

Jayanta Mahapatra: Rural Sensibilities and Odia Language.

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Abstract

Jayanta Mahapatra is one of the most read Indian poets in English and internationally acclaimed. He has composed hundreds of poems written in English however these poems depict different aspects of Odia culture. The object of this paper is to bring forth the Odia emotions represented in his poems and to explore how cultural clashes have let other languages to be equally popular in Odisha province through the different works of Jayanta Mahapatra. The language of India which bears pride and prosperity is diluted and its essence is manipulated. The multifarious culture and language were existing in its true origin until the British colonization. The values and rich cultures of the state are compromised to some extent. The adoption of new religions and languages have been increasing. The language became the hindrance to the path of success. The native language speakers are struggling as being educated they are unable to present themselves and secure a job for them. Linguists, poets, authors, social-scientists find in their studies that language and culture are intertwined and the loss of one could definitely destroy another one subsequently. Jayanta Mahapatra is presented as one of the finest Indian English poets representing Indian culture in general and the Odia emotions in particular¹. The mythopoeic vision of the poet depicts the mythology, tradition, folktales and many other aspects of human behaviour with special reference to the choice of language and comprehension of idealistic features of language. He makes use of English terms for Indian text as his poems deal with quest for self, identity, ethos, and sensibilities. The wonderful poetic style has tried to narrate the complexity, poverty, hunger found in the relationships. The religion of his own culture being a Christian by choice didn't interrupt much to delineate the Hindu Mythological description, symbols, and psyche. The dual sense of understanding and the nature of respecting both Hindu and Christian practices created certainly a sense of insecurity. The paper would attempt to meet its objective by depicting Mahapatra's quest for

self in the land of Odisha through his consciousness of Odia tradition, culture and identity in his poems.

Keywords: Culture, Language, Native, Odisha, Opportunity

Introduction

The state of Odisha is carved out of Bihar (1936) and located on the eastern coast of India. Odia is the chief language spoken around the state with different tones and minor changes in some words. The language is derived from the Indo-Aryan language family. The seed of the earliest Odia is traced to 3rd century B.C. The inscription of old Odia is found in the caves of *Dhauri* and *Hathigumpha*. The *Charyapada*, poetry is written in an *Apabhramśa* an ancestral to Odia, Bengali and Assamese. The use of prose in the early middle Odia (1200-1400) can be found in the *Madal Panji* of Jagannath Temple at Puri. The middle Odia period (1400-1700) has witnessed the greatest of all poets Balaram Das, Jagannatha Dasa, Acyutananda, Ananta Das and Jasobanta Das². Sarala Das wrote *Vilanka Ramayana* the Towards the 16th century. The late Middle Odia (1700-1850), epic poems called *Chhanda-Kavya* evolved around 17th century when Ramachandra Pattanaik composed *Haveli. Biadehisha Bilasa, Koti Brahmanda Sundari, Labanyabati* were some of the masterpieces of legendary poet Upendra Bhanja. Modern Odia (1850-till now) is enriched with modern printing sets, publication of literature, education, industrialization, business. Jayanta Mahapatra has been a poet turned critic in his poetries while projecting the naked earth being the root of symbolism, mythology and aesthetic structures of which Odisha and India. The Odisha landscape is setting a noble mentality and lyrical vocabulary of a nationalist is responsible for his mental evolution. The noble intention is materialized with humans and nature, faith and suffering on the other very side of Odisha landscape³. The Odisha people had always been heroic in all the past struggles from the side of the emperors to against the tyranny Britishers, the saga of the valiant Odia people is often remembered with a sense of nostalgia. The glory of our forefathers is lost in our national character. The rivers and mountains have witnessed the courageous soldiers of this soil which seems a sort of myth to us. The glory of our ancestors and concept of heroic nation is now only in memory. It is even for its successors seems to be unworthy to keep the glory afloat. Jayanta Mahapatra has noticed a sharp decline in the values and morals of our life. The borrowed, English language seemed more royal than our mother language. The notion of liberty and fight for freedom turned millions of souls a true patriot. Though we freed our country we couldn't

resolve our language. Jayanta Mahapatra the pioneer of Indian English writing has taken great pain to delineate the issues of Odia culture and language for the four decades of his career. The purity and sanctity are somewhere missing with the adoption of multifaceted English language. Besides few Indian official languages, other regional languages started fading away from their existence due to the growth of industrialization, job opportunity, and prone to live in towns in search of better employment and education. The provinces like Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh are enriched with regional languages and tribes. O' Malley states, 'Odia is at the rich stage of grammatical development than even classical Sanskrit, and, among Indo-Aryan Languages, it can only be compared with the ancient Sanskrit recited in the Vedic times⁴'. The efforts of centuries of years couldn't continue with it as usual pace. The social atmosphere along with culture, tradition and other aspects represent the intra-personal relationship of an individual, irrespective of the person's choice for God. The elements like culture, tradition, and mythology are moulding his thoughts with immediate effects, moreover he is impressed by the Odia people when he observes the reactions and approach of the people towards these three elements. The emotions that are attached to the culture of his own nativity is very common, he too finds the culture haunts him and he is fascinated with the celebration of different festivals across the state. He finds himself connected to that place and a sense of nativity that perhaps can't be detached from him.

Modern India demanded personnel with multiple talents and versed with foreign languages like English, Spanish, Chinese, French, German, etc. and the need of better perspective in everyone's life made the people be very pragmatic hence there was the beginning of switching over languages, cultures and the patriarchal rich practices. The new generation started disliking their ancestors and ancestral typical words, which were used in day to day life. The British education system made them more concerned about foreign language. The tribal people felt to leave their original habitat and made their way towards the town leaving the practices and inherited languages⁵. The state of Odisha is poorly educated and economically backward in the country' is a satirical comment and it hurts millions of the Odia souls residing around the globe. The state Govt. is making policies and commissions are framed for bringing the state to a developed platform. The greatest hindrance to sustaining the socio-economic status of the state is its language and its promotion. It seems sarcasm when the Govt. tries to expand the horizon of Odia language and on the other hand invites the foreign trading companies to establish firms in the state, moreover, the people who are sharing the states' borders are inclining to learn the native language of the other state. The census made in 2001

states the population of the state Odisha as 3.68cr. and its broad linguistic outline is as follows. The literary works of Jayanta Mahapatra have brought a significant change in the upliftment of Odia culture and language. The traditional way of learning and acquiring knowledge is replaced with the Foreign education methodologies in India. The *Shruti Parampara* is now nowhere it has lost its importance in modern education system. The blood of the generation has promised to get versed with foreign language. People consider learning in Govt. Odia medium school reveals a poor background of the family as a result, Parents are interested in getting admission in expensive private schools where children learn nothing new but the English language. Thomas Babington Macaulay states; in British Parliament that, he had not seen a beggar nor a thief and he was mesmerized with the honesty and values of the country, he proposed to replace the old and ancient education system of the country⁶. The Indian Govt. has been crippled with its education system and it directly affects states like Odisha which is completely dependent upon the grants of the centre. The families of the state besides their class and economical background is trying to educate their kids in a school where everything is taught except Odia or Odia is part of optional subject. Unlike Govt. sectors the private institutions are emerging with modern equipment, languages and rapidly growing with engineering, medical, management like professional degrees, hence the Odia language is compromised and replaced. The trend of brain drain is also raising higher, the dream for service, satisfaction is crushing the sanctity of Odia culture.

The role of media can't be overlooked and shares equal responsibility in the process of demolition of Odia language. It's truly paradoxical that the name of native News Papers and T.V. channels don't bear the content as their name suggests even it's painful to note the *Door darshan* known as D.D. Odia finds fewer contents, as a result, it telecast Hindi serials and cinemas. People of the state are found to be fond of Hindi programs and serials. People of Odia cinema production house uses Hindi in place of Odia, they find speaking Hindi and English is very prestigious. The youth of the state are scuffling for an opportunity to prove themselves and it's their right. The missionaries reach the sufferers when the state Govt. fails to facilitate the families with necessary amenities hence people of the tribal belt, the subaltern is very much disappointed with the state administration. Bijoy Mishra states, 'The language of the hill and tribal people are supposed to be researched thoroughly, the words of ancient origin have to be identified to give them recognition worldwide'. The youth turns rebellious and participates with communities like Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, etc. Religion and language are supposed to be two sides of one coin, the adoption of a new language gives birth to the adoption of new

language. We are slowly progressing on the track of demolishing the identity of the state. Books, magazines, journals in Odia language are very few in numbers and they are not easily available to the readers. Publishers find it a loss business of promoting Odia literature and they focus on money fetching publications in Telegu, Bengali, English languages. The student community also gets discouraged when they find least seats are available in Odia literature and language departments of renowned Universities of Odisha for higher studies in the branch of research. The universities of Odisha are promoting Bengali, Urdu, Hindi, Sanskrit, English languages. The student finds different languages to choose for higher studies, and the popularity of other languages over Odia is always compelling the learner. Jayanta Mahapatra had been very much careful while dealing with the language of English and Odia, certainly the Odia language is losing its popularity as another language of little importance has been fancy enough to draw the attention of the reader across the state. The paper is aimed to cater the major issues related to the culture and language of the state Odisha. Language bears self-esteem and identity for every individual. The Odia language is felt endangered and replaced in every possible field, it is not a matter of concern for the state Govt. rather a national issue as it adds glory to our national pride. Odia language is a scheduled language in the constitution of India and declared one of the official languages.

Conclusion

The rise of the concept globalization the world has really been small. Postcolonialism and modernism have a lot to do with literary evolution. Modern English poetry has made its way with the advent of such modern culture and acceptance of languages, it is being established as one of the indigenous tradition that adds glory to our very own culture⁷. The post-independence poets in India find the problem with their identity due to the cultural roots in their community as their poetry represents the quest for the self and origin of their culture. The writings and love for the language perhaps began with a different concept however it has received the status of language of the people of high society or officials. The tussle between Odia language with English is going on for ages, one is very much attached to the soil of the people and another enables to sound louder to the world. Poets like Jayanta Mahapatra who consistently delineate the culture of Odisha finds himself confined and sense of rootlessness as English can bear the emotions but not specific cultures that a true Odia poet can do with only Odia language to a higher level of creativity⁸. The true Odia people have landed on the road to protest against the use of Non-Odia and protection of the Odia language and culture in every Govt. and private sector. The Odia writers' community has often found on the rallies with the

demand for resolving issues of Odia language. The Govt. often condemns its own promises though it assures to promote and publish Odia language and literature. The rising of economic instability in the state is prompting all the issues. The Govt. plans and regulations have to be very approachable for every class of people. The major dialects need proper attention and recognition. The paper aimed to discuss the nation dialectics and nation epistemologies with the reference of Indian English poets and authors. The literary development of society ensures the growth of language and its popularity among people. How Odia culture is seen by the lens of linguistic perspective is the objective of the paper by considering the most read and renowned poet of the soil Jayanta Mahapatra⁹. The typical mindset of the people and prone to a foreign language is a major concern for the state. In the present context, academic excellence and facilities, job guarantee and social respect are the need for the promotion and sustenance of any language in the country.

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