feudalism in Orissa. Lachhma and Badal Singh, her husband, were outsiders but exhibited valour and courage to save the dignity of the nation as they had grown on Orissa's soil. The intention behind the novel was to stimulate nationalism within the readers. The description of war tactics like Fullwar, Mahisarekha, Haladipada and Katoya and the speeches of Badal Singh were intended to strengthen patriotism and courage among the people.

Fakirmohan had a deep-seated notion of the superiority of the English and their culture. At the same time he had realized the ruinous nature of British rule, of which his own family was a

26 M. Mansingh, Saraswati Fakirmohan, Granthmandir, Cuttack, 1972, p. 284.

victim. In the novel "Six Acres....." he pointed to the darksides of British rule by saying, "O, Hindu Storcks see the English crows, coming from a distant land with empty pocket and leaving with bellyful of fishes. But you living by the pond are not able to get little more than a small fish after twisting hard. Now the time has come for life and death. More of them will come and leave with more fishes and frogs. There is no rescue for you unless you go abroad.²⁷

By 1918, when Fakirmohan died, major national and international events had taken place. His poem on Russo-Japanese war showed his misconception of the event. On the other hand, he did not write on the contemporary national happenings. But he had a vision of independent India which can be deduced from its statement which he made in 1917 in the Satyavadi school, a nationalist institution run by nationalists like Gopabandhu Das and Godavarish Mishra. He said: "you people have sown a seed of freedom here..... I may not see the country independent but you will leave this world after enjoying²⁸ the fruit of this tree of freedom.

27 Fakirmohan Senapati, Fakirmohan Granthavali, Vol. II, Cuttack, 1963, p. 36.

28 M. Mansingh, Saraswati Fakirmohan., p. 316.

III

Another, stalwart of the second half of the 19th century Oriya literatures was Radhanath Roy (1848 - 1908). Unlike Fakirmohan, he was from a well - to - do family. Being the son of a wealthy and literate person, he had better access to higher education. But his broken health had restricted him from going to Calcutta and availing it. But he had read many English poets. That is why the invisible shadow of English poets hung on his poetic works. His poetic efforts were in part the product of the "compulsions of the time - the need to cater to a taste different from what had hitherto grown upon traditional poetry and literature."²⁹

Radhanath was a pioneer in the search for the Oriya identity in the natural beauties of the land which the others had to carry on later. "Mahajatra" (The Great Journey - 1897) was the poem where the poet gave expression to the patriotism within him by describing the greatness of Orissa. One important aspect of this poem's structure was that it was very much rooted in Orissa's cultural landscape and gave a comprehensive account of Orissa, its places and persons and its manifold natural beauties - a type of poetic preoccupation that had never been seen in

29 Ibid., p. 23.

Oriya poetry before. The poet's patriotism took a different image in the poem "Chilika" (1892). He did not restrict himself to glorifying Orissa in the process of describing the natural beauty of the great lake.

"Darbar" (The Royal Court - 1897) was a poem that vehemently attacked the degrading morality of the Oriyas of the time. Here the poet was full of grief at the prevailing political condition of Orissa. In one place he wrote:

why a crowd before the pandal ?
Struggle for power is going on.
Not getting the seat according to one's ego,
Some are disgusted. 30

In another stanza, he depicted the police, which had become an integral part of the society :

Another says, " I am police,
can create thunder without clouds,
Whether guilty or innocent,
Everyone is trembling out of fear
Whether poor or rich,
Red cap creates fear in each. 31

30 R. Roy, Radhanath Granthavali, Cuttack Trading Company, Cuttack, 1962, p. 279.

31 Ibid., p. 281.

"Shivajinka Uschaha Kabya" (Encouraging poem of Shivaji 1880), is written in a note of inspiration. Through this poem the poet gave meaningful identity to his patriotism. Shivaji is shown giving a provocative speech to his soldiers to inspire them to fight against the Mughals. Through this poem the poet gave an account of some of the glorious events of India's past. In one stanza he says:

This India, our motherland,
The land of virtue, having no comparison,
The mine of precious, rare jewels,
The greatest among the nations. 32

The British image of being of the saviour of India from various form of socio-political chaos had driven many Indians to adopt a lenient attitude towards Government. Radhanath Roy too wrote a number of poems in praise of the rulers. In one his poems he said :

Broke the chain of slavery of man
The nation, which duty is to give
independence still the sons of India.

Are her followers.
Thus the key to India's progress.
Today India's face is bright.
Like a lotus. New bloom
Happiness on the horizon
New Sun. the true friend
creates new energy in Aryans. 33

In two other poems Radhanath glorified.

Queen Victoria on her 60th birthday celebrations.



TH-2980

IV

The youngest of the two was Madhusudan Rao (1853-1912) usually described as a spiritual poet in Oriya literature. He studied upto the First Arts examination of those days and started life as a teacher in a Government Schools. He was essentially a preacher and teacher, who made use of the literary vehicle for publicising his ideas, reflections and visions.

As a literary person his nationalist writings, in compression with other of his writings such as children's literature and spiritual poems were fewer in number. To trace

33 Ibid., p. 328. The Poem was written on 16th, February, 1887.



the past glory of the country and point to the present deficiencies he said in one of these poems;

Strangled in frustration and darkness,
In the subjugation, fallen and slept,
The men and women of India,
Forgetting the glorious past
They have become poorer. 34

In this poem the poet's grief at the present condition of his country used in the light of their glorious past was expressing the prevailing ideology of the day, when the intelligentsia, to rouse the popular consciousness, both social and political, used to look back to the achievements of their ancestors. Another important idea of this period was the conception of the country as Motherland. This is best seen in Madhusudan's Poem, the Motherland; (1908) :

O, motherland, the sacred land of India,
All of us are your children,
We'll devote our life and heart for your service,
And will sing you name in happiness,
We'll be happy with you happiness,
And sorry at your sorrow. 36

34 Mayadhar Mansingh, History of Oriya Literature, KSA, New Delhi, 1962, p. 192.

35 Madhusudan Rao, Madhusudan Granthavali, Cuttack Student's Store, Cuttack, 1970, p. 50.

36 Ibid., p. 10.

The poet had a vision of the bright future of India, which he said would come very soon. He had the vision of a greater India where there would be no differences on the lines of caste, creed and religion;

The days of racial and religious differences are
Coming to an end.

In a sacred hour India will be greater country,
Punjab, Ayodhya, Bengal, Rajputana and Gurjar,
Tailang, Kannad, Utkal and Maharashtra,
Are singing "Hail, India hail,"

There is no fear we are a single nation. 37

At a time when Orissa was going through the days of language agitation, this poem may be seen as a healthy portent of the coming days.

V

The three writers discussed above dominated the last quarter of the 19th century in Oriya literature. They worked as a bridge in connecting the medieval and the modern ages in Oriya literature. Fakirmohan, the senior among them, made perhaps the

37 Ibid., p. 129.

greatest contribution in saving the Oriya languages from Bengali domination. His masterly handling of rustic speech, his dealing mostly with the common folk and his close attachment to nature and the soil was to provoke a later critique to call him Thomas Hardy of Orissa. ³⁸ Radhanath, essentially a narrative poet, was most popular in his time. The great seventeenth century writer, Upendra Bhanja, is regarded as the only one to be superior to him. Madhusudan, the spiritual modern poet, was seen as the sonneteer of his time. His prose texts and sonnets are still taught to the young toddlers.

38 Mayadhar Mansingh, History of Oriya literature, KSA, New Delhi, 1969, p. 181

CHAPTER II

IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY (1909- 1918)

Towards 1909, Swadeshi movement was coming to a virtual end. Oppressive measures of Government had silenced the revolutionary terrorists and Morley Minto Reforms had worked like a magic wand on the moderates. The trick of 'divide and rule' had been played with success and there was a large crack in the Congress camp. Ground had been laid by the Government to divide the nationalist ranks and to check the growth of unity among Indians, In 1911, the Partition of Bengal was annulled and the capital was changed from Calcutta to Delhi.

On 12th December 1911, His Majesty the King Emperor George V announced the creation of Bihar and Orissa as a separate province,¹ Orissa was tagged to the tail of Bihar for the latter's administrative advantages and also to give it a seaboard.² The unification of Oriya speaking areas in neighboring provinces was paid little consideration. Meetings were held in different parts of natural Orissa to give vent to the deep sense of frustration felt by the Oriyas at the Creation

1 K.M. Patra, Orissa Legislature and Freedom Struggle, p. 21.

2 H.K. Mehtab (ed.), History of Freedom Movement in Orissa, Vol. III, Cuttack, 1957, p.

of Bihar and Orissa and non-compliance to their desires and prayer for separate Orissa. At this very junctures came First World War. It had little impact on the political arena in Orissa. Moderates dominating the Utkal Union Conference, the chief organ of Oriya movement, displayed loyalty to the Government. In the Indian National Congress, excluding extremists, who had been put down earlier by various repressive measures, moderates proclaimed their loyalty and support to the war in resolutions adopted at each of its four annual sessions during the war.³

The feudatory chiefs of Orissa collected a handsome amount of Ropes 50,000 and presented it to the Government for purchasing two aeroplanes for war use.⁴ UUC was largely dominated by the feudal chiefs by this period. It was only in 1913 that Madhusudan Das became its president for the first time.⁵

II

About this time poet Gangadhar Mehar (1862 - 1924) was in the highnoon of his career. Starting his writing in 1885 he had produced a number of works which had led to his getting the title

3 R. Palme Dutt, India Today, Second Indian Edition, Calcutta, 1970. pp. 332 - 334.

4 S. Pati, Democratic Movements in India, New Delhi, 1987, p. 58.

5 Nivedita Mohanty, Oriya Nationalism, New Delhi, 1982, p. 58.

of 'Swabhab Kabi' (Natural Poet) of Orissa. Meher was from a lower middle-class family from the villages Barapali in Sambalpur. During his early days he had to depend upon his hereditary occupation, weaving, to support his family. Poverty and various family disturbances stood in the way of his educational progress. The burden of early marriage and the increasing problems of joint family had posed a threat to his early education. At the age of twenty he finished his formal education.⁶

Towards the last part of the 19th century, the language agitation in Sambalpur had gathered momentum. The forcible imposition of Hindi as the court language by the Government of the Central Provinces under whose administration Sambalpur was then, was seen by the people as an act of negligence of the languages and culture of the Oriya people.⁷ Here also the government had played the imperialist policy of 'divide and rule'.⁸ After 1895 the problem took different form and more popular protest meetings were organised in that part of Orissa.

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- 6 H.K. Das, (ed.), Gangadhar Granthavali, Berhampur, 1977,
 7. C. Mishra, Freedom Movement in Sambalpur, New Delhi, 1986, p. 153.
 - 8 Richard P. Cronin, "Language and Nationalism in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth century India", in R.I. Cranc and Bradford Spangenberg, (ed.) Language and Society in Modern India, New Delhi, 1981, p. 25.

Gangadhar Meher had lent enough support to his fellow Oriyas and had written a series of poems for restoration of Oriya as the court language of Sambalpur. In the poem "Matrubhumi" (Motherland) he had written, " If we consider those people who have no love for their motherland and mother tongue as wisemen, them where would be the place of fools ? ⁹ 'Sambalpur Hitaisini; a journal published from Bamra, became the mouth-piece of the agitators in that period. Meher uses to publish his poems supporting the movement in this journal. The ultimate result of this agitation was the restoration of Oriya languages as the court languages of Sambalpur. At the time of the partition of Bengal Sambalpur was returned to the Orissa division. 'Utkal Laxmi' is regarded as the best of Gangadhar Meher's important nationalist poems. It was completed in 1894. It came in for criticism in 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' the next year. It's final publication was in 1914, According to Isaiah Berlin, "while a grave wound is inflicted on the collectives feelings of society, it may became a necessary condition for the birth of nationalism. There appears the necessity of "national image" building and this is done by the conscious intelligentsia. These are men who speak or write to the people and seek to make them conscious of their wrongs as a people - poets, novelists, historians and

9 H.K. Das (ed.), Gangadhar Granthavali, p. 336.

critics, theologians, philosophers and like.¹⁰ "Gangadhar Mehar belonged to this class of people. Through his writings he made conscious uses of the past greatness of the Oriyas and inspired them to work for the betterment of their motherland. Scattering of Oriya speaking lands among different provinces and the hostility of the non-Oriya provincial governments to the cultural aspirations of the Oriyas were seen by the Oriyas to be the problem they were facing. In "Utkal Laxmi" for the first time Gangadhar talked about the boundaries of Orissa. The captured the popular sentiment, with its religious flavour. At the same time the geographical demarcation it favoured was based on the feeling of belonging to a single area.

His " Arghyathali" (Worshiping Plate) was the collection of small poems written between 1910 and 1918. Some of his nationalistic poems belonged to this collection . "Utkal Bharatinka Ukti "(Saying of Utkal Bharti), "Matrubhumi " (Mother land) and "Udbodhan" (Address) are some of his poems which bore the odour of patriotism and sense of dedication to the national cause. Through these poems he made the point that the key to development of motherland was the mother tongue. In the poem "Udbodhan" (Address) he says:

10 Issaiah Berlin, Against the Current. Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 346.

If you try to be great,

Make great your mother tongue.¹¹

In some of his poems he asked the people of Orissa to join the "Utkal Union Conference" and to strengthen the agitation for the Unification of Oriya speaking tracts.¹² Besides these he also wrote some poems on the then Oriya leaders like Madhusudan Das and Fakirmohan Senapati.

There are some poems written by him, which bear loyalistic attitude marking the them thinking of Moderates and many others about the Government. At the age of twenty-three he got a job with the local zamindar who was a staunch supporter of the British Raj. After fourteen years he got the job of a judicial clerk through the recommendation of the said zamindar. Being a loyalistic circle and depending upon them for his livelihood it was natural his part to display the same mentality towards the government.

His poem "Udbodhan" was a call to the Indian youth to join the army during the First World War. To inspire them, he reminded them of the heroic deeds of their ancestors. He put forth the

11 H.K. Das (ed.), Gangadhar Granthavali, p. 34.

12 Poems on the title "Nababarsha" (New Year), "Udbodhan" and Utkala Sammilani proogated the ideas behind the conference.

examples of epic heroes like Abhimanyu and Aswathama, two characters of Mahabharat who had showed exemplary bravery in the battlefield at a very young ages. "Mahaprayan" (The Great Demise) written on the death of Edward VII was a blind glorification of the king about whom he might have read from his school books. Another poem of the same character "Victoria Staba"¹³ (Hailing Victoria) described the virtues of the Queen on the occasion of her birth anniversary.

In the same collection, "Arghyathali", the poem "Go-Bilap" (Cow's Sorrow) portrayed the sorrows of cattle on their killing and negligence by human beings. Here he pointed out that cow killing was at the root of communal tension. Writing at the request of the President of the local cow protection organisation, he requested communities, Hindus and Muslims, to refrain from torturing cattle.¹⁴

His poem "Bharti Bhavna" (Thoughts of Bharti)¹⁵ invited special attention for the nature and degree of protest shown against the government. It was published in January 1923, number of 'Mukur' a journal published from Cuttack. Writing during the last days of his life he used considerable harsh words against

13 Ibid., p. 376.

14 Ibid., pp. 378 - 383.

15 bid. pp. 389 -417.

the British rule. The poem was written at a time when Orissa had joined the national movement and its first wave, the Non Cooperation Movement was just seen in this poem. The poet's inner fear in challenging the British rule and his loyalty shown in the past restricted him from criticising British rule more directly. Written in a roundabout way the poem expressed dual meanings. He gave his feelings a mythological shield. Consequently, it is possible that the real meaning of the poem was not grasped by the layman. Considering his loyalistic poems it is clear that the Gandhian movement had a profound impact on his and people's thinking.

Gangadhar Meher's entire life in a rural surrounding and close contact with the peasants had given him enough inspiration to speak on speak on their behalf. In this poetry collection "Krishak Sangeet" (Songs of the Farmers),¹⁶ he highlighted the socio - economic condition of the peasantry. At the same time he warned that as long as peasantry was underdeveloped, the country itself would remain under-developed. He also said that farming was the root of all civilisation.

16 Ibid., pp. 389 -417. The poem was written in 1921.

Leave farming, everything will be destroyed,
No food no shelter,
Civilisation will vanish,
Man will die of hunger. 17

Besides farmers he took up the cause of other poorer sections of society. In the poem "Panchayat" he traced the causes of the suffering of the rural poor. Village headmen and moneylenders were seen to be the chief exploiters poor. According to him the Panchayat alone could save the people from the 'devils and lead them to Satyayuga !

In every village will appear Satyayuga
Its impact will be felt in towns. 18

III

During the times Gangadhar Meher was searching for the lost Oriya identity in the natural beauties of hills and lakes, Nandakishore Bala (1857 - 1928) was searching for it in the villages of Orissa. The pleasant village life yet untouched by

17 Ibid., p. 391.

18 Ibid., p. 393.

the invading modernity of towns attracted him to write a series of poems which earned him the title of 'Pallikabi' (Poet of villages). Simple and accurate description of mundane things of villages life filled the reader, having a village background, with a strong feeling of nostalgia. Being from a well-to-do family he had enough opportunity to get higher education in the last part of the nineteenth century. Study of English poets had a profound impact on him which he freely admitted. He borrowed much of his technique from Shelly, Tennyson and Keats.¹⁹ His poetry marks clearly the descent of Oriya literature from medieval allegories and metaphor to modern simplicity.

Spending a major portion of his life in different towns of Orissa he had seen both the sides of the coin-town life and village life. Describing the heavenly beauty of the village he had not forgotten to point to the darker side of the villages. Superstition prevailing in the villages had annoyed the poet. He had been disturbed by the condition of women and in particular, of women and in particular, of the young widows. In the third part of his most important work 'Pallchitra' (Villages Scenario-1899) he attacked the idleness, the narrow outlook of the villagers, casteism and child marriage.

19 K.B. Das, "The Impact of West in Oriya Literature" in Arvind Podder (ed.) Indian Literature, IIAS., Simla, 1972.

His nationalistic writings mark some difference from those of his contemporaries. These are more simple and stronger in their argument. He touched every aspect-cultural, economic and political- of the Oriya movement . Through moderate in nature his, poems testify to the depth of his knowledge of national and international happenings. "Janmabhumi" (Places of birth)²² which is in three parts and contains several poems, is the best of his nationalistic writings. Part one was written under the title 'Mother Utkal's Prayer Before the New Emperor' for an essay competition by the Radhanath Library of Balasore on the occasion of the coronation of Edward VII. The poem was awarded the first prize by the library. Before becoming a part of a book in 1903, it was published in two different journals - 'Sambalpur Hitaisini'.²³ He put his ideas in roundabout way by giving it the form of dream of to crowned king. In the dream the king sees 'Mother Utkal' in a shabby dress narrating her woes before in a crowded court room. After a brief introduction, she is saying that despite a glorious history her sons are underdeveloped and poor. The main cause of poverty are their idleness and inactivity. She mentions the exploitation of Mughals and Marathas

20 N.K. Bala, Nandakishore Granthavali, Cuttack, 1955, pp. 65 - 95.

21 Ibid., p. 307.

as another cause of her poverty. She had been saved from their clutches by the Britishers only, but enough had not been done in compares on with other provinces. So she places a list of reforms before the king for her betterment and would make her equal with the neighboring provinces. Her second demand was to grant her the long promised permanent settlement which was granted to Bengal Proper.²² Third demand was the enhancement of irrigation projects in the Orissa division to save the people from the curse of droughts. The most, important demand was for exemption of the Salt Tax in Orissa division.²³ The fifth one was the demand for equal right of Oriyas in Government jobs and the last one being the demand for an Agricultural Bank in Orissa.

Through this poem the poet wanted to make the people of Orissa conscious of the common cause they should have fought for., The demand for united Orissa was by now a long-standing cause. Frequent visitation of drought and the resulting suffering of the inspired the poet to demand irrigation projects. After the British occupation of Orissa in 1803, many experiments

22 Ibid., p. 317. Only he provided adequate argument for the demand. According to him Bengal had made progress because of revenue settlement. Moreover the soil patterns of Orissa were not suitable for temporary settlements.

23 Ibid., p. 319. Also he has pointed out the loss to government treasury by employing so many people to protect the Salt law.

in revenue administration were conducted. These became the major cause for the Paik Rebellion of 1817. From 1837 thirty years' settlements were made. This continued upto and after the²⁴ devastating famine of 1866. These temporary land settlements and their defective nature inspired the poet to demand Permanent settlement in the province. Salt was the cheapest but essential commodity on which the Government was imposing taxes causing difficulties to the poorer sections of the society. Thirty years before the breaking of the Salt law at Dandi by Gandhi, Nandakishore Bala had demanded its abolition. Asking for access for the Oriyas to Government jobs was a reaction to the Bengali dominance in every sphere of administration in British Orissa.

Written at the Peakhour of the language agitation, this poem was a symbol of popular protest before the Government. None but the people of Orissa themselves were made responsible for their suffering. Britishers were depicted as the saviours and torchbearers of modern civilisation. Humiliation at the hands of the people of the neighboring states had acted as the common wound to give birth to the nationalism of the oriya people. In this poem Nandakishore's objection to their i,outsiders'

24 Amal Kumar Mishra, Nationalist Leadership and Agrarian legislation, M. Phil. Dissertation, JNU., .

domains was fierce. In one Stanza of this poem, in his effort to describe the plight of Oriyas, he said:

Being employed in every places,
Railways, postal and administration,
They took much money or Oriyas,
Oriyas are grass cutters when foreigners get jobs.
Without job cries Oriya, also unfed Oriya woman. 25

The target of his anger was not colonial exploitation but the other non-Oriya Indians, mostly Bengalis.

The second part of 'Janmabhumi' was dedicated to Madhusudan Das, the man behind UUC. This was a collection of twenty three poems which were sung in the different political and cultural associations like Ganjam Jatiya Samiti, Utkal Sahitya Samaj and Utkal Union Conference. Before coming out in a compact bookform in 1908, these were also published in journals like Utkal Sahitya and Mukur.
26

In these poems he gave Orissa, the motherland, a human form. In most of his poems he depicted Mother Utkal as crying, distressed and lying in dust. Starting from French Revolution in the 18th century and getting its Indian forms through Bankim

25 N.K. Bala, Nandakishore Granthavali, p. 319.

26 Ibid., p. 328.

Chandra's 'Anand Math' this concept of land as mother has been used by natinalists to arouse the masses. It was Nandakishore's²⁷ effort to promote nationalist sentiments among people by touching as their emotions. In one of his poems he said:

O, dear Oriyas, get up from your slumber,
There is injustice to your land.
See Motherland wiping her tear,
In a sorrowful images.²⁸

In another poem he said :

My body is made of thine flesh and blood,
My life is inspired by thine courage.²⁹

One more characteristic of his nationalist poetry was his exhortation to the people to rise from inactivity to action. Also, he was cry optimistic about the coming of a bright day after the dark night was over. What his poems signified was the then limited popularity of the Oriya movement in different parts of the province, Low literacy rate, fear of any government reaction and non-realisation of the common problems had

27 T.W. Clark, "The Role of Bankim Chandra in the Development of Nationalism" in C.H. Phillips (ed.), Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, Oxford University Press, 1961.

28 Ibid., p. 347.

29 Ibid., p. 341.

restricted the boundary of the Oriya movement in the first decade of the 20th century to a particular class of people. There was a perpetual effort by the conscious intelligentsia to reach the message of nationalism to the masses. Nandakishore also placed examples of development achieved by the people of other provinces and also of other countries.³⁰ By the placing the instances of developed western countries he had shown his deep appreciation of the superiority of western material civilization with its bases in science and technology.

The early nationalists had given importance to social reforms. They had felt that it would be very difficult for their political ideologies to gain foothold in the king of medieval society that Orissa then was. Western education had implanted much humanism in their heart to press themselves to do something about the prevailing inhuman practices in society. Earlier Rammohan Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar had shown the path.

Nandakishore was no exception to this trend, The condition of women had appalled him and inspired him to raise his voice against their exploitation in the name of religion.³¹ He had

30 He gave the examples of countries like USA, Japan and other European countries. Growth of Japan as an economic power entire colonial world in those days.

31 Poems like Nari Siksha (Granthavali, P. 283), Charuchitra (Granthavali, p. 283) and Brudha Bibaha and Bala Bibaha are bearer of such ideas.

written some poems and novel 'Kanakalata' 1914 (them only novel to his credit) highlighting the inhuman practice of child marriage and its consequences on society. Although he had taken up the cause at the inspiration of Fakirmohan senapati, in the midway he had lost his destination. Death of the young widow because of dysentery and the hero's defection to ascetic life were not only an unto climax but give a clear impression that he had succumbed to the pressures of conservative elements of society.

Orissa came under colonial rule from 1803 the time she was annexed to British India. Gradually her indigenous industries were destroyed and like other parts of India self sufficient village economy was replaced by market economy. Reaction of Orissa to the colonial exploitation came later than in other provinces. People's wrath was falling more on the intermediaries like Jamindars, money lenders and Bengali bureaucrats than on the Britishers. The hostility shown by the people to foreign rule just after fifteen years of occupation restricted the Government in advancing any kind of major reformative measures. As a result, the Orissa division lagged behind both economically and socially.

Negligence of Orissa gave an upperhand to the outsiders who were comparatively more advanced. Their threat to impose alien language in Orissa soil was seen as cultural colonization. According to Elie Kedouri, "..... the characteristics which served to distinguish one human group from another were cultural, and more specifically, linguistic, since language was not a colourless medium of human communication but a depository of the tradition, attitudes and habits of successive generations of particular group. ³² So when Oriya language was at stake, it could not be tolerated by Oriyas. Starting from Fakirmohan Senapati, the man who had dedicated his life to the development of Oriya language, to Nandakishore Bala, every major writer put emphasis upon the upliftment and enrichment of the language. According to them working for the mother tongue was the same as worshiping goddess Saraswati.

IV

Another characteristic of these poets was that they drew inspirations from the past. Past was always glorious compared to the present. According to Kedouri, "Nationalist doctrine is

32 Elie Kedouri (ed.), Nationalism in Asia and Africa, London, 1971, p. 34.

asserting that the only legitimate political association is one which binds together men speaking the same language, sharing the same culture, and cherishing the same heroes and ancestors, expresses in its ideological way a preoccupation with history, has come to be a dominant theme of the modern European outlook and which and also been wherever European culture has penetrated. Man³³ always uses his past as the strong proof of his separate identity. Besides the past, the Oriya poets also looked for inspiration to the different contemporary happening. Still, they could not free themselves from feudalistic attitudes which were the contemporaries of Radhanth Roy. However, whatever the nature of their writing their contribution always outweighed their flaws.

33 Ibid., p. 35.

CHAPTER III

JOINING THE MAINSTREAM (1918-1929)

I

End of the second decade of the 20th century was full of dramatic events. "By the end of the First World War in 1918, the generation of nationalists, aroused to political awareness and impatient with the pace of change, were looking for a means of expressing themselves through effective political action."¹ Non-fulfillment of the promises made by the government during the war was laying the parts for Gandhian protest movements. In Orissa, Utkal Union Conference was escaping from the clutches of the conservative forces. Architect of the Conference, Madhusudan Das, was being over shadowed by the coming of the new young radical leaders.² Now the leadership was shifting from him to Gopabandhu Das, the social worker turned politician. Gopabandhu Das had been known to the people of Orissa from the opening of the school at Satyavadi, whose contribution to Orissa politics for the next two decades was most valuable.

1 Bipan Chandra and others, India's Struggle for Independence Viking, New Delhi, 1988, p. 169

2 Nivedita Mohanty, Oriya Nationalism, New Delhi, 1982, p. 62. For Gopabandhu's rise to politics see Jagannath Pathy, "Gopabandhu and the Rise of Modern Oriya Nationalism," Bengal Past and Present, Vol. XCVIII, Part - I, 1979.

On the bank of River Vargavi on a moonlight night of September, 1902, four youngmen took the pledge to serve their motherland and to die if necessary in the effort. These youngmen were Gopabandhu Das, Nilakantha Das Krupasindhu Mishra and Anant³ Mishra, four of the few educated Oriyas. Seven years later their brainchild the Satyavadi school came into existence in the Churiana groves of Saksigopal, some nine miles away from Puri. The depressed condition of Oriyas; increasing deaths due⁴ natural calamities and epidemics and exploitation by the people of the neighboring province had inspired these youths to devote their life to the cause of their motherland. The first organised step they took was the formation of a "recruiting ground for persons who would serve the country in true patriotic spirit." This nationalist-cadre producing institution at Sayavadi became a place of attraction for the coming two decades. Obstacles in their way were many. There was not only a school but also an organisation for social reforms. There was no caste distinction and superstition could not make its way into the school was run like a large family. It was surrounded by orthodox Brahmin-dominated villages and most of its teachers were Brahmins. The conservative sections of the society could not

3 Nilakantha Das, Atma Jibani (Oriya), Cuttack, 1963, p. 35.

4 Godararish Mishra, Godavarish Granthavali, Vol. I, Cuttack, 1960, p. 92.

tolerate the existences of such sudden progr^s/assive forces having profound effect on their own children. As a result, in 1912 the school was burnt down to ashes. Some of the teachers and their families were ostracised from the village community.

Another obstacle was the Government apathy towards the institution. It could not get a University recognition in time so that students had to appear for their examination through other recognised schools. After eight years of working in 1917, it got university recognition on the condition that it had to receive the aid of some seventy five rupees annually which was contrary to the principle of the school. Past activities of the teachers and then political condition of the country made the authorities hesitate in giving recognition to this unique institution. They had an impression that me king of secret anti-British activities were going on in the school premises.

5. S.N. Das., Utkalamani Gopabandhu, Cuttack, 1975, p. 11.

6 Godavarish Mishra has mentioned in his autobiography about his terrorist connections in his student days. During his stay in Calcutta he had come in to contact with Bengali extremists and their secret underground activities. In Cuttack, Gopabandhu, Nilakantha and Godavarish were involved in a secret organisation whose meetings were held at night at various secluded places. Government had the firm impression that they were carrying on underground activities in the school premises.

All these hindrances could not restrict the growth of the school which was to produce many of the future freedom fighters of Orissa. The austerity, morality and dedication of the self-sacrificing teachers to the institution to acquire high reputation. Number of students increased day by day, as also the visitors to this pilgrimages center of nationalist education. In 1911 and 1912, Pandit Nilakantha Das and Pandit Godavarish Mishra joined their political Guru Gopabandhu Basin this school. While the opposition to the school was local, assistance came from various quarters of Orissa. Some religious heads and feudatory chiefs were also contributing to the school fund.⁷

Gopabandhu was the central axis and everything was revolving around him in the school. He was the father of the idea and the inspiration behind the school. He had realized that the education was the only way for development of national prestige. The school was the experimental of national ground of his thoughts and the dream which he had visualized in the youth regarding education and nation building. Fergusson college of Pune, Public Schools of Eton, Harrown and Rugby and aroused his vivid imigation.⁸ Elasticity of the young minds and the ease with which nationalist

7 Nilakantha Das, Atma Jivani, Page 121.

8 Ibid., page 103.

ideas could be implanted in them were the chief motivation behind this school, Gopahandhu wanted to systematise the educational revolution in the province and to make it a part of the national educational movement.⁹

The Satyavadi group did not restrict itself to education only in a limited sphere. For the development of Oriya language and imparting education to larger number of people they set up a printing press in 1919 and started publishing two journals-¹⁰ "Satyavadi", a monthly, and 'Samaj' a weakly in Oriya. Through these two organs they also ventilated their own ideas and opinions. Towards the later part of the second decade of the 20th century, Satyavadi school started downhill. Internal rivalry for Headmastrship, a result of the existence of equally qualified person. and coming of the Non-co-operation movement added speed to the process of deterioration. No more existed the early vigour and entusiasm of the teachers. The ambition of serving the country actively and more directly dragged them away from the school. Being elected to the Bihar and Orissa legislative council in 1916, Gopabandhu had reduced his participation in school affairs. At the coming of the NCM and the introduction of the Congress policy of Nationalist Education, Gopabandhy proclaimed the school as a nationalist institution: and during his last days in 1928 used to stay there.

9 Gopabandhu Rachanabali, Val, GBAC, Cuttack, 1976, page 45.

10 Godavarish Granthavali, Vol. I, p. 98.

II

Rowlatt act led to the Jalianawala Bagh massacre. First World War had ended with a partitioned Turkey for which Indian Muslims were critical about the British policies, and thus arose the Khilafat agitation. Both these events prepared the ground for Gandhi, the man who had returned from South Africa and had given a flash of his charisma in Champaran, Khaira and Ahmedabad, to launch the first mass movement in India.

11

Orissa had remained away from the Rowlatt Satyagraha. The scattered character of Oriya speaking tracts had made it difficult for the leaders to organize an anti government movement at such short notice. National Congress was looked upon as a bigger organisation having nothing to do with regional problems. Orissa was still in the moderate era of leadership.

By this time a new group of politicians had emerged on the political Scenario of Orissa. Under the leadership of Gopabandhu Das they had realized that it was no more right to stay away from the Congress. They also thought that they could simultaneously look after the regional problems and participate in the national

11 In Introduction to R. Kumar (ed.), Essays on Gandhian Politics, Oxford, 1971., p.7.

mainstream. Madhusudan Das, with his anti- Congress stance, departed from this group and remained loyal to the government . His popularity as the chief Oriya leader thus begun to wane. Gopabandhu Das with his Satyavadi reputation and as a legislator was gaining popularity. Samaj, the weekly newspaper launched from Satyavadi in 1919, reflected his ideological stand. The people in general started assigning the two groups separate slots: one committed to the Oriya problem no doubt but divorced from broader ideas floating in the air, and the other, at least on the surface, prepared to accommodate with ideas: ¹²

Immediately after the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress. Utkal Union Conference had its annual session in Chakradharpur of Singhbhum district. At this session, Gopabandhu Das introduced an important change in the outlook of the Conference whereby it accepted the principle that although unification of all Oriya speaking tracts was a vital issue with Oriyas, Utkal all the same could not move separately from the whole of India in tackling her problems but should make with the Congress under its direction. ¹³ Another development at the Nagpur Congress was the adoption of the Principle of forming regional

12 Nivedita Mohanty, Oriya Nationalism, New Delhi, 1982, p.99.

13 H.K. Mehtab (ed.), History of Freedom Movement in Orissa, Vol. III, SCCHFM, Orissa, 1957, p. 55.

congress committees on linguistic basis. This enabled Orissa's participation in the national movement to move one step forward. From January onwards. Gopabandhu toured the province intensively and held meetings at different places where he emphasized the boycott of government institutions and foreign goods. During his India wide tour Gandhi came to Orissa on 23rd March and addressed a huge meeting on the bank of Kahjuri river at Cuttack. From there he proceeded to Berhampur. In his Cuttack meeting he said that Swaraj could be attained within seven months if the Congress resolution on non-cooperation was carried out.¹⁴ This visit of Gandhi inspired the people and they participated in the movement in large numbers. Cuttack, Sambalpur, Balasor, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur became centers of Congress activities. Students of Sambalpur Zilla school became the pioneers of the movement there. One of them had even attended the Chakradharpur session of UUC. The students of zilla school were the first to adopt the noncooperation movement before its spread anywhere else in the province.¹⁵ By 30th June 1921, 40,000 Congress members had been enrolled, Rs. 22,000 collected for Tilak Swaraj Fund, and 15,000 Charkhas operating in Utkal. Gopabandhu Das declared Satyavadi School to be national school.

14 Speech at Cuttack, Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIX, (Nov. 1920 - April 1921), p. 474.

15 Cittaranjan' Mishra, Freedom Movement in Sambalpur, New Delhi, 1986, p. 193

III

Besides active participation, Gopahandhu had also contributed towards the movements as a writer. Although by that time he was not an established poet in Oriya literatures, still he had published in 1899 a poetry collection. "Abakash Chinta"¹⁶ (Thoughts of Liesure Hours), containing thirty-eight poems. In the poem of this collection, like Khandagiri Sikhare (At the top of Khandagiri), Katakara Silasetu (Stone Embakment of Cuttack), Barabati Darshan (Visit to Barabati), and "Rel Upare Chilika Darshan" (Chilka from the Train), he had lamented over the past glory of the Oriyas and searched for the patriotism in Oriya heart.

In one poem he said :

The Hills are there , also the woods,
Strong are the rocks, then the ocean,
But where is the heroism,
Nationalism of Oriyas. 17

16 The poem was published in 1899 from Orissa Patriot Press on the occasion of Kartabya Bodhini Sabha having only nine poems and of nineteen pages. Radhamohan Gadnaik (ed), Collected Works of Gopabandhu (Oriya), OSA, 1980, p. 15.

17 Ibid., p. 55.

So one can perceive the basic characteristics of the nineteenth century nationalist literature in Gopabandhu's early writing. Another characteristic, the loyalist flavour, was also present in his writings of this period. A poem of the collection 'Abakashchenta' described the British rule as civilised and benevolent:

Gone are a hundred years of,
British benevolent rule in Utkal,
Western education bore the fruit,
Power of an united effort.¹⁸

In the second decade of the 20th century, when he was working for the flood and famine affected people and was coming into contact with the real Orissa, a change took place within him. After being elected to the Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa his primary concern became the presentation of the actual facts of the people's condition in rural Orissa.¹⁹ The final change of his attitude towards the government came after the launching of the Non-co-operation movement by Gandhi.

18 Ibid., p. 58. Even Gandhi, till the launching of Rowlatt Satyagraha had loyalistic mentalities towards Government P.H.M. Van Den Dungen, Gandhi in 1919 : Loyalist or Rebel? in Ravinder Kumar (ed.), Essays on Gandhian Politics, Oxford, 1971.

19 K.M. Patra, Orissa Legislature and Freedom Struggle (1912 - 1947), ICHR, New Delhi, 1979, p. 26.

Gopabandhu's nationalist spirit was poured into two of his poetic works. " Kara Kabita" (Prison Poem) and" Bandira Atmakatha" (Self Revelation of a Prisoner). The former, a collection of poems and the latter a single long poem, were written during his prison life in Cuttack Jail and Hazaribagh Jail from 31st May 1922 to 26th June 1924. In the poetry collection, "Karakabita" the poem "Pitrupaksh Tarpan" (Offer to Ancestors) Justified the cause for which he had come behind the bars. It embodied the deep anger towards the undemocratic British rule. He confirmed that he had made no mistake in going against the British rule, which Gandhi had described as "Satanic". He said:

The system headed by bureaucrats,
People bear the exploitation.
Administration means only thrashing,
People know only paying taxes,
Wealthy and crooked are welcomed,
Poor innocent subjects bear repression.20

Echoing Balgangadhar Tilak, he said:

20 R. Gadnaik (ed.), Collected Works of Gopabandhu (Oriya), pp. 107 - 108.

Freedom the birth right of man,
Freedom of expression and freedom to move,
Freedom to live and freedom to organisation,
On the four pillars rests human society
Bureaucratic rule in India,
Has, broken the society by uprooting these.²¹

This poem also provided a broad account of Gopabandhu's perception of the non-violent movement. He wrote: "although remaining loyal to the throne is the principle of the scriptures, still people have lost faith in the government. The bureaucratic machinery of the Britishers has harassed the Indian masses. When people are oppressed and public opinion undermined, there comes a revolution. As India is the birthplace of the concept of Ahimsa (non-violence), she would not have that bloody revolution. Gandhi had propagated Ahimsa and people starting from householders to hermits are responding to his call. The belief is getting stronger that this ultimate weapon of non-violence would drive out the Britishers from India". He ended his poem saying that though offering to ancestors should not be made in alien land, he had no alternative. In his own words:

21 Ibid., p. 104 - 105.

No right to the temple, thy built,

22

I'm a wretched begger in the state thy established.

In the poem "Bandira Sandhya Bhakti" (Evening Prayer of the Prisoner) of the same collection "Karakabita", he cited the examples of Socrates among others, who had laid down their lives for the victory of truth in this world. Also he was of the opinion that always regal powers vanished in time and were condemned for times to come.

"Bandira Atmakatha" the long poem written during the prison life was based on and about the Non-cooperation movement. Here he encouraged the people to carry on the movement in his temporary absence. He defined the Non-cooperation movement as a peaceful war, in which there was no need for canon and sword.

The war was going on in a spiritual basis to defeat animal power or the beastly administration. Only non-violent way was applicable in that war and its first consequence was

22 Ibid., p. 111. The poem was written during his prison days in Hazaribagh.

23 Ibid., pp. 116-117, also written during his prison days.

24 "And considering all these factors we will reach on the decision that poem's first part was written immediately after going into Cuttack Jail second part after four months and the third part just before going to the Hazaribagh jail." Natabar Samantray "Time and Situation of Writing of Bandira Atmakatha (Oriya)", Panchajanya, 5th year, no. 3, 1984.

imprisonment. In the following few lines from the poem the poet expressed his self dedication to the cause of the nation.

Let my body mingle in the soil of this land,
May my countrymen tread on it as they walk,
And the holes that are there on the road to swaraj,
May those be filled up with my bones and flesh,
May the offering of my life advance a whit,
The cause of man's freedom in the land ever bright,
And the will of God be fulfilled in my life,
This is a lord my last prayer thy side.²⁵

He glorified the prison as the door to heaven of national independence. He made the British rule responsible for the price rise, frequent revenue settlements and different kinds of oppressive taxation and in general for the increasing poverty of the people. Also he prophecied that the inhuman rule would come to an end at the coming of swaraj. In swaraj, there would be no sorrow and exploitation. No one would be hungry, and the poor would not bear the thrashing of the wealthy. People's rule would replace the rule of force. And swaraj was the noble cause for which Gandhi was imprisoned. Gopabandhu inspired the people

25 Collected Works of Gopabandu (Oriya), p. 16.

to spin and compromise personal disputes through village panchayats. He also encouraged the people to give up any kind of fear and to walk on the pathy of truth.

In this poem he justified his stand of adopting Congress principles at the Utkal Union Conference. In the Conference there was a great deal of opposition to the proposal from the loyalist or pro-government section. He compared Gandhi with Bhagirath and the NCM with the river Ganga. He compared himself to a negligible boatman in the boat of swaraj. He asked the people not to feel his absence as God was there to lead them. He gave the example of Lord Jagannath helping an Oriya king in
26
battlefield to defeat an enemy.

Then he gave a vivid description of poverty or material condition of the Oriyas. How the condition of peasants and Paikas (a martial class who served in army) had worsened because of the exploiting money-lenders, zamindars and the village police. Frequent visits of natural calamities had added to the plight of the people. According to him, all are encircled in a

26 A Legend runs that Purushottam Deva, the Gajapati king of fourteenth century, had attacked the kingdom of Kanchi to take revenge for an insult. In that battle Lord Jaganath and his brother Balabhadra had helped the king in the battlefield in the guise of two soldiers. They had done so for the safety and prestige of Utkal.

magic circle of British rule like the doves in a hunter's net. The condition of doves worsens by quarreling among themselves without being conscious of the ill fate overpowering them. He also pointed to the destruction of indigenous industries and the capture of Indian market. To him the country had become a corpse.

To escape the vicious circle of exploitation, he advised the people to give up foreign goods, use indigenous products and take personal disputes to village panchayats, the age old law-enforcing organ of village administration. Gopabandu believed that spinning wheel at home, panchayat in village and unity among villagers would ultimately bring swaraj to Orissa.

Subsequently he described the wretched condition of Oriyas, who were suffering from natural calamities like floods and famine. But, strangely, he made the people responsible for their own suffering. He said that the society was full of sinners and suffering was for the past deeds. People's purification of their own sould would bring them happiness. This indicated the underdeveloped character of Gopabandhu's political consciousness.

27 All these, results of man's Karma
Sin has increased in the society.
(Collected Works of Gopabandhu (Oriya), p. 181.)

It seems that he had insufficient understanding of the imperialistic policies of the government. Although he talked of the economic impact of British rule, in this poem he was not able to give the exact nature of the impact.

During the month of March, 1922, the time NCM was at its apex in Orissa, a series of incidents of fire took place in Cuttack town. On 20th March, 30 houses in one place and 35 in another, and on 27th, 40 to 50 houses caught fire. According to official reports the police and Government officials were doing nothing to prevent the fire or detect the persons behind such acts of incendiarism. Some took it as acts of police supported by the government. Mentioning these incidents in his poem, Gopabandhu told the people to leave the culprit at the mercy of God.

He was of the opinion that by abiding with the principle of Satyagraha, organising panchayats, playing the spinning wheel and giving up untouchability people would achieve the ultimate result, Swaraj. Regarding the incidents of fire he gave the examples of Kansa and Duryodhan of Mahabharat who were punished at the hands of God.

28 Home Department Political (Fortnightly Report), F.18/3/1922.

29 Collected Works of Gopabandhu, (Oriya) p. 184.

Another major incident during the NCM in Orissa was that of the Kanika disturbances which was the culmination of the unpopular revenue administration in the estate. The Raja of Kanika who was a major figure in the Utkal Union Conference condemned NCM and congratulated his tenants for remaining uninfluenced by the movement. On 23rd April, 1922, the movement took a violent form when one man was shot dead and two others were seriously wounded by police firing. What followed was ruthless suppression of peasant rebellion in the estate. Kanika disturbances served as a major cause for Goipabandhu's arrest and imprisonment. Government wanted at any rate to keep the leaders away from the area of disturbance. Gopabandhu had not forgotten the mentioning of the unfortunate tenants of the estate in the poem "Bandira Atmakatha" He consoled them to have patience and to be righteous and said what justice would be with them.

Satyavadi group of writers had always used the myths and legends of Orissa to create a passion for independence among their people. "Dharmapada" was one of such legends which had its

30 Biswamoy Pati, "Popular Struggle and Indian Nationalism A Note on the Kanika Disturbances (1921 - 1922)", Journal of Orissa History, No. 2, July 1981.

31 Home Department Political (F.R.), F. 18/3/1922.

32 Ibid., F. 18/6/1922.

origin with the Suntemple of Konark. Legend runs that when twelve hundred architects employed by the king Narsingh Dev failed to complete the final work before the dead line given by the king, Dharmapada, a twelve year old boy , a son of an architect Bisu Moharana, completed the final work. It would have been dangerous for the dignity of the architect class if by the morning people would have come to know the secret. So for the sake of the prestige of the architects. Dharmapada jumped into the deep sea from the top of the temple and thus became immortal. Gopabandhu's poem Dharmapada written during his prison days described this incident in a lucid and lyrical form. The chief intention behind this poem was to rouse the patriotic sentiment in the Oriyas. He said in the poem;

Human life is not of years, months, days and hours,
Man lives on his action, the only measuring rod of life.³³

Comparing Gandhi with Chaitanya, Nanak and Lord Krishna and

British Government with Kamsa and Duryodhan, Gopabandhu showed his perception of Gandhi and his non-violent movement. ³⁴ When

33 Collected Works of Gopabandhu (Oriya), . 234.

34 In the meeting of 23rd March, 1921 where Gandhi was also present Gopabandhu compared him with Chaitanya, Kabir and Nanak. In another meeting he compared Gandhi with Krishna and Britishers as Kamsa, Pandit S.N. Das, Utkalmani Gopabandhu (Oriya), Cuttack, 1975, pp. 397 - 398.

somebody expressed doubts about Gandhi's proclamation of attaining swaraj within one year, Gopabandhu was quick to say; "Gandhi is like an incarnation. He must have taken his gigantic enterprise with some secret understanding with either Afghanistan, Turkey and Russia or any other country. His political understanding was based on faith rather than scientific deduction. His perception of swaraj as a religion higher than any other religion of the world was perhaps designed to reach the concept to the mass of people. Abstaining from violence, narcotics and giving up untouchability were made the principles of this religion by him. He told the people to celebrate the Stayagraha week from 6th April to 13th April, 1922 like Dashera or Muharamm. Guided by this instruction, during those seven days people from rural areas came to attend meeting in Kirtan groups. The religious flavour added to the movement attracted much larger participation at a time when political consciousness was yet

35 R. Mishra (ed.), Collected Works of Godavarish (Oriya), Vol. I, Cuttack, 1968, p. 110.

36 Jangan - nath Pathy, " Gopabandhu and the Rise of Modern Oriya nationalism", Bengal Past and Present, Vol. XCVIII, Part I, Jan-June, 1979.

37 "In effect and this is a point overlooked in all the modern commentaries of Gandhian though Satyagraha was a religious struggle, a form of religious reform", Bruce Watson. "Satyagraha : the Gandhian Synthesis", Journal of Indian History, Vol. LV, 1977.

38 S.N. Das, Utkalmani Gopabandhu (Oriya), p. 374.

underdeveloped in Orissa. Gopabandhu's efforts taking the Oriyas from narrow regional politics to broad national movement was his most important contribution to the history of the Freedom Movement in Orissa and India.

IV

One of the colleagues of Gopabandhu Das in Satyavadi school was Nilakantha Das (1884 - 1967). From an earlier age both were known to each other. With two other friends; they had taken the vow to serve the country instead of entering into any government job. After completing M.A. from the Calcutta University, Nilkantha Das joined Gopabandhu in Satyavadi School in October, 1911. At the request of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee he joined Calcutta University on 20th September 1920, to teach Oriya and Comparative Linguistics, When NCM started in Orissa he came back from Calcutta on 6th January 1921. He joined the movement as headmaster of Sambalpur National School. Besides teaching he organised a volunteer group and rendered equire help to faraway villages during epidemics like cholera. During his stay in

39 Collected Works of Nilakantha Das (Oriya), Vol. I.

Sambalpur a weekly newspaper name 'Seva' was published by him. To bring out the students from schools and colleges and lawyers from law courts he had composed one song which student used to sing in processions. The song went like this:

Swaraj bhaya albat hoga,
Chhodke aao gulami,
Bharat ladka gulam hoke
Kahe karo badnami
xxxxx xxxxx
Skool kacheri kaunsil ko yad rakho babujee
40
Maya ye sab gulamika isme nahin bhulojee.

In his autobiography Nilakantha has given a separate chapter about Gandhijee visit to Orissa in 1923. This date was incorrect as Gandhi was in jail till February 1924 from his arrest in March 1922. However in that chapter Nilakantha Das has mentioned what he had an important discussion with Gandhi on the economic development of Orissa and the programme of popularising spinning weheels in villages. He was unable to reach at any conclusion azfter this discussion. By that time Nilakantha Das was not
41
willing to believe any thing without a concrete base.

40 Ibid., p. 93

41 Ibid.,

Pandit Nilakantha Das's literary achievements may be divided into two parts; poetry written during the Satyavadi days and prose, written towards the latter parts of his life. He has distinct identity in Oriya literature after Radhanath Roy. To create national consciousness among the subjugated Oriyas he went through the pages of ancient history and adopted the latter as his chief weapon to awaken the dead patriotism of the Oriyas. He felt that unless Oriyas were united their language, literature and future were not safe.

"Konark" (At Konark-1917)⁴³ and "Kharavela (1917)."⁴⁴ the poem written on the great historical figure of ancient Orissa, are the two nationalist poems of Nilakantha. The poet made a visit to the Suntemple from Satyavadi with his students. Due to rain they had to stay back somewhere on the way back to the school. There Nilakantha, through the night, conceived the idea of writing a long poem on the temple. The poem was a concise historical

42 P.K. Swain, "National Consciousness in Poetry of Pandit Nilakantha", The Jhankar (Oriya), 40th year, No. 10, Feb. 1989.

43 Collected Works of Nilakantha (Oriya), p. 73.

44 For details about Kharavela, the historical character, see, N.K. Sahu, History of Orissa, Utkal University, 1964.

commentary. On ancient and mediaeval Orissa in poetry form. The poem is curious mixture of facts and legends of History with a strong flavour imagination.

The poem "Kharavela " described an episode from Kharavela's campaign to the North-West. When he was in Afghanistan he came across a peasant girl. Kharvala's love with the girl beside the fight against the enemy was described in the poem.

Nilkantha was an ardent opponent of the Radhanath School of writers, He alleged that those writers, having no original identity of their own, borrowed heavily from Bengali literature.⁴⁵ Not only Nilakantha but the Satyavadi group of writers as a whole were critical of the Radhanath school of writers. Nilkantha was more of an active participant in the Freedom struggle than a contributor through literature. In 1923 he was arrested and sentenced to six month imprisonment in Hazaribagh Jail.⁴⁶ Then by the advice of Gopabandhu he joined the pro-changers and was elected to central legislative council. He was an active participant in the freedom movement till the attainment of independence.

45 Mayadhar Man Singh, History of Oriya Literature, (Oriya), .
Cuttack, 1967, p. 242.

46 Collected Works of Nilakantha (Oriya), p.98.

IV

Next to Gopabandhu and Nilkantha, Godavarish Mishra (1886 - 1957) was the most important figure in the Satyavadi group. He had joined the group in 1912. In his student life he had got an opportunity to stay with Gopabandhu and Nilakantha in Ravenshaw colleges. He had passed M.A. from Culcutta University.

Godavarish's writings consist of Ballads, two dramas and several novels. While the ballads speak of his humanitarianism and dramas of patriotism after mother land, novels speak of his idea of political extremism. His poetic creation, mostly lyrical ballads, were goal-oriented. The vivacity in national life which the Satyavadi poets had tried to see in contemporary society was not there. So they had to go back glorious past in their imagination to find it. Contemporary political and economic progress, social disturbances, apathy towards freedom movement and in particular the cold responses of the people had inspired the poet to create new hopes of the past, and beliefs from national heroes and national history and culture. Although their poems and stories were developed artistically, art was not the whole of the story. Reestablishment of national character, creation of craving for freedom and raising national consciousness among the people were their chief concern. In

the ballads of Govavarish, nationalism, social reform, humanism,⁴⁷ truthfulness and pride in the country's past were reflected. Characters in his ballads were often in ideal form.

Two of his dramas were based in the lives of two historical figures, Purusottam Deva of fourteenth century and Mukunda Deva of sixteenth century.

Godvarish's novels in the purview of our discussion were "Athara Saha Satar" (Eighteen seventeen)^{*} and Abhagini (Orphan)^{**}. "Atharasaha Satar" is based on the Paik Rebellion of 1817 in Orissa. After Orissa was annexed to British India in 1803 a great change was brought in the revenue administration, which increased the popular discontent. Particularly, the local militia, the Paikas, were the worst sufferers. They had to pay taxes on lands which they were earlier enjoying tax free. This class became the leading figures in the rebellion. The final outburst came in 1817 and rebels along with some tribals attacked the government resident stationed at Khurda and captured some important positions.⁴⁸ Although the rebellion was crushed by the -----

47 J. Jena, "Poetry of Godavarish (Oriya), Konark, 65th Number 1987.

* Godavarish Mishra, Atharasaha Satar, Cuttack, 1949.

** Godavarish Mishra, Abhagini, Cuttack, 1922.

48 For details about the rebellion see K.M. Patra, Orissa Under the East India Company, New Delhi, 1971, pp. 19-29.

Company ruthlessly, it marked a turning point in the British attitude towards Orissa. Their hostile attitude continued till the famine of 1866. Godavarish's novel was based on this rebellion having some historical as well as imaginary characters. Through the novel, he tried to show that basically Oriyas were freedom loving and their history had enough instances of opposition to the rulers.

The other novel, "Abhagini", is written on the model of Charles Dicken's "Tale Of Two Cities". It portrayed the life of Panu, a notorious character who subsequently changed and even fought for the sake of his country. Another character of the novel, Banamali, a college going youngman, joined a terrorist group and fought the police along with other members of the group. Probably, Godavarish had identified himself with this character. In his college days in Calcutta and Cuttack, Godavrish had indulged in various underground activities. During his stay in Calcutta in 1911 and 1912 he had actively participated as messenger of a terrorist group and had observed the making of bombs. He tried to portray these acts in the novel. During World War he had the ambition of joining the army

49

49 Collected Works of Godavarish (Oriya), Vol. I, pp. 75-80.

He also mentioned in the autobiography of his family conditions, which restricted him from involving himself in terrorist activities.

to learn the art of armed struggle. His activities in Young
*
Utal Association and contact with revolutionaries like Khudiram Bose had given him some idea of the possible alternatives in the struggle to expell the British from the country.

"Abhagini" was written in the year 1922, the year NCM was at its peek in Orissa. Godavarish had been given the task of promoting Congress work in Singhbhum district, now in Bihar. In the begining of the movement, this extremist mind was not willing to accept Gandhian methods. But Gopabandhu had powerful impact on him as a political mentor. In his autobiography, Godarvarish gave interesting accounts of NCM in the Singhbhum district. Anyway, "Abhagini " was an expression of the suppressed idea of violence in Godavarish who had a strong belief that non-violence
50
had no place in poiltics.

* Godavarish was Secretary to this association. Its secret meetings were organised in the backyards of private residences, where rebellious literature was recited. Physical excercises were conducted by the Association in the normal school established by Gopabandhu. Ibid., p. 61.

50 "Non-violence may have its place near a saint of Vaishnavism following the four Ashrams but not in active politics".
Ibid., p. 121.

v

During the twenties there emerged the Sabuja School* in the vacuum created by the disappearance of the Satyavadi School. Western education, particularly the study of western literature, had made the new generation apathetic to the social reality. The adherents of the Sabuja School were not nihilists in the western sense but escapists. Revolution was on their lips not in their heart. They had resorted to the new path because their dream had no chance of being realized in the real world.

They had their counterparts in Bengali literature as "Kallol." in Hindi literatures as "Chhayabadi" and in Marathi literature as "Rabikiran".⁵¹ Unlike others, however, Subujites could not acquire a firm footing in their thought and make their way to progressive literature. That was why some critics hesitate to call their period a literary age.

Their basic characteristic lay in their departure from the traditional pattern of poetry writing. They differed radically

* The word Sabuja (Green) was for a call to the youth of the country to revolt against all that was lifeless senseless, joyless and ugly in our society, to bring a new zest into our intellectual and spiritual life, a new appreciation for the physical beauty, of earth", Mayadhar Man Singh, History of Oriya Literature, KSA, New Delhi, 1962, p. 245.

51 N. Satpathy, abujaru Sampratik Cuttack, 1979. p. 15.

even from their immediate predecessors, the Satyavadi group. In form and content they deviated from the contemporary writers and leaned towards Bengali literature, particularly that of 52 Rabindranath, who was at that time at the peak of his career. Annada Sankar Ray (b.1904), Baikunthanath Patnaik (b.1904), Kalindi Charan Panigrahi (b.1901) Sarat Chandra Mukherjee and Harihar Mohapatra constituted the group. During their studentship in Ravenshaw College, they formed an association and named it the "Nonsense Club", also they put out a hand written magazine named Abakasa (Leisure). 53 Annada Sankar and Sarat Chandra made little contribution towards Oriya literature and they later shifted to Bengali literature. Baikunthanath and Kalindi Charan were left to make their outstanding contribution to Oriya literature in the coming years.

Kalindi Charan had considerable amount of writing of nationalist nature. Indirectly, he was connected with the Communist movement in Orissa. So far as our period of discussion is concerned, Kalindi Charan's novel "Luhara Manish" (Man of Iron) should be taken into account. It was a portrayal of

52 Ibid., p. 10.

53 The club came into existence in 1921 and changed its name to Sabuja Sahitya Samiti in 1929, Ibid., p. 11.

the life of a peasant in the days of NCM. Kalindi Charan, the novelist, tried to show the reaction and participation of the lower strata of the society in the movement. Baraju, had little education and had three children; wife and a brother living with him. They lived in a remote village. Baraju was an attempted portrayal of Satyagrahi who fought against the exploitation of the poor untouchables in the village. In a Gandhian model, he left his house to his brother when they had a rift over paternal property. His brother, a spoilt child, was guided by the village money-lender Hari Mishra. If the story of the novel was seen in the political background of the period, then Hari Mishra, the innocent villager and Baraju himself appear respectively as the British Government, forty crores of Indians and Gandhi.⁵⁴

At the coming of the first Gandhi movement, Satyagrahis came to the adopted village of Baraju and held meetings in the nearby market place. Baraju came in contact with them and got infected with the nationalist spirit. He enrolled himself as a volunteer and subscribed to the Tilak Swaraj fund. He even delivered a speech in a meeting and mentioned Gandhi's name several times during his speech. For this offence he was arrested and taken to custody.

54 Kailash Patanaik, "Sociology of Kalindi Charan's Novels" Konark, 63rd Number, 1987.

Through this story Kalindi Charan depicted the course of Congress movement in rural Orissa. Accounts of distribution of cheap nationalist literature, of the conservative ideas about the mighty British government and of the peculiar ideas about Gandhi made the novel quite realistic. Concepts like Swaraj and Swadeshi got their own place in rural context. Another important aspect of the novel was that it showed the shifting of leadership from the elite groups like the lawyers and the town folk to charismatic persons like Baraju. In the words of Gopal Krishna, "The significant difference between the pre - 1920 and post - 1920 Congress leadership lay in the fact that before 1920 it was social position which automatically conferred a leading role in the movement, after 1920 it was the renunciation of social position and the demonstration of willingness to sacrifice that demanded of those who aspired to lead". Also after Gandhi's ascendancy only in politics, there was a major change in the Congress policies; and priority was given to microlevel Congress organisations. Throughout the struggle for freedom, Gandhi was seen in the form of several images by the people of India. In many cases he had been seen as a supernatural being, who was there to rescue the people from any kind of trouble. Baraju, the

55 Gopal Krishna, "Development of the Indian National Congress as a Mass Movement," Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXV, May, 1966

56 Indo - Anglican writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and Bhabani Bhattacharya have portrayed this image of Gandhi in their novels like "Untouchable", "Kanthapura" and "So Many Hungers". Jasbir Jain, "Changing Image of Gandhi in Indo-English Fiction," Indian Literature, July - August, 1979, pp. 182 -190.

hero of the novel, was not an exception in this respect. He perceived Gandhi as a saint like Chaitanya, and Nanak with their supernatural power. He saw Gandhi above and apart from any human being because of his power to move thousands towards himself. One incident in the novel gave an example of the perception of people about Gandhi, Bubbles rising in the middle of pond were described as the appearance of Gandhi, the god, and the news was spread to other villages through rumor. More people congregated around the pond and religious celebrations were arranged with music groups for days together. The single instance described by Kalindi Charan in his novel represented thousands of such incidents that occurred since the time of Gandhi's appearance in politics. During the fire incidents in Cuttack, a government report said that some people believed it to be the wrath of God at the arrest of Gandhi in March, 1922.⁵⁷

Along with Gandhi, his concept of Swaraj was also many times interpreted by the people in their own way. People of India were so exhausted by various kinds of taxes that they believed that after coming of Swaraj no more would they have to pay taxes. In some places people even stopped paying taxes including land revenue. In the novel "Luhar Manisha", the same question arose

57 Home Department Political, (F.R.), F. 18/3/1922.

in the mind of Baraju who confirmed through a brahmin pandit that Swaraj was nothing but person's rule over himself. In the words of Baraju" We dig the soil and carry it as we prepare to dig one pond. In th process a pond is ready. Swaraj is like that- the digging of a pond. As a pond comes into existence by only digging the soil, Swaraj will come throughworing for it. Oh, brother! Swaraj is nothing. It comes itself.

58

Kalindi Charan also made a comment on the charkha programme in villages. One of his characters said : Babus are talking of good profit from spinning. But I don't find it more profitable than selling Madhi and Ukhuda". Kalindi Charan was alert to the problem of machine - made clothes overpowering Khadi because of the latter's higher price.

VI

All the writers discussed above, in some way or the other reflected and reacted to the freedom movement. There was a different literature which had its effect on the movement. This we may describe as revolutionary literature. It included songs written for the active participants in the movement,

58 Collected Works of Kalindi Charan, (Oriya), Vol. I, New Students Store, Cuttack, 1971, p. 265.

simultaneously having substantial effect on the non-participants. These were intoxicating pills for the Satyagrahis working against the suppression and beating by the police. "Jatiya Kabi" Birakishore Das's poems are examples of such literature.

Birakishore Das (1896-1977), a loyal clerk to the government, was working in PWD Office. From the beginning he never was Gandhian or never thought of participating in the Gandhian movement. An incident in his life changed his views and he jumped into the current of national struggle. His brother was a satyagrahi who had enrolled himself as a Congress worker against the will of his family. During the NCM his brother caught fever and got seriously ill. Birakishore could not afford proper treatment for him. Gradually the patient's condition worsened. Desperately searching some way out he came across a portrait of Gandhi. Believing in the popular view that Gandhi had supernatural powers, he put that portrait under the patient's pillow. Somehow or other the patient showed signs of recovery and from that day Birakishore became a follower of Gandhi.

59 G.C. Mohapatra, "Nationalist Poet Birakishore", Messenger of Revolution, Nationalist Poet Briakishore, Birakishore, Memorial Trust, Cuttack, 1985, p. 16.

Birakishore wrote his first nationalist poetry collection "Mohan Bamsi" (Flute of Mohan) in 1921, based on the principles of NCM. It contained three poems which he had written during his office hours. The flute of Lord Krishna had enchanted the ladies of Gokul and they were rushing towards him, overtaking social hurdles. Birakishore's message through the poems for Indians was to unite under Mohan Das Gandhi on his inspiring call. Another interesting fact about the poetry collection was its publication. Government's ban on inflammatory literature had put Birakishore, a government servant, in real trouble. But he could manage to publish the book in Viswanath Kar's press. The work contained a dedicatory note to Madhusudan Das. Both of them were opposing NCM and were loyal citizens of British India. The booklet was banned but no disciplinary measures could be taken against Birakishore. Starting with this work he reached the height of his fame during the Civil Dis - obedience movement. For writing inflammatory songs and active participation in the movement, he had to bear imprisonment several times. During the thirties there was a major change in his writings when he diverted most of his writings to the life of the exploited class of society.

60 N. Mishra, "Mohan Bamsi and Poet Birakishore, in Ibid.,
p. 151.

The songs of Birakishore can be divided into three categories. First, patriotic songs, second, on Gandhian philosophy and thought and the third, revolutionary songs. With the passage of time and the growing intensity of the freedom movement, Birakishore became more popular among the youth. During NCM, students came out on the road with Birakishore's songs on their lips. He said in one of his poems :

Compel me not to read books during war,
My blood boils by the sounds of war drums. 62

In another song he said :

Day and night I have the only thought,
O, My friend the only thought,
When the funeral of this government. Will take place?
I will see the last flame,
O, my friend the only thought. 62a

An important aspect of Birakishore's poems was that it added revolutionary tone to Oriya literature. Moderate criticism was replaced with strong opposition. The propagandist nature of his poem helped the Gandhian movement to reach the larger masses.

61 B.K. Satpathy, "National Consciousness and Birakishore", Jhankar, 36th year, No. 6, Sep. 1984.

62 G.C. Mahapatra, op. cit., p. 17.

62a Ibid.,

VII

During the twenties a poetic genius came in Kuntala Kumari Sabat (1901 - 1938), a girl studying in Cuttack Medical School. Her poetry did not have the depth of Bhaktakabi Madhusudan Das, the intelligent portrayal of Radhanath and Gangadhar Meher on the beauty of rural landscapes. It had something which created inspiration for action, threw a ray of hope in periods of desperation, inspired friendship with nature, and produced an intimate picture of helpless women amidst rural poverty and supersitition.⁶³ Her first poetry collection, "Anjali" (Offer), was published in January, 1923. "Sphuling" (Spark - 1929) and "Ahwan" (The Call - 1930) are two of her nationalist poetry collections.

"Sphuling" was dedicated to the youth of Orissa. Through its poems she tried to emphasise the role of youth in the freedom movement. In the dedicating poem she said :

Say who will rescue the Sagar clan,
Where is the hero, patriot Bhagirath.⁶⁴

Though this poetry collection was dedicated to the youth of Orissa, in the poems she crossed the regional barriers and

63 See the Editor note to K.B. Das (ed.), Collected Works of Utkal Bharati Kuntala Kumari, Vol. I, Cuttack, 1968.

64 In the dedicating poem in Sphuling, (Spark), Ibid., p. 185.

addressed the youth of India. Kuntala Kumari detected the cause of national suffering in the interanal quarrels among different groups when the foreigners were exploiting the oppurtunity. She also condemned the pseudo freedom fighters crying for the country at the same time neglecting their own family. She described such perosns idle and worthless. She also wrote poems on peasants and artisans who were the worst sufferers at the coming of the Britishers. In poems like "Bharat Ramani" (Indian Woman) and 'Narishakti' (Woman Power) she tried to asses the place of woman in Indian society. Most important in this collection was the poem "Manisha Bhai" (Brother Man) where her tone was more revolutionary. The poem started like this:

Oh, listen brother man,
Man is not born to suffer and die,
To end the life in frustration,
In the darkness of failure,
Tamed, oppressed and deprived,
In the prison of suffering. 65

"Ahwan" (The call) was written during the civil dis-obedience movement. Here was her effort in strong lyrical language to creat anti- colonial consciousness among people. Here she had

tried to describe the cause for which people had to fight foreign domination. Britain's authority over India was not resting solely on power or force. Ideological colonisation had helped them to keep such a vast country under subjugation. Therefore, the educational enterprise of the government, vernacular or university, were always within the confines of colonial needs.⁶⁶ Here Kuntala Kumari's effort was to break the shield of colonial ideology and to remove the mask of "whiteman's burden". She also emphasised the economic exploitation of India in the form of destruction of her indigenous industries and the drain of wealth. Very few writers before her or contemporary to her had highlighted such issues in such a lucid poetic manner.

Simultaneously she highlighted the national movement from NCM to CDM in her poem. Simon Commission and the Meerut Conspiracy Case also did not escape from her detailed accounts of British oppression. In condemning British imperialism she did not confine herself to Indian problems. To show the British racial discrimination she also cited the example of South Africa.

Like her contemporary writers she gave Gandhi the image of an incarnation. She portrayed Gandhi as a God in flesh and blood.

66 In the words of Prof. Panikar, "The alien rule was maintained not simply with the help of police and army but also by an illusion created by ideological influences" K.N. Panikar, "Presidential Address", Indian History Cong., 36th Session, Aligarh, 1975.

He will start the peaceful war,
The great saint going before.
With pale eyes and weak body,
Glaze of thousand suns within it.
Power of Brahma , Vishnu and Maheshwar,
Khadar clad sacred Brahmachari.
Divine rays from his eyes,
Earth shudders at his every step.
God in the form of flesh and blood ,
Will make light the burden of world.
Take Mohan's wheel (Spinning),
Destroy the devil foreigners. 67

Like Gooabandhu, she echoed the words of Tilak, "Swaraj is one's birth right and the duty of every Indian is to achieve it." Being a women poet she addressed the women to come out of their veil and along with men to fight the devil.⁶⁸ Again she compared Gandhi with Lord Krishna and Indian woman with Mirabai.

In her effort to give the details of economic exploitation she did not make the sufferers responsible. This was also the

67 Collected Works of Kuntala Kumari, Vol. I, p. 218.

68 Kuntala Kumari was connected with the Utkal Women's Conference which started in 1924. In 1931 she became its President. Nibedita Mohanty, Oriya Nationalism, New Delhi, 1984, p. 83.

case with natural calamities like floods and famines. In such case she pointed to the British government as the root cause of the miserable material condition of Indians. The Regulating Act, Montagu Chemsford Reforms and Simon Commission were seen as efforts to bamboozle the Indian people. She also condemned the religious policy of the British in India.

Kuntala Kumari wrote five novels, through which she waged a war for the liberation of women from the clutches of male exploitation in traditional Hindu society. The social condition of women particularly from the middle class and lower class was depicted in these novels. "Naatundi" (Many mouthed) gave a grim picture of Gandhian movement in rural Orissa. In this story, the Zamindar took an active part in the movement. Being the landlord, he got ample support from tenants. With their co-operation he opened spinning centres set up village panchayats propagated against untouchability. In this novel, she gave her own justification for Swadeshi. In her actual life she had started using Khaddar from the last part of 1927. She also gave a brief account of the spread of communalism in the rural areas. Their chief cause was confined, she wrote, to cow killing and music before mosques.

69 Chakradhar Mohapatra, Kuntala Kumari Biography (Oriya),
Cuttack, 1972, p. 182.

The leaders and social reformers in her novels were from higher social strata. In her novels like "Kalibohu" (Dark complexioned Bride) "Bhranti" (Fault) and Parasamani (Touch Stone), her prime concern was for widow remarriage.

VIII

Above all, in the twenties, there came dynamic change in the political atmosphere of India as also of Orissa. This had an inevitable effect on Oriya literature. The Satyavadi group went into oblivion and there came the Subujites. Radicals like Birakishore and Kuntala Kumari established themselves. Most of the writers contributed to this national movement through their writing along with active participation in the movement. Poets like Birakishore changed the tone of protest from moderate criticism to strong opposition. Also they did not any more restrict themselves to narrow regional problems. Besides this they tried to bring changes in society which were seen to be necessary for the advancement of political consciousness in society.

THE FINAL PHASE (1929-1947)

I

In 1927, there came the all white Simon Commission, which was opposed all over India. By a resolution passed with a majority of fifty to forty the Bihar and Orissa council extended its cooperative hand to the commission.¹ The most elderly Oriya leader Madhusudan Das overnight formed the Orissa Liberal League to welcome the commission in Orissa.² The revival of revolutionary activities leading to the Meerut Conspiracy Case, the Lohore Conspiracy Case and the death of Jatin Das etc., aggravated the popular spirit against the British Government. At the 1929 session of the Indian National Congress the momentous decision was taken that Purna Swaraj was to be the goal of the national movement.³ Also it was decided that Congress would achieve the goal through a mass movement. Thus the Indian National Movement entered a new phase.

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- 1 K.M. Patra, Orissa Legislature and Freedom Struggle, ICHR, New Delhi.
 - 2 Surendra Mohanty, Grand Oldman (Oriya), Lark Books, Cuttack, 1978, p. 323.
 - 3 Bipan Chandra, . op. cit., p. 266.

In mid February, 1930 Gandhi was entrusted with full power to plan and lead the mass movement. Tactically he took up the cause of Salt, upon which the Government was imposing a heavy taxes affecting more or less every Indian. On 11th March he started his historic march to Dandi, 240 miles away from his Sabarmati Ashram with a handful of followers. On 6th April, by picking up a handful of salt Gandhiji inaugurated the civil disobedience movement, a movement that was to remain unsurpassed in the history of national movement for the country wide participation unleashed.⁴

The Utkal Provincial Congress Committee at its meeting on 10th March, 1930 at Balasore decided to launch the movement in Orissa by breaking the salt law, and Gopabandhu Chaudhury was given the charge to organise it.⁵ Some congress leaders had prepared the coastal village of Inchuri as the launching ground by thoroughly drilling nationalistic ideas into the minds of the villagers. The movement became most successful here. Thousands of men and women manufactured contraband salt in violation of the Salt law and the government officers who went there to arrest the civil resisters were boycotted to such an extent that they could not even get water to drink.⁶ It is -----

4 Ibid., p. 272.

5 K.M. Patra, op. cit.,

6 H.K. Mehtab, The History of Orissa, Vol. II, Cuttack, 1960, p. 453.

claimed that the Inchuri Salt Satyagraha was second only to that in Gujrat where Gandhi himself led the movement.

One of the positive sign of the movement was the large number of women participating alongwith men.⁷

Arrest of the leaders, coming of the rainy season and at last the Gandhi Irwin Pact led the movement to subside Gandhi went back to his constructive works. Neither Purna Swaraj nor his eleven point demands which had placed on the negotiation table were achieved. In his nation wide tour to uplift the social condition of Harijans Gandhiji came to Orissa in 1933. In Orissa he walked from Puri to Bhadrak preaching his gospel of love to humanity particularly to the untouchables.⁸

On the literary scene, the first part of the period under discussion was dominated by the Sabujite poets like Baikunthanath Patnaik and Kalindi Charan Panigrahi. There emerged some individual poets on the literary scene. The Spread of nationalistic ideas and the need to reach them to greater numbers led some poets like Banchanidhi Mohanty and Birakashore Das to pen some remarable revolutionary literature.

7 Ibid., p. 457.

8 Ibid., p. 453.

Latter half of the thirties saw the growing influence of Marxist ideas on the literary scenario. According to Mayadhar Mansingh, "the average contemporary Indian intellectual, it seems felt a greater fascination for the Soviet experiment and the Marxist political ideologies that for the message of the still small voice of the great Indian leader. The apotheosis by poets and writers of India was already over by end of the twenties leaving in the intelligentsia only a lukewarm sympathy for the national movement.⁹ But in fact the progressive thinking in Oriya literature bore not merely the Marxist ideas but also the prevailing message of non-violent Gandhian movement.¹⁰

During the period of discussion, Banchanidhi Mohanty (1898-1938) needs greater attention as a revolutionary poet. It was the need of the hour to reach the message of the non-violent movement to the illiterate masses through their own language. It is very clear from the introduction to his poetry collection "First Tune" of "Utkal Harp-1921" where he said: "my songs are written with simple language, simple lyric and taal with a purpose that the common man of the village would understand it and sing it".¹¹ These poems had a real potential of influencing

9 M. Mansingh, History of Oriya Literature, KSA, New Delhi, 1962, p. 271.

10 M. Satpathy, Sabujaru Sampratik, Cuttack, 1979, p. 5.

11 B. Mohanty, Banchhanidhi Padyavali, OSA, Bhubaneswar, 1963, p. 98.

the mass consciousness. There was no jargon of revolutionary poetry. It can also not be denied that these poem had the particular aim of reflecting the economic problem of India. In a good number of the poems he highlighted the issue like destruction of ideignous industries, the capitalist capture of Indian market and the drain of wealth. In one of his poems he said :

Giving foreign cloth,
Takes shipful of,
Rice, paddy and wheat ,
The food stuffs, .
Hungry we are here,
Growing gradually,
The price,
No one realises it,
Gandhi, the great came to know it in meditation. 12

In another poem he said:

Looking after the foreign traders,
You have killed the native ones,
The weaver in our home suffers. 13

12 Ibid., p. 9.

13 Ibid., p. 109.

Categorically he has mentioned the drain of wealth in one of his poems:

Sixtyfour crores of rupees, it takes annually,
We are in scarecity and hunger,
Highest tax it takes in clothes,
See she cleverness of the Trader King.¹⁴

Apart from economic exploitation, he criticised both satirically and directly many other aspects of the foreign rule in his poem. In one poem he spoke about the different commissions and the sub-committees, like Phillip Duff Committee for seperate state formation and Simon Commission and described them as mockeries by the British Government.¹⁵

Unlike some of his predccessor poets he invaribaly glorifies both India and Orissa. He did not confine himself to a region. According to Banchanidhi, the godly man, Gandhi, saint and ascetic, alone had the power to drive out the British and save Indians. In the poem on Gandhi, he compared Gandhi to Lord Krishna. In one of his poems he said:

14 Ibid., p. 21.

15 Ibid., pp. 174-75.

The Mahatma Mohan Das,
Lives in Dwaraka,
Dwaraka of Dwapara age,
Full of deeds of Krishna. 16

Side by side he compared the British to demons. In the above mentioned poem he compared the Charkha to Sudarshan Chakra, one of the weapons of Krishna. Even Gandhi's imprisonment was compared by him to Krishna's departure to Mathura from Gokul.¹⁷ His two poems, "Utkal Harp's" "First Tune" (1921) and the "Second Tune" (1931), marked no difference from each other in structure and technique though there was difference of ten years between their writing.

Apart from the national movement, different social reforms like drive against untouchability, upliftment of women and popularisation of Swadeshi also got a place in his poems.¹⁸ The last poem of "Utkal Harp's" "Second Tune" was a an angry critique of the superstitious elements in society.¹⁹

16 Ibid., p. 12.

17. Ibid., p. 129.

18 Ibid., pp. 178, 190.

19 Ibid., p. 190.

The poet was sure that independence was drawing nearer. So,²⁰ in a number of poems he urged the people to charge into action. From the point of structure and techniques of modern poetry these poems are seen to be inferior. But in the particular condition²¹ of the time, they served an important purpose.

The wide gap between the haves and have-nots, and the ever wretched condition of the peasants inspired Banchhanidhi to voice their problems through his poems. He had the bright vision of a society where there would be no exploitation and the farmer would be the owner of and all in all in the country. He was of the opinion that Swaraj would be of no use if the prevailing structure of society continued after the attainment of²² independence.

Banchanidhi had thorough knowledge of the national movement going on in the different part of the country. His ideal people and area were the Punjabis and their region. In more than one poems he hailed his Punjabis for their herosim and valour against the British rule.

20 Ibid., pp. 125-126.

21 N. Satpathy, Sabujaru Sampratik, Grantha Mandir, Cuttack, 1979, p. 490.

22 "Swarajya has no meaning when I am straved, Peasants toiling till death without square meal a day". Ibid., p. 29.

23 See poems on the pages 4, 25, 135, 144, B. Mohanty, Banchamdi Padyavali.

III

The three poets, who appeared after the Sabujites, and established themselves individually were Mayadhar Mansingh (1905-1973), Radhamohan Godnaik (b.1911) and Schidenanda Routray (b.1915). In Oriya literature Mayadhar Mansingh is popularly known as the Lover Poet.²⁴ Mansingh's romanticism is in many ways similar to that of Radhanath Roy. In the early phase of his poetry he combined Radhanath's picturesque language and satyavadi group's extremist national consciousness.²⁵ His four poems "Konark" (1926), " Barabati," (1926), " Sadhabajhia" (Trader's Daughter-1929) "Utkal Bandana" (Hailing Utkal-1939) are the embodiments of a wonderful mixture of romantic imagination²⁶ and national consciousness. In his later years, although he became a devotee of physical beauty, he has maintained a distance from the Sabujites. Both Mansingh and Sabujites possessed the same romantic imagination but unlike the latter he did not avoid the problems of national life.

24 N. Satpathy, Sabujaru Sampratic, p. 130.

25 Ibid., p. 123.

26 Ibid., p. 125.

While enjoying natural beauty like Radhanath, he kept an eye on the national past like the poets of Satyavadi

He was pained by seeing the contemporary condition of the successors of Kharavela and the great Gangakings. That pain took image in the following stanza:

Why you are destitute possessing so much,
How can I believe one having heavenly beauties,
No food to eat,
How it can be affected by bad days? 27

The same question had been asked by many other nationalist poets. They had shed tears on the contemporary misfortunes of the people and called for action in the future.

From 1928-29 to 1936-37 there was a parallel movement of romantic imagination of love poems and many lively picture of rural life in Mansingh's poetry. The destruction of economic structure of the villages and people's migration to cities constituted the essence of these latter poems. The poet was

27 M. Mansingh, Mansingh Granthavali, Vol. I, Granthamandir, Cuttack, 1962, 313.

28 The poems like "Rangoon Chitti" (Letter from Rangoon), "Barsa Sandhya", (Rainy Evening), "Ghara Pasa" (Home Sick), "Nasta Palli (Ruined Village), Collected under the title "Mati Bani", (Voice of Earth) bear this sentiment.

29 N. Satpathy, Sabujaru Sampratika, p. 126.

conscious of the various social problems of rural orissa. The suffering of the rural -folks and their external struggle to escape from the exploitation of the money - lenders found a clear human voice in his poems. The poem written by Mansingh between 1926 and 1935 are collected under the title "Sedinar Kabita" (Poems of those Days)³⁰. This is a collection of poems of a different character. In some poems he was attracted to the exploited and down trodden classess of society. The lives of rickshaw pullers, labours, peasants, carpenters and school teachers became alive in these poems. In one of the poems entitled "Majdur" (Labourer), the poet said :

One man with so much wealth, others empty,
One man floating in luxury, others hungry,
Of what justice, thousands toiling till death,
One idleman fills his boxes.³¹

In another poem entitled Krishak (Peasant), same tone was adopted:

30 M. Mansigh, Mansingh Granthavali, Vol, I, pp. 1-68.

31 Ibid., p. 58.

We under sun and rain,
Struggle and live in distress,
Who sits on a chair without work,
Is an officer, who scolds us,
God's laugh on us,
He who supplies food, starves. 32

Against the unequal system of society, Mansingh did not give a revolutionary call but was full of internal suffering. But this consciousness proved to be transitory for the romantic poet. After these poems he did not write a single poem in a realist or socialist tone. His poetry is overtaken by romantic
33
imagination, and later it led to metaphysics. That is why in the history of Oriya literature he has been given the title of "Lover Poet" not socialist poet.

32 M. Mansingh, Mansingh Granthavali, Vol. I, p. 60.

33 N. Satpathy, op. cit. p. 130.

IV

Radhamohan Gadnaik (b.1911) has become famous among the contemporary poets as a ballad writer. He has popularised ballads as an important form of Oriya poetry by composing more than fifty ballads. The dramatic presentation of the story in a powerful moving language and with natural expression of emotions, makes Gadnaik eminently successful as a ballad poet. His biographical ballads gave expression to the cause of freedom movement directly or indirectly and the poet took great interest in discovering the undiscovered truth behind the sacrifice and dedication of the martyrs of the country. With full command of poetic resources and an aptitude for transforming all common incidents relating to freedom fighters into heroic events, he fearlessly and elegantly expressed his nationalist consciousness in such poems as "Uddam Singh" in which he said :

Far away from my motherland,

Me, Uddam Singh, prisoner of a London jail,

Before me is the scaffold,

I, the son of a Sikh sing the victory of my motherland. 35

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- 34 Encyclopadia of Indian Literature, Vol. I, KSA, New Delhi, p. 351. Ballad is an ageold form of telling a popular story in verse to a large number of people.
- 35 Uddam Singh was the man who killed O, Dyre, the man connected with Jalianawala Bagh massacre, in London. R. Gadnayaak, Gadnayaak Granthavali, Vol. I, Granthamandir, Cuttack, 1968, p. 402.

Obviously this kind of poems invoked the spirit of struggle in the national struggle for independence.

Radhamohan had been influenced by one his school teachers to perform social service.³⁶ In 1928 he came in contact with Chandrasekhar Mishra who had come to recover his health to Anugul in Dhenkanal, a feudatory state. Through this contact he was attracted towards the congress. In that year he translated Walter Scott's poem "Patriotism" Radhamohan's earlier poems were a peculiar mixture of Satyavadi school type national consciousness, Nandakishore Bala's³⁷ portrayal of village life and Rabindranath Tagore's spirituality. In one of his earlier poems his nationalist consciousness sought an out-let:

The sons of which country laid down their lives,
Sang in a loud voice the song of blood,
That blood flows within me,
May it be thin,
I am the son of that country,
Am I poor and negligible ? 38

36 Ibid., p. 6.

37 N. Satpathy, op. cit., p. 144.

38 R. Gadnayak, op. cit., p. 991.

In 1938 the whole Garhjat area was engulfed by the popular movement against the autocratic rulers. To escape the oppression of the chiefs and their officials, the subjects of the states fled to neighbouring British Orissa. They were settled in camps which were called Hizrat camps. One such camp was Talcher hizrat camp. Many Indian leaders visited this camp. People continued their struggle for democracy from these camps. Radhamohan's following song used to be sung there:

As we have fled our state,
You may be taking us as cowards,
We don't have love for life,
We will blow here the horn of human's victory. 40

His poetry collection, "Utkalika" (1945), marked a point of perfection in ballad writing. "Queen Sukadei", "Chaki Khuntia", "Sanatan" were some of the biographical ballads where he picked up some obscure characters of Orissa history and made them come alive. In the poem "Queen Sukadei", he described how a young queen after the death of the king in a battle fought and defeated the enemy. The poem, "Chaki Khuntia" was about the Oriya

39 S. Pati, Democratic Movements in India, New Delhi, 1987, p. 98.

40 Ibid., p. 8.

Brahmin Chandan Hazuri, who fought against the company soldiers in the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857. In this poem, the poet gave a call to the Indians to fight the alien power:

Be ready for that,
Young men and women of India,
All the kings and Zamindars,
Rise with your weapons.⁴¹

V

As a contemporary of Sabujites and successor of Satyavadi group, poet Godavarish Nohapatra (1898-1965) was active in Oriya literature from 1914 to 1965. These fifty years can be divided into three stages. First stage is from 1914 to 1921, second from 1921 to 1947 and third from independence to 1965. In 1914 and 1915 respectively he had written two poems titled "Banapur" and "Pravat Kusum" (Morning Flower) under the shadow of

41 Radhamohan Gadnayak, op. cit., p. 328.

42 N. Sathapaty, op. cit., p. 97.

Radhanath's "Chilika" and "Tulsi Stabaka" (Tulsi Bud).⁴³ After he entered Satyavadi national School in 1915, there came a major change in his writing. Particularly, the revolutionary change which came in his post - 1921 poems was a clear reflection of the Satyavadi literary tradition.⁴⁴ The second stage of his poetic development was a period of struggle. As a student of Satyavadi school he utilised the inspiration he got from Gopabandhu and his colleagues. He kept himself away from the Sabujites although he was their contemporary. This is clear from his poem "Swagata Yaubana" (Welcome youth 1924). Instead of seeing the youth as an altar of desire, enjoyment and dream and love, he saw it as the symbol of energy and organisation.⁴⁵ His poems, "Utkala Maara Santan Ame" (We are the children of Mother Utkal-1929), "Barabati Bakshe" (On the heart of Barabati-1925) and Durgapathe (On the way to the castle) also depict the picture of this dynamism of youth.

43 "Banapur", (1914), and "Pravat Kusum" (1915) were both published in 1918, and 1920. Eminent persons of Orissa particularly teachers had given their well wishes and inspired the writer.

44 N. Satpathy, op. cit., p. 98.

45 G. Mohapatra, op. cit., pp. 229 - 230.

In 1931 under the leadership of Pandit Godavarish Mishra, Mohapatra was engaged in the popularization of Oriya language, literature and traditions in the outlying tracts of Midnapur. There, in a remote village, his poem "Utha Kankal " (Rise Skeleton) came to be born. In 1936 it was published from Berhampur under the patronage of Maharaja of Parlakhemdi.⁴⁶ The poem transported the readers to a world of the historical romance of the military achievements of ancient Orissa. The style of this poem was heroic and full of rhythmical vocabulary and deep penetration:

O, Skeleton, rise, now you rise the weakest,
Let rise the lost glory, stolen glory, the dead glory,⁴⁷

After the launching of non-cooperation movement by Mahatma Gandhi it was natural with many poets to forget regional problems and to highlight the national problems. Godavarish's poem "Chhande Chhande" (With the Rythm - 1920) is a good example:

Before you the rocky path,
Rise O, indestructibles,
O, rise invincible, the hard working,
Satyagraha burns within the heart,
O, rise the new age with a new hymn.⁴⁸

46 Ibid., p. 14.

47 G. Mohapatra, Godavarish Lekhavali, p. 213.

48 Ibid., p. 217.

After 1936, the year of the formation of the separate Orissa province, Godavarish's poem became more intense and sharp. The extreme nationalist consciousness in poems like "Garaje Bajra" (Roaring Thunder- 1938) and "Biplab Pathe" (On the path of Revolution - 1938) made this clear:

Don't shed tears,
Don't die of defeat,
Don't finish the unextinguishable fire within your heart,
Out of fear, a day 'll come the brightest,
Fast sword of the exploited,
It will cut the burden,
And bring the freedom. 49

The thirties saw the spread of socialistic ideas, the Russian Revolution of 1917 had provided the socialist idea a world-wide popularity. In 1924 at the death of V.I. Lenin Poet Godavarish had written:

At the door step of socialist sacrificial fire,
Under your red flag,
Congregated the devotees, forgetting the obstacles,
You dragged them near and Kissed them with your fiery lips,
The world looked at you spell-bound. 50

49 Ibid., p. 225.

50 Ibid., p. 259.

Alongwith this poem on Lenin he wrote poems of socialistic character or poems on behalf of the poor, such as "Halia" (Plougher-1942), "Gai O Gariba" (Cow and Poor), " Mukutar Parajaya" (Defeat of the Crown - 1947) and "Zamindarar Mrityu " (Death of Zamidar - 1947). The socialist consciousness of the poet was based on the strong foundation of humanism. According to N. Satpathy, "It will be more appropriate to call him a humanist than a socialist."⁵¹

VI

Poet KalindiCharan Panigrahi's (b. 1901) poetic life started in 1920 and its Sabujite form continued till 1932. After 1932 his poetic consciousness underwent a radical change and then new phase continued till 1945. His novel "Matira Manisha" (Man of the Soil-1931)⁵² gave an better hint of the coming change in his literary perspective. Unlike other Sabujite poets, he took a look towards the Gandhian movement. Social reality echoed in the heart of this sabuja poet and he did not find it possible to

51 N. Satpathy, op. cit., p. 105.

52 K.C. Panigrahi, Kalindi Rachanachaya., Vol. II, New Students Store, Cuttack, 1971,

continue to live in the dreamland. On one of his early nationalist poem, he said:

Who'll turn sacred,
The fire altar of Mother Land,
O, pioneer, listening this call,
Stain this soil with blood. 53

The only Indian leader who had attracted attention in every Indian language was Gandhi. The charismatic leader had been perceived by different authors in different images through out the national movement. The image which novelist Kalind Charan perceived in his novel "Luhar Manishs" (Man of Iron-1931) was⁵⁴ there in his poem "Kasturba- (1933). There he had written:

Whose mild stroke turns stone into water,
Whose soothing touch brings smile on the face of an animal
Many a praise come from country and abroad,
O, the greatest man Mohan Das. 55

The year 1935 was turning point in the literary life of Kalindi Charan. Nabayug Sahitya Samsad, the socialist literary association organised under the leadership of his younger brother

53 Ibid., p. 279.

54 Kalindi Ch. Panigrahi, Kalindi Rachanachaya, Vol. I, pp. 120 - 272. The novel was written in the year 1947, after sixteen years of its first part "Matira Manisha", 2nd Edition to Luhar Manisha, 1955, p.1.

55 Ibid., p. 315.

Bhagabati Charan, posed a real threat to Sabuja Sahitya Samsad to which Kalindi Charan belonged. When the former represented the harsh reality of the human life, the latter represented colourful dreams. In this ideological conflict under the same roof, Bhagabati, the man with a communist outlook came out victorious. Kalindi Charan captured in the whirlpool of various thought surrendered and was attracted towards leftist thinking. The poem "Churitie loda" (A knife in needed- 1939) bears the insignia of his socialist thinking:

Man, Man came the far away call,
All the exploited down troddens,
That's the breathing of hapiness,
On the rocky path he is my only friend. 57

VII

The political vacuum created after the calling off the civil dis-obedience movement attracted some young Oriya intellectuals toward Marxism. In 1925 an all India Organisation under the name of the Communist Party of India had been formed. Since 1917

56 N. Satpathy, op. cit., p. 34.

57 K.C. Panigrahi, op. cit., p. 275.

58 Bipan Chandra and others, op. cit. p. 301.

many young persons attracted by the Soviet Union and the October Revolution. In the late twenties socialist ideas began to spread rapidly especially because many young person who had participated actively in the non-cooperation movment were unhappy with its outcome and were dissatisfied with Gandhian politics and ideas as well as the alternative Swarajist programme.⁵⁹

In 1934, the Congress Socialist Party was formed in Bombay under the leadership of Jay Prakash Marayan, Acharya Narendra Dev and Minoo Masani. Orissa had its CSP pioneered in Nabakrishna Chaudhary, Malati Chaudhury and Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi.

Bhagabati Charan, while studying in Patna college, was attracted by Socialist ideas. Coming to Orissa during the hectic days of civil dis-obidience he organised terrorist activities and distributed a revolutionary pamhlet titled "Agei Chala" (March Ahead). Acharya Narendra Dev had come to Puri in 1934 and Bhagabati got an oppurtunity to meet him. In 1935 he became a member of the Bengal Communist Party. In the same year he with others started Nabyug Sahitya Samsad which later

59 Ibid., p. 297.

became the wing of Progressive Writers movement in Orissa. The Socialists brought out the periodical "Krishak" With Baghabati as⁶⁰ its editor.

During his short span of life Bhagabati Charan had made his mark in the literary field. His literary creations, confined between the years 1929 and 1936, had the most extraordinary⁶¹ appeal of progressive literature. It was mainly constituted of handful of short stories such as "Janqli" (1929), "Jibanar Samadhi" (1936) Shikar (1936, Samayatita (1932) and Da O Hatudi (1936). Among these short stories, "Shikar" was the most powerful as it made a powerful exposure of the feudal⁶² bureaucratic system.

The hero in this story, Ghinua was a poor tribal who was adept in the use of bow and arrow. But he was exploited by the most oppressive person of the area, Govind Sardar. Ghinua took revenge on the Sardar by beheading the Sardar, the symbol of exploitation. He rushed with the head of the Sardar to the

60 B. Panigrahi, Bhagabati Sanchayan, Nabayauga Granthalaya, Cuttack, 1985, pp. I - XVIII.

61 G.C. Mishra, "Oriya Literature", in Contribution of Writers to Indian Freedom Movement, Vol. II, Indian Writers Union, 1988.

62 Ibid., p. .

commissioner Shahib with the hope of being presented with handsome rewards. Before it he was presented with some money for killing wild animals. Ghinua with his own logic thought he would be rewarded for killing a man more dreaded than animals. Instead, Ghinua was charged as murderer and criminally prosecuted and the judges sentenced him to captical punishment. The writer expressed his political ideology as a socialist by ironically potraying the clash between the freedom fighters and the imperialist power.

VIII

Another important development of the 1930's was the States people's movement or Prajamandal movement. People of states like Ranpur, Talcher, Dhenkanal and Nilgiri revolted against the autocratic rule of the Chiefs.⁶³ The ruling chiefs had unrestricted powers over the state revenues for persnal use and this led to ostentatious living and waste. The burden of the land tax was usually heavier than in British Indian and there was usually much less of the rule of law and civil liberties.⁶⁴

63 See, S. Pati, Democratic Movements in India, New Delhi, 1987.

64 Bipan Chandra and others, op. cit., p. 356.

Invasion of democratic ideas into these literally speaking dark areas became a vital cause of the popular resings. The advance of the national movement in British India, and the accompanying increase in political consciousness about democracy, responsible government and civil liberties had an inevitable⁶⁵ impact on the people of the States. The formation of All India States People's Conference in 1927 took the people's cause one step ahead.

The 1930s culminated in major popular struggles in Orissa states. Prajamandals were formed in Talcher and Dhenkanal in the first week of September 1938.⁶⁶ The two states went through a very organised form of struggle by the people of these states. Ranpur and Dhenkanal witnessed militant forms of struggle. Police firing resulted in a number of deaths. In Ranpur an Englishman named Major R.L. Bazalgate was killed in the uprising.⁶⁷ In Dhenkanal a twelve year old boy Baji Rout was killed in the police firing.⁶⁸ Sachidananda Routray and Kalindi Charan Panigrahi wrote poems on the young martyr. Sachidananda'a

65 Ibid., p. 357.

66 S. Pati, op. cit., pp. 96 - 104.

67 Ibid., p. 110.

68 H.k. Mehtab, (ed.), Freedom Struggle in Orissa, Vol. IV, SCCHM.

poems "Baji Rout" and "Maartu Jete Guli" (Shoot as much as you can) inspired the prajamandal movement. Immediately they were banned in the Garhjat state.

IX

Sachidanad Routray (b 1915) was born in an upper class family of village Guruganj in Khurda. His ancestors used to serve the royal family of Khurda as martial arts teachers. P.K. Rautray, his father, was an eminent lawyer and Congress leader of Khurda. In 1932 his first poetry anthology "Patheya" was published. During the year 1933-34 his literary activity increased and more of his poems, short stories were published in periodicals like 'Sahakar' and 'Pallimangal'. In 1932-33 his poem "Bhagaban Achha Kahin" (God, where Are You ?) displaying his socialistic bent of mind was published. In this poem, the atheist within the poet said :

"God, where are you ?

Roaring wind and sky whispers in my ear 'no, no'

Whereever I look back,

69 S. Rautray, Sachi Rautray Granthavali, Grantha mandir, Cuttack, 1976, pp. I-III.

I see the poor, helpless,
Human soul without food
Is crying,
God where are you?
Every where I see exploitation,
Suffering in the name of religion. 70

Rautray, short story "Bisarjan" (Immersion) was published in a journal named 'Yugabina' in 1932.⁷¹ This short story reflected writers attitude towards scientific socialism. The story dealt with the exploitation of helpless woman by a man from so called higher starta. Simultaneously, it depicted the parallel existence of ceremonial extravanza and utter poverty in society. Thus from early age the writer had shown a leaning towards socialism.

In 1934, Rautray passed matricualtion from Brahma Boy's School in Jhamapukur street of Calcutta. He then joined the Intermediate Arts class in Calcutta City College. During his college, days, he was involved in communist activities and was arrested once. This development provoked his family to bring his back to Orissa when he joined the Ravanshaw college.⁷² His essay

70 Ibid., p. III.

71 Ibid., pp. 535-539.

72 Ibid., pp. IV-IX.

"Prema O Panya" (Love and Commodity) and novel" Chitragriba" were the creation of his Calcutta days. In "Prema O Panya" Rautray critically discussed social institution like marriage and prostitution. ⁷³ According to him marriage was a rotten social custom and the mother of prostitution. Also he said in this essay that imperialism and capitalism provided the favourable conditions for the growth of prostitution in society.

In 1937, he became the assistant editor of the journal "Sahakar". Through his writings in this journal he strengthened the progressive trend in Oriya literature. In the following years he actively participated in student satyagrahas, peasant movement and Garhjat Prajamandal Movement. Particularly at this time, Prajamandala movements were intense in states like Talcher, Dhenkanal, Ranpur and Nilgiri. In 1938 a twelve year old boy was killed among others in the protest against the British police force. The heroic death of the young patriot had echoed in every corner of Orissa. Sachidananda, who with his own hands lighted the funeral pyre of young martyr, wrote:

Death has made,

Out of this young life's insignificance,

73 Ibid., pp. 517-530.

Each man's significance,
Freedom's master unchallenged. 74

His poem "Baji Rout" is a tremendous expression of nationalism and expressed the popular resentment against the autocratic rulers of the feudatory states. Another of his poems "Shoot as Steadily as You can" was also popular during the State People's movement. It was a battle cry against the police by the people participating in the Prajamandal movement. There he said:

Shoot shoot as steadily as you can,
Our hearts are bared to your bullets,
Keep aside your wooden lathi's,
For we damn it all,
Our breasts are made of rocks. 75

The poems written in 1936, for example "Matira Patanga" (Insect of Earth), "Ratri" (Night), "Khadya" (Food), "Barta" (Message) and "Sahara Talira Usha" (Down Town Dask) signified the poets change of tomw and his socialist romanticism. The people

76

74 S. Sazzad Zaheer, "An Oriya Poet Sings of People's Hopes and Fears", in Basudha Chakravarty (ed.), Sochi Rautray Poet of the People, Calcutta, 1955, p. 62.

75 H. Chattopadhyay, "There Arises Sochi Rautray" in Ibid., p. 23.

76 N. Satpathy, op. cit., p. 297.

ill cared and neglected were described as 'insects of the earth. These people needed food to eat and house to live; but some particular selfish people shattered their dream of happiness. These poems reflected the prevailing social inequality and called for a war against the exploiters. Sachi Routray was also powerfully affected by the devastating nature of the Second World War. "Sankranti", "Rakshasa" (Demon) and "Hitler" were examples of his west influenced writing. In the poem "Hitler", he said "

The Nazis shake hands with Franco's army,
It's the conspiracy' to divide and share the world.
Goondaism in the name of rule is raising its head,
The coronation of exploitation in the name of peace. 78

The frustration which led T.S. Eliot to voice a philosophy of Nihilism in the poems after seeing the World War I was not present in the poems of Rautray; instead there was the thunder

77 I, the insect of this earth,
Suckling child of this earth,
I need enough heat, food, and long life,
I am destruction, embryo of life in the eternal womb of poverty,
Fearless waiting is stuck under my wings.
(Matira Patanga - 1936)
Quoted in Ibid., p. 297.

78 S. Rautray, Pandulipi., p. 57.

79
like voice of a Mayakovsky. Another poem "Protima Naik" written
80
in 1945 expressed the deep frustration of the post - war period.

Rautrayu, poetry was in fact the product of communist influence.
But, surprisingly he was not member of the Orissa branch of
81
Communist Party of India. When Germany attacked Russia, the
communists changed their attitude towards the war and proclaimed
it as the People's War. Rautray, who from the very beginning of
the war had objected to the war among imperialist forces through
his different writings, did not change his view and remained in
temporary silence.

The poet had written most of his communist poems for the
people of the entire world or for the emancipation of all the
classes of humanity. At the same time, his poem 'O, my
Innocent Country' (1943) was written on the then socio-political
condition of Orissa. He said :

O, Utkal; homeland Utkal,
I have seen your villages, your citizens,
At the laughing of proud mighty, the sinner,
Suicide of the week-in excess heat of poverty. 82

79 N. Satpathy, op. cit., p. 302.

80 S. Rautray, Pandulipi, p. 115. Protima Naik is the name of a girl.

81 S. Rautray, Sochi Rautray Granthavali, Cuttack, 1976, P. XII.

82 S. Rautray, Pandulipi, p. 93.

The popular upsurge all over the world, weakening of British Empire after the war and the decline of British capitalism at home and abroad spread the belief that India was going to be independent after the war. Routray, in his poem "Amery", addressing the then secretary of state, for India wrote in this context:

Vast India is not the country of coolies and clerks,
You have seen without seeing, Amery ,
Yesterday dies, goes out the evening lamp of "Today,"
In the coming bright festival. 83

In another poem named "Istahar" (Poster) he asked the the British to leave the country to Indians:

The posters on the wall proclaims through crores,
Says O, British, listen in pitiable fun,
"Sign us divorce. Century is coming to an end,
See the bright country you have fathered,
A bastard child,
The profit making, country capitalists. 84

83 Ibid., p. 130.

84 Ibid., p. 133.

Rautray, starting his writer's career fifty years back, occupies a distinguished place in Oriya literature. He was awarded to the most prestigious Jnanapith Award for the year 1987. Writing about him, the famous progressive writer and critic S. Sazzad Zaheer, had written in 1943, " a true people's artist give back to the people what he got from them , inspiration and all the joy which they can derive from the thing of beauty.⁸⁵ Another admirer K.K. Kaul has written "His poetry is a terrific proclamation of human rights, the protest of plundered people, a flaming thunder of indignation against the shams of cruelties.⁸⁶

85 S. Sazzad Zaheer, op. cit., p. 62.

86 K.K. Kaul, "Sochi Rautray, a Critical Study," in Ibid., p. 31.

C O N C L U S I O N

In 19th century Indian literature entered the modern age. Writers increasingly left devotional poetry and stopped praising the feudal rulers instead they began to portray the reality they were going through. They no longer tried to avoid the harsh reality of poverty and exploitation created by the colonial rule.

In both spheres, the political and the literary, Orissa's reaction was a delayed one. The early nationalist writers like Radhanath, Fakirmohan and Madhusudan had limited their protest against the British rule. Perhaps the strong repressive measures of the Government against any anti-government voice usually branded as seditious, had prevented these writers from turning anti-colonial. The nationalist feeling within them searched for an outlet and they found it in propagating the unification of Oriya speaking tracts. Attacks made by the intellectuals of the neighbouring states on Oriya language and culture and the counter bid of some Oriya's to protect them created Oriya nationalism which was primarily language based and had a regional character. The British Government delayed granting a separate Oriya province. This diverted a considerable portion of Oriya intellectual mass from the all India national movement which had entered its militant phase with the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal. There was however some recognition of the exploitative character of British rule as in the writing of Fakirmohan Senapati.



Things remained unchanged till the end of world War I. However Orissa could not keep herself away from the national upsurge which came in the form of non-cooperation movement. Now the political leadership came into the hands of Pandit Gopabandhu Das who was also a man of letters. Besides taking Utkal Union Conference into the national mainstream, he changed the tone of the Oriya literature from moderate criticism to nationalist and broadened Oriya nationalism to include all India nationalism. His colleagues of the Satyavadi School like Nilakanth Das and Godavarish Mishra, made their own contribution to Oriya literature and its nationalist content. After the death of Gopabandhu in 1928 there appeared fluctuations in the nationalist dedication of the younger Oriya writers. Perhaps there was even a decline as the Gandhian movement gathered momentum in the province in the 1920s. The twenties of the embryonic form of a literary group called Sabujites who tried to escape the reality of social conflict though later some of its members returned to the mainstream.

Simultaneously there appeared individual literary figures like Mansingh, Godnaik, Birakishore and Banchanidhi Mohanty. Of these the poetry of the latter two and to some extent that of Kuntla Kumari invites special attention. Unlike most of their

contemporaries they not only voiced protest against economic exploitation and colonial domination in their writing that they also did not hesitate to court imprisonment for such writings. Like Gopabandhu they were active participants in and literary contributors to the National movement.

During the 1920s and 1930s the protest against class oppression was over-shadowed by the commitment to achieve independence. But the communist Bhagabati Charan and his friend Sachi Rautray dominated the latter part of the thirties and beginning of the forties through their fearless communist writings. Paucity of sources and inadequate knowledge of literature led me to deal with some eminent of literary figures of the period of this study. Along with these writers numerous other writers contributed to the nationalist literature of Orissa. Many poems of these writers have not come to light. Lack of appropriate secondary sources have led me to an empiricist view of these literary work.

Although Oriya literature has a great deal of achievements of this period these are very few. Concrete works that portray the national movement in the province are also few. In particular these are very few novels portraying in detail the development of nationalist consciousness.

But, comparatively from 1920 to 1947 the nationalist literature was quite rich as a whole. During these years Oriya literature acquired a nationalist hue. At the same time it fought against the social superstitions and oppression and dealt with the problem of economic inequality. Literature of the both reflected the social reality and offered the images of a better society. Novels of Fakirmohan, Kuntlakumari and Kalindi Charan Panigrahi to some extent offered such blue print of a future society.

To conclude, Oriya literature in some degree reflected the national movement; inspired the freedom fighters; made them conscious of what should fight for and lastly pointed to the weaknesses of the national social structure of Oriya and Indian society.

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