



## ORISSAN RESURGENCE AND ROLE OF BALASORE

Gourahari Jena, Lect. in History, Baba Panchalingeswar Degree College, Ssantaragadia.  
Balasore. Odisha, [E.Mail.-bpdegree.santaragadia@gmail.com](mailto:E.Mail.-bpdegree.santaragadia@gmail.com)

(Abstract:- Orissa's Freedom movement was a romantic and revolutionary saga in India. It witnessed resurgence movement for the search of Oriya identity and Freedom movement in the National mainstream of India. Balasore was no exception from it. The British occupation of the coastal district of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri in 1803 was an inglorious chapters in Orissan History. Oriya lost its identity. After the great famine of 1866, Western ideas of democracy, modernity, individual freedom and group of intelligentia like Fakir Mohan Senapati, a famous novelist, story writer, Radhanath Roy, a reputed poet, Baikuntha Nath De, the versatile genius and philanthropist rose into prominence. Their combined effort was fruitful.)

ISSN : 2348-5612 © URR



The later half of the nineteenth century saw the growth of social, religious and political awakening all over the country because of the growth of press, western education and communication and rise of English-educated middle class. Out of that awakening the national movement took shape and the country marched on the path towards freedom. In Orissa, this socio-political consciousness had two directions. On the one hand, this consciousness manifested itself as a part of the larger national identity, and on the other, it assumed the shape of a movement for the merger of all Oriya-speaking areas so that Oriyas could maintain and develop their own socio-cultural identity. The intelligentsia and people of the district of Balasore, which was all along one of the three districts of Orissa proper, contributed to the growth of the socio-political consciousness of Orissa in both the directions.

The Socio-religious movement began in Bengal with the formation of the Brahma Sabha by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828. Balasore, being the adjoining district of Bengal came directly under the impact of the Brahma movement. As early as 1855 a Brahma reformer, named Ishan Chandra Basu came to Balasore to preach. Sometimes afterwards, regular Brahma congregational prayers were conducted in the Mayurbhanj palace of the Motiganj bazar. Fakir Mohan Senapati was one of the noted persons of the town who used to attend this congregational prayer. By the end of the nineteenth century the branch of Brahma Samaj had been established in some parts of the district. In 1874, a Brahma mouthpiece, called *Dharma Bodhini* was brought out in Balasore town. In 1875, a Brahma reformer from Bengal, named Ram Kumar Bhattacharya established two schools in the town, one for preaching Brahma ideas and another for giving general instruction.<sup>1</sup>

The Socio-religious movement began in Bengal with the formation of the Brahma Sabha by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828. Balasore, being the adjoining district of Bengal came directly under the impact of the Brahma movement. As early as 1855 a Brahma reformer, named Ishan Chandra Basu came to Balasore to preach. Sometimes afterwards, regular Brahma congregational prayers were conducted in the Mayurbhanj palace of the Motiganj bazar. Fakir Mohan Senapati was one of the noted persons of the town who used to attend this congregational prayer.<sup>2</sup>

Balasore also played a significant role in the development of press in Oriya language in later half of the 19th. Century and Fakir Mohan Senapati was the pioneer in establishing printing press at Balasore. Fakir Mohan felt, as he points out in his autobiography, that for want of press the Oriyas were being humiliated by the Bengalis who had a fairly developed press and literature in their language.<sup>3</sup> He was determined to establish a press at Balasore. He formed an association at Balasore, consisting of Babu Jayakrushna Chaudhury, Babu Bholanath Samantaroy, Babu Damodar Prasad Das, Babu Radhanath Roy and Fakir Mohan Senapati himself. They carried on



propaganda among the people to purchase capital shares for the press and several meetings were also held for this purpose. The substance of the speech delivered in the meeting could be put as follows:

Those who Purchase Company's share will get much profit; the scriptures like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*, if printed, will sell at cheap rates. It would be much easier to read the printed books than the palm leaf manuscripts. It would not be necessary to call for the special scripture-readers. The boys can easily acquire learning. No outsider can abuse the oriya as fools.<sup>4</sup>

By 1869, the proposed press had been established and Fakir Mohan Senapati brought out the periodical "*Bodhadayini O Balaswar Sambadabahika*".<sup>5</sup> In 1873 another press, called the De press was established in the Balasore town by Raja Baikuntha Natha De, the popular domiciled Zamindar of Balasore. In 1899, another press, called Binod Press, was established in the town by Brajanath De.<sup>6</sup>

After the publication of the *Bodhadayini O Baleswar Samabadbahika*, another periodical called "*Utkal Darpan*" was appeared at Balasore in 1873 through the patronage of Raja Bakinthanath De. This periodical marked a definite advance in the formative phase of the modern Oriya literature. In its columns are to be found the earliest writings of Radhanath Roy and Madhusudan Rao, the pioneers of modern Oriya poetry.<sup>7</sup> In 1882, the periodical called "*Prajabandhu*" was brought out in the Balasore town.<sup>8</sup>

The later part of the 19th. century saw the emergence of an educated middle class in Orissa, which began to voice the Socio-political grievances of the people. Consequently, thereafter, several associations were formed in Orissa. In Balasore districts the following notable associations were formed: *Bhadrak Desha Hitaishini Sabha*(1874), *Baleswar Sabha*(1875), *Balasore National Society*(1878), *Baikunthanath De's Social Club*(1895)<sup>9</sup> and *Baleswar Zilla School Reading Club*(1896).<sup>10</sup> In 1886, the National Society of Balasore sent three delegates, namely Baikunthanath De, Bhagaban Chandra Das and Ramesh Chandra Mandal to participate in the 2nd. session of the Indian National Congress, held at Calcutta.<sup>11</sup>

In the last quarter of the 19th. century when there was a demand from the people of Orissa for the construction of railway lines across the coastal belt, the Balasore people rose to the occasion. A railway committee was formed at Balasore by Raja Baikunthanath De, who, in December 1882, sent a printed memorandum to the authorities for the construction of railways lines across Orissa.<sup>12</sup> It may be noted here that the posterity must acknowledge with gratitude, the contribution of this public-spirited Zamindar of Balasore, the first man from Orissa to become the member of the Bengal Legislative Council (in 1832)<sup>13</sup> who was various ways sought to promote the interest of the people of Orissa.

From 1841 onwards, systematic efforts were being made by some Bengalis to introduce the Bengali language in the school of Orissa.<sup>14</sup> In 1870, Kantichandra Bhattacharya, a teacher of Balasore Zilla School published a book, entitled "*Odiya Ek Swatantra Bhasa Nay*" in which he questioned separate identity of the Oriya language.<sup>15</sup> At the same time Sibal Bhattacharya, the Deputy Inspector of schools in Balasore tried very hard to abolish Oriya language from the schools of Orissa. Mid-nineteenth century was, therefore, very critical for the Oriyas, because there was no powerful educated middle class who could fight to save the Oriya language from impending extinction at the hands of some Bengalis. At this critical juncture the people of Balasore rose to the height of this crisis and demanded transfer of Sibadas Bhattacharya. At last he was transferred and in his place came Radhanath Roy.<sup>16</sup>

At this stage, Fakir Mohan Senapati who enjoyed the confidence the then District Collector of Balasore, John Beames, a great patron of Oriya language, played a significant role in saving the Oriya language from extinction. He organized a meeting at Balasore Collectorate and told the employees there: "if Oriya language is abolished from the schools of Orissa the sons and relations of Bengalis will replace you in the Collectorate".<sup>17</sup> Because of efforts of persons like Gouri Sankar Roy and Fakir Mohan Senapati and official patronage given by John



Beames and T.E.Revenshaw, the commissioner of the orissa division and G. Campbell, the lieutenant Governor of Bengal finally ordered in 1872 that the Oriya language must continue in the schools of Orissa.<sup>18</sup>

To continue Oriya language as the medium of instruction in the schools of Orissa literary talents like Fakir Mohan and Chandra Mohan Maharana wrote text books in the Oriya language. To promote the development of Oriya language, Daitary Prasad Das founded an association in 1867 at Balasore, called "*Utkal Bhasa Unnati Bidhayini Sabha*" (association for the promotion of Oriya language), the main objective of which was the publication of old Oriya manuscripts.<sup>19</sup> Chandramohan Maharana and Madhusudan Rao started at Cuttack an association called Alochana Sabha (Discussion Forum) to promote the development of Oriya language.<sup>20</sup>

Fakir Mohan was the father of modern Oriya prose literature. A poet, a novelist, a short story writer and a historian, he was also a social reformer and a free revolutionary thinker in the core of his being. His novels are characterized by profound regard for the fundamental values and criticism of social corruption and demoralizing influence of the pseudo-westernization through satire. If Fakirmohan was the father of the modern Oriya prose, Radhanath Roy was the father of modern Oriya poetry. Unlike Fakir Mohan, Radhanath was well-versed in western literature. His lyrical ballads, translation of the "*Meghadutam*" of Kalidas, and *Kavyas* like *Chandrabhaga*, *Usha* and *Kedargouri*, which are Indianised versions of the stories from Western mythology, *Chilika*, a lovely nature poem, *Chilika* lake in ecstatic poetry and Mahayatra, ostensibly a description of the journey of the Pandavas to heaven but in fact a satirical aspersion on the condition of India under the British rule ushered in the era of modernity in Oriya poetry. Both Fakir Mohan and Radhanath were out and out nationalist in outlook. The former attended the annual session of Indian National Congress held at Madras in December 1898.<sup>21</sup> About this participation in Congress session Fakir Mohan made the following observing in his memoirs.

"Most of the topics of discussion in the congress were political. Even though there is no possibility of fulfillment of our political aspiration in near future, we should not hesitate to ventilate our grievances. Congress is uniting well-educated and patriotic sons of mother land from different regions who have dedicated themselves to eradicate her sufferings. Lack of unity has been the main cause of India's downfall".<sup>22</sup>

Radhanath Roy composed the nationalist Sanskrit verse, "Sarvesam no janani Bharat dharani kalpalateyam" (This India, the mother of all of us is the land that fulfills all our human desires). This was accepted as the opening song in the first session of Utkal Sammilani.

The basic objective and the significant outcome of the literary movements from the second half of the 19th century onwards was the strengthening of the Oriya identity and consciousness at cultural level which laid the foundation for a constitutional movement called Oriya movement or Utkal Samilani with which both Fakirmohan and Radhanath were associated. This fact explains the reason why Utkal Sahitya Samaj, fore-runner of Utkal Samilani acted as a sister organization to the latter in the venue of the annual session, the annual conference of its literary counter-part was held. . The third session of Utkal sammilani was held at Balasore on 13<sup>rd</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> April 1906. This was the first session of the sammilani held outside Cuttack because of the efforts of Raja Baikuntha Nath De who had submitted a memorial to the Viceroy Lord Curzon, demanding the amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts of Madras, Bengal and central Provinces under the administration of any of these provinces or a separate administration in 1902<sup>23</sup> and the patronage of Maharaja Sri Ramachandra Bhanja deo of Mayur-bhanjs. This conference adopted a resolution, moved by fakir mohan Senapati to help Utkal Sahitya Samaj in collection and publication of old Oriya manuscripts. For the second time, the annual session of Utkal Sammilani was organized at Balasore on 29 and 30 December 1916 by fakir Mohan, Daitari prasad Das and Radha Gobinda Das after the death of Baikuntha Nath. This session of the Sammilani constituted a seven members committee to prepare a memorandum on the amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts which was to be submitted to E.S. Montagu, the Secretary of State for



India and Lord Chelmsford, the viceroy. The spectacular popular enthusiasm and contribution of the common people for the success of the twelfth session of Utkal Sammilani was recorded in its proceeding in the following words.

“No national (or public) institution depends on some individuals or donation of Rajas, Maharajas and rich persons. Nobody can check nation’s growth. If the idea of nation-building inspires people’s minds then all people, rich and poor, old and young, men and women will offer oblations to the national sacrifice and small interests will be united for a great cause. We have realized this in the twelfth session of the Sammilani at Balasore. Octogenarian poet fakir Mohan appeared with the energy of hundred youths. His idealism, courage and enthusiasm inspired the whole Balasore”.<sup>24</sup>

A few months before his death fakir Mohan presided over the thirteenth session of Utkal Sammilani organized at Cuttack on 30 and 31 March 1918 by Madhusudan Das and Rajendra Narayan Bhanjadeo, the Raja of Kanika. Old and ailing by that time in a spirit of unfaltering determination, Fakir Mohan told the audience at Cuttack.

We should not give up our endeavors, even though in spite of repeated appeals to the Government we have not been successful. Some day the pathetic cry of the emaciated children of Utkal will draw the head of the British sovereign.<sup>25</sup>

Emphasizing the all-embracing character of Utkal Sammilani, Fakir Mohan observed:

“This association has been formed for the welfare of all classes from princes to the pauper. Hence all Oriyas have equal rights in this association. On behalf of the Sammilani this point is being brought home again and again. But example is better than precept. Only to provide this, even though I hail from lower class, I have mustered courage to occupy the seat of chairman”.<sup>26</sup>

The above statement of Fakir Mohan shows the inability of the Utkal Sammilani to draw the masses into its fold. He died in June 1918. By that time India was heading towards a mass movement, organized by Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. People of Balasore, like their counterparts elsewhere, did not to join the national mainstream.

## References

1. Natabar Samantaroy, *Odia Sahityara Itihas (Oriya)*, Cuttack, 1964, PP. 34-37
2. Ibid
3. Fakir Mohan Granthavali, Pratham Khanda, *Atma Jivan Charita (Cuttack 1963)* P. 44
4. Ibid, P. 46
5. Ibid, P. 51
6. Samantaroy, op.cit., P. 172
7. Mrutyunjay Granthabali Pratham Khanda (Cuttack 1971) P. 409
8. Samantaroy, op.cit., P. 175
9. K.M. Patra, *Orisa State Legislature and Freedom Struggle 1912-47 (New Delhi, 1979)* P. 7
10. Samantaroy, op.cit., P. 196
11. Patra, op.cit., P. 9
12. Samantaroy, op.cit., P. 182
13. Patra, op.cit. P. 17
14. Samantaroy, op.cit., P. 239
15. Ibid, P. 234
16. Ibid, P. 239



- 
17. Fakir Mohan Granthavali, Pratham Khanda, Atma Jivan Charita, P. 55
  18. S.C. Patra, Formation of Orissa as a Separate Province (Calcutta, 1979), P. 106
  19. Samantaroy,op.cit., P. 194
  20. Ibid, P. 195
  21. Fakir Mohan Senapati, Atmajivan Charita (cuttack, 1991), P. 139
  22. Ibid
  23. Utkal Dipika, 21 February 1903
  24. Proceedings of Utkal Union Conference, 1916, P. 77
  25. Devendra Kumar Das (ed.) Utkal Sammilani (1903-1936) (Oriya), Rourkela, 2005, P. 407
  26. Ibid, P. 405