

Social Conditions as Depicted by some Modern Sanskrit Poets of Odisha

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0. Introduction

At present times a large number of poets modern Orissa are composing small poems and longer *kāvya*s through Sanskrit language. They are Late Pandit Digambara Mohapatra, Dr. Prafulla Kumar Mishra, Dr. Braja Sundar Mishra, Dr. Parambashri Yogamaya.

Other poets who are writing in Sanskrit now are-

(1) Banamali Biswal, *Rituparṇā*, (2) Prafulla Kumar Mishra, *Brahmanābhiḥ*, (3) Ravindra Kumar Panda, *Pratidhvani*, (4) Keshava Ch. Dash, *Bibhāvāri*, (5) Pramod Kumar Nayak, *Savari*, (6) Harekrishna Meher *Mātrgitikānjaliḥ*, (7) Narayana Dash, *Hatyākāi kaḥ*, (8) Parambashree Yogamaya, *Mṛtyuḥ-Candrasyaṃśaḥ*.

1. Digambar Mohapatra

Pt. Digambar Mohapatra was born in the village Purunapani in Banki sub-division of Cuttack district. A Sanskrit teacher by profession, Mohapatra has got rare distinctions among modern writers in Sanskrit. A widely travelled personality visiting a good number of Western countries, the poet has extensive experience and profound knowledge in many branches of art of culture.

His *Mānasasandēśa* is *khaṇḍakāvya*, deals with 180 verses in Mukataka and Yugmaka verses in traditional metres like *Vaṃśastha*, *Viyoginī*, *Vasantatilaka* etc. Unlike *Meghaśandesa*, it has been divided into 15 sections and is based on the description of particular places and objects. Mohapatras mind-swan or *Mānasahaṃsa* is sent from Puri to Manas lake beyond the Himalayas. On the way comes Konark, Chilika-lake, Bihar state, prayag, Agra, Delhi, Kashmir (particularly Srinagar), the Kailasa Mountain etc. Here is this Mānasarovar lake, through the dialogue of the Mind-swan with his lady-love the wretched conditions of the country comes to the view of the readers. Here the poet seems to be touched at heart on observation of the decadence in social and moral life of man in present day India. The immortal public leader is narrated by Sri Mohapatra in the following way-

नास्त्यद्य पूतचरितो रघुनन्दनः स
राजाप्रजा हितकरो न च रामराज्यम् ।
राजायते स्वाहितनिष्ठपरोधुनाऽसौ
नेता हि केवलमिहैव शठो वरिष्ठः ॥

(*Mānasasandēśa*, 14.32, p.34)

On the other hand the common people are portrayed by Sri Mohapatra in the following fashion-

देवान् जना जनपदे न च मानयन्ते
देवस्वमप्युदरसाच्च समावहन्ते ।
गङ्गाजलं भवतु वा यमुनाजलं वा
किं तेन हन्त किमहेश्व पयः प्रपानैः ।

(*Mānasasandēśa* – 14.25, p. 35)

On the defect of democracy, the poet reiterates in his *Janatantravimarśa* (2002), where the rich goes on accumulating more riches and his servant remains poor for ever.

मन्ये हि दोषो गणतन्त्रे आस्ते
तन्यते वैषम्यमिदं च येन ।
धनी धनं सञ्चिनुतेऽतिमात्रं
निध्नस्तदा योऽस्ति सदैव दुस्थः ॥

(को विप्लवं वारयितुं समर्थः) जनतन्त्र-विमर्शः p.37

Moreover,

गणतन्त्रनये नीतिनिराश्रयेव रोदिति ।
भेदवादरताः सन्ति नेतारो हि नयाद् वहिः ।
दुर्नीति राजते राज्ये सज्जनो दुर्जनायते ।
प्रपीड्यन्ते प्रजा दुःखाद् गणतन्त्रं न रक्षति ।

On Dutifulness the poets view stands high when he writes-

स्वधर्मरक्षां यदि नाचराम्यहं
कथं हि रक्षेत् खलु मां सोऽरक्षतिः
शरोमदीया यदि याति यातु वा
न नीतिमार्गात् विचलामि जातुचित् ।

(जनतन्त्र-विमर्शः p.11)

The poet has already drawn the appreciation of the critics and connoisseurs by the imprint of his matured artistic hand in about these more than two decades of poetic life.¹

The poet has become more explicit on the corruption factor particularly regarding the leaders in democracy. For example-

यदि नो भारते भाति प्रकृष्टं गणतान्त्रिकम् ।
कथमत्र पुरे प्रान्ते भ्रष्टाचारः प्रवर्तते ॥ *ibid.*p.26

The same context does not come to an end in this work here. The poet in a subsequent satirical *kāvya*, *Durnītipurānam* (2000) uses more weapons against the corruption in democracy. Regarding the self-aggrandising leaders the poet remarks.

लोकस्य नेता खलु सर्ववेत्ता ।
पृथक् पृथक् स्वान्तः वचोक्रियाभ्यः ।
स्वरूपमस्यैव महद्विचित्रं
देवो न जानाति कुतो मनुष्यः ?

It unveils the double standards, conceit and hypocrisy, changing, party lines off and on, do not indicate any commitment either for the motherland or the people those who elect them.

An around picture of decadence in the society is portrayed in his *भवते रोचते यथा* (1996). It has become rare to find goodwill for one another. Selfishness has become the guiding factor of human behaviour for which the poet wails in agony in his poem *विप्लववरुणालये* as -

न वासयोग्या खलु सागराम्वरा
न कश्च विश्वासबिमर्शभाजनम् ।
जनावने स्वादुवचोऽपि चेद् क्वचिद्
विषञ्च तेषां ष्टदये समुत्कटम् ।

Moreover,

विना शुभेच्छां श्वसता शरीरिणां
स्वजीवने स्वार्थमस्त्रमिच्चताम ।
भरेण तेषां हि विपद्यसे मही
शुभाय नैतत् खलु विश्ववासिनाम् ।

“विप्लववरुणालये” - (भवते सेचते यथा)- p.66

He is a poet so much rooted to the ground level reality, he has not even left out in his *Vyastarāgam* which can provide sufficient fun and amusement to the readers. For example-

वारिनास्ति वारिवाहे, जामाता भवति पलितः केशः, ऋन्दति कुमारी गृहे
पर्वते पर्वते घनः वेणुं वादयति नन्दनन्दनः, प्लवते राधिका मनः ।
हस स्मरराज हस । तरुणी हृदयमनुप्रविशः सदा मधुपुरे वस । p.50
काचः काचोमणिर्मणिः विदधाति यथा यदजयोनिः, वनंवनं वनी वनी ॥ p.66

In one sentence we can summerise on the poet Digambar Mohapatra, that he was a natural poet

by instinct has not left any visible area of social life, may it be children literature, travelogue, polity in democracy, social decadence, patriotism, spirituality, philosophical contemplations, Yogic system, description of nature, love and romanticism, kaivisikṣā, wisewayings and so on.

2. Prafulla Kumar Mishra

Prafulla Kumar Mishra taught Sanskrit literature and poetics in the P.G. Dept. of Sanskrit, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. He has four collections of Sanskrit poems entitled *Citrakuraṅgi* (1995), *Brahmanabhiḥ* (2000), *Tava-nilaye* (2000) and *Konārke* (2002) and small lyrical play *Citrangandā* (2005).

P.K. Mishra is a poet, deeply rooted to the soil of Orissa more so in the Puri-Konark region. The poet himself as certains-

ततो गव्युतिमात्र दुरे मदीयावासः । आवाल्यात् चक्रवाले छायाङ्किते कोणार्कस्य मन्दिर-
मवलोक्य विस्मयेनाभिभूतो जातः ।

This has later induced the poet to produce the *Kāvya Koṅārka* which has given scope for the poets high imaginations. See in *Koṅārke* –

अपराहणे प्रलम्बिते/
विद्यालयं बालेषु गतेषु
भजनं भोजनं च सम्पादिते,
द्वारि छन्दपद्यभ्यां
मध्ये लग्नेकहस्ता/
वामहस्तलग्नमुखं
कपाटोपरि प्रलम्बते ।

Here is a scene from *Koṅārka* temple carved in sand stone in the 13th century. The poet imagines her may be a devoted wife, after the children has gone to the school, having finished the fore-noon household lores looking for the way of the return of her dear husband. Or it may be otherwise, according to the poet she may be a Parakiya remembering the dalliances of her paramour in the past day when one reads it-

अथवा
गतदिवसे समागतस्य विटस्य
सुखकरं स्मरणं कुरुते ।

Or there may be further shift in the world of ideas. She may be a promiscuous woman not satisfied with her husband by her gestures and lusture attracting a promising passer by in her net of amorous desires. As the poet imagines-

अथवा
रतीश्वरी,
समागतस्य पुरुषस्य
मुखमवलोक्य
मृदु हसति
हसन्ती आकर्षयति
आकृष्य जाले पातयति
पातयित्वा मोहयति ।

Having a look at one model carved out in stone by artist before hundred years the poets imaginations in such a diversified manner, tells the depth of thinking of P.K. Mishra as a poet laudable insight.

Besides, free style in poetry versified composition in traditional metres are also not unknown to the poet in- “Timirah” he reiterates on the moon beaming face of his beloved in his collection *Brahmanabhi* in *Vasantatilaka* metre.

His philosophical contemplations identify the poets vibrations in an equilibrium with Lord Jagannath, which he sees as the very cause of the creation.

For the roaming and moving man in the modern age, most of the life is spent on wheels. For the more affluent even in the open sky in a closed AC aircraft amidst varieties of Co-passengers or inmates or inmates who knows whether any meeting with them shall be again in future or not. Still man starts the primary love game there if possible in- स्वप्नसन्तरणम्

उर्वशी या स्वर्गवेश्या नन्दनकानने
पुष्पान् पुष्पं देहान्देषमनुक्षणम् ।
पुरः व्योमपरिचारिणी सुरुपा युवती
इयं हि सा प्रणयिनी उर्वशी-सुन्दरी ॥

Then in the dream the poet becomes conscious. The society perhaps restricts him in his subconscious state, when we writes-

गृहाङ्गने प्रतीक्षिता
सोद्विग्ना स्वपत्नी
चिन्ताकुला शोचयति भर्तुरागमनम् ।

Then the poet comment in his consciousness-

वायुयात्रा अनिश्चिता जीवनस्य गतिरनिश्चिता ।

न जानाति को वा तत्र अनिश्चितं स्वप्नसन्तरणम् ॥

How people spending time and energy on trivial things best presented by the poet in -

त्यजतांत्यजतां रथ्या p.24

व्यस्ततायाः रथे वसामि... । त्यजतां त्यजतां रथ्या... ।

मत्कृक्कुरस्य मत्कृणाः प्रबम्ला । आयास्यते च द्राकतरः ।

परश्च भविष्यति यस्य प्रदर्शनी । शिरसि व्या मे कम्पजरः

त्यजतां त्यजतां... । शाल्याः ग्रामे कविसमवायः ।

विलम्बिते यत् व्यस्ततशेऽस्मि । त्यजतां त्यजतां...

The poem मुधा कलकलः is a representative expression of such pseudo businessly situation met with in *Citrakurangi* (pp. 41-42) the cuckoo has no important in this insouciant world as observes Aurn (*Op.cit.* A.R. Mishra,p.175).There is hardly any body to appreciate its songs. People otherwise busy find little difference in it whether the cuckoo sings or the ass brays-

न कोऽपि शृणोति न वा कथयति । कोकिलो गायतु गर्जतु वा खरः । नास्ति विशेषो न वा समादरः The Gresham's law of Economics has worked here as the poet thinks.

The social decadence of the present age has been reflected at many instances in modern Sanskrit poets/ authors writings. See, how P.K. Mishra depicts it through provoking metaphors and symbols. He finds man's greed is now dominating the houses and family life by relegating the finer aspects to oblivion-

गृद्धपश्री सदा गृहे मोदते । खिन्नसारसो मानससरंगतः

(पतिवर्द्धितेप्रबञ्चना, चित्रकुरण्डी p.14)

The society today is gasping under brisk business which very often trivial, silly and super fluous. Man has no time to appreciate beauty or to meditate upon the nature and characters of self of the uncomparable grandeur of the creation of the Almighty God. Man has made himself a prisoner of his own ambitions small or big. Lost the peace of mind long far away, only busy for house (even construction of number of buildings here and there beginning from the National capital till the paternal or in laws village).

Prafulla Kumar Mishra's career as a poet is still open. Gradually the man grows more thought-provoking poems of larger and serious dimensions on life and society are well expected form the spectrum of his luminous pen.

3. Dr. Braja Sundar Mishra

Among younger generations of poets Braja Sundar Mishra (1968), the author of *So Śonitasvākṣaram* and *Candrabhāgā* well reveals promising future for socially oriented poets of Orissa.

4. Dr. Parambashree Yogamaya

Another young poet Parambashree Yogamaya² represent female poets of Odisha, whose 1st collection of poems are on the way of publication by Sarasvati, Bhadrak. The feelings of an unmarried young girl in the modern society is reflected here in her poem- नारी ।

यस्मिन् सा विश्वसिति,
स तां दंशति, शतधा विदारयति
सुरक्षायाः कैतवेन असहायति,
प्रवञ्चनाया विषावर्ते क्षिपति
शठत्वमाश्रयते ।

This feeling continues in the whole poem in different situations and with different characters. What is the cure? Will the writers poets be able to bring a change?

End Notes

1. For details see Panda Raghunath. *Orissa's Contribution in Sanskrit Lyrics*, Abhijeet Publishers, Delhi (2004) pp.213-215.
2. Arun Ranjan Mishra, *Contemporary Sanskrit writings of Orissa*, Pratibha Prakashan, Delhi, 200. pp. 67-97.
3. I am thankful to this young poetess for providing me some very important research materials.

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10. Panigrahi, Satish Chandra. Unpublished article, 'The poetry of Prafulla Mishra'.