CHAPTER VII
Chapter VII

Growth of Oriya Press, Literature and Cultural Nationalism During the Nineteenth Century

(a) Development of Press in Orissa

An attempt will be made in the present chapter to trace and analyze the origin and evolution of cultural nationalism in Orissa during the nineteenth century. As mentioned earlier, cultural awakening in Orissa emerged with the activities of Christian Missionaries as well as the establishment of English and Vernacular schools by the British government in the Pre-Famine period. It was, however, in the post-Famine period that cultural resurgence and nationalism took concrete shape with the evolution of an indigenous intelligentsia class, which voiced its consciousness, hopes and aspirations through press, journals and public associations.

It may not be quite out of place to observe here that from a purely cultural perspective, modern Orissa came into being with the publication of *Utkal Dipika*, the first Oriya journal to be published by a native of the province in 1866. It is proposed to analyze socio-cultural developments from 1866 till the formation of "Utkal Union Conference" (*Utkal Sammilani*) in 1903, a landmark development in the history of Oriya nationalism.
As regards the history of Oriya press in the nineteenth century, it was inextricably linked with the language problem in the province. To begin with, it may be stated that Oriya language is one of the oldest languages of India which produced a highly illustrious brand of literateurs during the Medieval period. But such a process received a severe jolt with the advent of British as they divided the land and people of Orissa under three provinces, namely, Bengal, Madras and the Central Provinces. Consequently, Bengali, Telugu and Hindi languages were imposed on the Oriya people residing over there respectively. Coupled with this, while some vested interests tried to introduce Bengali as the medium education in the mainland Orissa, some others tried to impose "Hindusthani" as the court language in the province. Thus, a great sense of resistance was aroused in the minds of Oriya people as how to protect their native language from such external penetrations. Infact, the cultural consciousness as engineered by the language controversy, provided the stimulus for the development of Oriya language and literature. The establishment of the printing press and the publication of newspapers and journals provided further impetus to such a process of cultural consciousness in Orissa.

To begin with the section, it was the Baptist Missionaries who took a major interest in establishing the first modern press in Orissa. In this context, the observations of Priya Ranjan Sen in his article entitled,
"An Approach To Modern Oriya Literature" was quite pertinent. For instance, Sen stated:

"... The contributions of Christian Missionaries constitutes a definite landmark in the spread of western influence in Orissa in matters affecting literature and other aspects of social life ..." 379

As for the Missionaries, their principal motive to establish a press was to preach Christianity in the province. Infact, all the religious tracts ("pamphlets") in Oriya were printed at Serampore press in Bengal. In 1837, Reverend Lacey, one of the prominent Baptist Missionaries, brought a small handworking printing machine from the Mission establishment at Serampore. He established the first press in Orissa called "The Cuttack Mission Press" in 1838. Commenting on the inauguration of a native press in Orissa, "The Friends of India" observed that, the establishment of a press in any province is an important era in its history." 380 In fact, it was from the same press in 1849 that Reverend Lacey produced "Jnanaruna", the first printed Oriya periodical. Subsequently, two other periodicals namely, "Prabodh Chandrika" (1856) and "Arunodaya" (1861) were published from the Cuttack Mission Press. It may be observed that these publications were mainly intended at popularizing the christian religion and that any news of general interest to Oriya people was scarcely published in these periodicals. 381

380. As cited in N.R.Patnaik, op.cit., p.73.
381. For details see D.Swaro, op.cit., pp.201-202.
It was after long thirty years that the second Oriya press was established on 4 August 1866 through the initiative of Gaurishankar Ray, an inhabitant of Cuttack town known as the "Cuttack Printing Press". Under his editorship, the first Oriya journal Utkal Dipika was produced very soon. Under its banners, various articles projecting miserable socio-economic conditions of Oriya people, as well as condemning the conservative social set up and age-old superstitious practices were published. It also highlighted the remedial steps, which created a congenial groundwork for social reforms in Orissa. Lauing its role, Utkal Gaurab Madhusudan Das, the pioneering father of Oriya nationalism, observed:

"... Utkal Dipika is the lamp of Utkal. Encircled by darkness when the human race was in an uncivilized state, Gouri Shankar showed the light to men". 382

A third press was established at Balasore through the efforts of prominent Oriya literateur Fakir Mohan Senapati in 1868, known as "Utkal Press F.M. Senapati and Co.". In his autobiography Fakir Mohan describes own strenuous efforts as well as pathetic economic conditions for the establishment of the press. Also, under his editorship, a new Oriya monthly paper entitled "Bodhadayinee O Balasore Sambad Bahika" was published from his press. While the "Bodhadayinee" portion was devoted to Oriya literature, "Sambad Bahika" part was assigned 382. As cited in Surendra Mohanty, Satabdira Surya (Cuttack, 1970), in Oriya, p.186.
news items. But this publication did not continue for long due to acute financial difficulties. In 1872, however, it was revived partially in another new form called "Sambad Bahika".

In the year 1873, two more presses were setup in the province. One was called "Utkal Hitaisini Press", called "Orissa Patriot Press" established at Cuttack by Zamindar Kalipada Banerji. He published the journal "Utkal Hitaisini" from the press. The other one was called "Dey Press", at Balasore established by Baikunthanath Dey. The "Dey Press" published the journal "Utkal Darpana". Subsequently, however, another Oriya press was established by the Raja of Bamra, Sudhaladeva in 1885 called the "Bamanda Press". It was from this press that "Sambalpur Hitaisini", an Oriya periodical, emerged at Bamanda under the editorship of Nilamani Vidyaratna. It focussed on socio-economic grievances of Orissa in general and of western Orissa in particular. Towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century, several other presses were established namely, "Bhakti Pradayini Jantralaya" (1874) of Puri, "Ganjam Nishanishedhini Samaj Press" (1875) from Berhampore, Ganjam, "Mayurbhanj Press". (1879) at Baripada, "Victoria Press" (1885) at Cuttack, the "Printing Corporation"

383. For details see F.M. Senapati, Atma Jiban Charita (Cuttack, 1980) in Oriya reprint, pp. 54-62.
384. Utkal Dipika, 13 July 1872.
385. For details see Ibid, 18 January 1873 and Sambad Bahika 1 August 1873.
386. For details see Sambad Bahika, 13 March 1885.
(1890), "Arundaya Press" (1893), "Ray Press" (1894), "Darpani Raj Press" at Cuttack (1899), "Binod Press" (1899) from Balasore and "Utkal Sahitya Press" at Cuttack (1899).\(^{387}\)

Closely on the heels of printing press, emerged a variety of other journals in Orissa highlighting the socio-economic problems and socio-cultural aspects of the province. Apart from *Utkal Dipika* and *Sambad Bahika*, *Utkal Darpana* and *Sambalpur Hitalsini*, other important ones were *Utkal Subhokari* (September 1869) with Bhagabati Charan Das, as the editor, *Utkal Putra*, *Bhagbat Bhaktipradayini* and *Bideshi*, all published from Cuttack in 1873 under the editorship of leading personalities like Pyrimohan Acharya, Kirodnath Mitra and Dinanath Banerji respectively.\(^{388}\) Other publications of the period included the first English periodical *Cuttack Argue* (1869), an English Weekly *Cuttack Star* (1869), another English periodical *Cuttack Standard* (1869) and *Cuttack Chronicle* (1871). The *Cuttack Chronicle*, however, was stopped after only three months of its existence.\(^{389}\) Other periodicals which followed suit in 1874 were *Sikshyaka*, *Dharmabodhini*, *Utkala Samskaraka* and *Chandrika*. In 1875, a weekly journal called *Swadeshi* was published from Berhampore under the editorship of William Mohanty. A few other periodicals published thereafter were

\(^{387}\) For details see N. Samantray, *op. cit.*, p.172.
\(^{388}\) Ibid, p.176.
\(^{389}\) For details see *Utkal Dipika*, 20 February 1869, 27 February 1869 and 30 May 1871.
"Dhumaketu" (1877), "Utkal Madhupa" (1878), "Mayurbhanj Pakshika Patrika" (1879), "Kohinoor" (1888), "Purusottam Dipini" (1880), "Purusottam Patrika" (1882) and "Prajabandhu" (1882), "Nababidhana" (1884), "Pradeep" (1885), "Sikshyabandhu" (1885), "Haribhakti Pradayini" (1885), "Odiya O Nabasambada" (1888), "Orissa Patriot" (1888) [new name of Samsaraka].

In 1889, "Dipak", Sambalpur Hitaisini and "Samalochana" were published. Earlier to this, a missionary monthly "Taraka" was published from the Cuttack Mission Press. In 1886 three other periodicals were published namely, "Byabasayee", "Taraka O' Subhabarta" and "Cuttack Students". In 1887, a weekly named "Navasambada was published from Balasore.390 Other periodicals in this category included, "Sebaka" (1883), "Odiya" (1887), "Navasambada" (1887) published from Balasore under the editorship of Bhutanath Basu. The "Samyavadi" (1887) was published under the editorship of Lalit Mohan Chakravarti which focussed on socio-religious issues in Orissa.391

Apart from these a few more periodicals, newspapers and magazines were published in the last decade of the nineteenth century. These included, "Utkal Prabha" (1891),

390. For details see N. Samantray, op.cit., pp.176-178, Utkal Dipika, 16 October 1875, 26 February 1876, 22 November 1884, and Sambada Bahika, 1 August 1874, 16 October 1884, 8 January 1885, 5 February 1885, 30 April 1885, 12 March 1885 and 16 May 1889.

391. For details see Sambada Bahika, 20 September 1883, and N. Samantray, op.cit., p.178.
"Bhakti Tatwa" (1892), "Indradhanu" (1893), "Bijuli" (1893), "Brahma" (1894), "Utkal Chikitsaka" (1894), "Utkal Bandhu" (1896), "Pravatitara" (1896), "Ganjam News" (1896), "Utkal Sahitya" (1897), "Orissa Times" (1898), "Ganjam Odia Hitabahini" (1899) and "Alochana" (1900). 392

As mentioned earlier, the most important journal which mobilized the public opinion and ventilated popular feelings successfully was Utkal Dipika under the editorship of Gouri Shankar Roy. He took all possible help from the rulers of Badamba, Dhenkanal, Talcher, Athgarh and Narsingpur for establishing the Cuttack Printing Press. He also received assistance in his efforts from personal friends like Bitchitrananda Das, and Jagmohan Roy. His press also received official patronage from the then Commissioner of Orissa T. E. Ravenshaw. He continued to remain as the editor of Utkal Dipika till his death in 1936. 393

To conclude, the establishment of press along with periodicals and journals served several useful purposes in Orissa. To begin with, through these journals, learned people were able to express their views rather conveniently. Secondly, it fulfilled the immediate problem of lack of text books in Oriya language. Thirdly, due to these publications, the Oriya literature was able to develop itself properly. Further, the establishment of Printing Press helped in bringing out the

392. For details see N. S. Mantray, op. cit., p. 179.
393. For details see K. M. Patra and Bandita Devi, An Advanced History of Orissa, op. cit., p. 173.
classical literature of Orissa to proper limelight. Fourthly, these developments provided the foundations of modern Oriya literature. In fact, the time period from 1866 to 1903 is described as the "renaissance" in Oriya literature. Finally, due to the establishment of these presses and publications, Oriyas began to comprehend rather clearly about their own traditions and past glories as well as the day to day happenings in the province. In course of time, however, such consciousness were converted to political awakening and nationalist sentiments in Orissa.

(b) Evolution of Oriya Literature in the Nineteenth Century

Literature is a powerful medium to portray contemporary social condition as well as to articulate public opinion by creating awareness on any prevailing issue or problem. During the second half of the nineteenth century, a new phase in Oriya literature began to evolve, which came to be appropriately called as the "Modern Age". As mentioned earlier, the period from 1866 to 1903 is described as the "renaissance" in Oriya literature. For the Oriya people, "pan-Oriya" nationalism began to evolve during this period. But the period was dominated by a trio namely, Radhanath Ray (1848-1908), Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843-1918) and Madhusudan Rao (1853-1912). Being influenced by Western education, they brought revolutionary changes in the sphere of modern Oriya literature. In the process
they brought to Oriya literature to the threshold of a
successful intellectual movement. Like their male counterparts,
the women writers also produced lyrics, novels, dramas and
short stories which depicted the various anomalies and
bitterness in Oriya society as created by the British
administration. Prominent among them were Sulakshana Devi,
(1829-1901). Suchitra Devi, Reba Roy (1876-1957), Annapurna
Devi (1883-1948).

To begin with, the British initially committed the
blunder of neglecting the educational field for a long period.
This was taken advantage to by the Bengali officials serving
in Orissa to persuade the British to accept their view point
that Oriya was not a separate language. This resulted in the
first language agitation as mentioned earlier. With the whole­
hearted support from T.E.Ravenshaw, the cause of Oriya language
was safeguarded properly. With the establishment of some high
schools and a college at Cuttack in 1868, the Oriyas were
initiated to the field of western education. As a result, a
modern trend in Oriya literature began to evolve.

It may be observed that apart from western influence
on Oriya literature, there were other influences emanating
from languages of neighbouring provinces such as Bengali in
the north, Telugu and Tamil in the South and Hindusthani in
the west. To begin with, in north Orissa many Bengali Zamindars
settled down permanently who exerted their influence on Oriya
society. Further, modern Bengali literature was considered to be more progressive than the Oriya literature. It was regarded as one of the leading languages of India. The influence from the South, however, was not that direct. While some writers from Ganjam were influenced by Telugu literature, but in general, such impact was rather limited. As regards the impact of Hindi, from the western side, it was also quite limited. We find only uses of few Hindi words in the writings of Brajanath Bodjena and a few Telugu words in the writings of Gopalkrushna Patnaik and Raja Bikramdev of Jeypore.

Another aspect which promoted the development of native language was the establishment of Oriya press and growth of journalism.

Another factor responsible for such a cultural growth was the development of communication facilities. Through the railways, modern ideas from the west and the neighbouring states easily reached the province. It may be mentioned that prior to train communications, Oriya students travelled by boat to Calcutta for higher studies. After the railway facilities were valuable, the students came to know things rather quickly. They began to congregate and discuss collectively through the formation of societies. These societies, in course of time, became centres of reforming zeal, literary and philosophic illuminations.
As regards the evolution of Oriya literature, the post-medieval period continued up to the late sixties of the nineteenth century. The chief poets of the post-medieval period (who wrote love lyrics and devotional songs) were Kavi Surya Baladev Rath, Jadumani Mahapatra, Gourahari Parichha, Gopal Krishna Patnaik and Banamali Das. In the prose writings of Baptist Missionaries, however, the foundations of modern Oriya prose could be traced to some extent. In fact, the Missionaries, in order to propagate the religion, use the prose language of Oriya people. They also translated many writings of English into Oriya language. But such translations were so crude that it would be inappropriate to describe such writings as modern Oriya prose literature. But the Great Famine of 1866 and the First Language Agitation which followed suit, worked as a real stimulus for the Oriyas to develop their own language and to evolve a modern literature which could compete with other developed languages of India. In course of time, several prominent writers contributed to the field of Oriya literature in the nineteenth century. Prominent among them included, Bichitrnanand Das, Govind Chandra Patnaik, Kapileswar Bidyabhusan, Samanta Chandrasekhar, Gouri Shankar Ray, Fakir Mohan Senapati.


Modern Oriya literature could divided into three sections (1) translation (2) Immitation and Assimilation (3) New Creations. As regards translations, basically works on Epics like "Ramayana" and "Mahabharat" as well as Vedic literature and the "Puranas" were the common practice of Oriya writers. Fakir Mohan Senapati began his literary career initially with such translation works. As regards "immitation" and "assimilation" these were found mainly in the works of Radhanath Ray. He wrote many "Kavyas" which were immitated from western literature. His first "Kavya" Kedar Gouri was written under the influence of Pyramus and Thisbe of the Greek Poet Ovid. Another, Kavya, Usha, was written under the influence of Atlanta Race of Ovid and the Milanion of William Morris. Further, his "Kavyas" like Chandrabhaga and Nandikeswari were also created under the influence of Ovid's Appollo and Daphne and the Scylla respectively. His poetry Chilika shows his masterly talent at assimilation and gives a new dimension to the study of nature in Oriya literature. He also chose themes from Indian literature. For instance, his work, Mahayatra is taken from "Mahabharata", the great epic, but its

395. For details see N. Samantray, op. cit., p. 259.
style of writing is borrowed from the western Epics. Other poets of the period like Nanda Kishore Bala and Gangadhar Meher were popular writers who created mythological themes of the epics as the base of their literature. While Nandakishore based his attention totally on rural setting and folk traditions, Gangadhar provided a new flavour to ancient themes. Further, while Gangadhar's portrayal of character was chosen from ancient literature but his literary expression was totally different with excellence in expression. His characters are sketched out in a so lively and colourful manner that the reader, while going through the poetry feels as if he himself is a part of the same. For instance, in Tapaswini, Sita is characterised in so lively manner and the nature is so colourfully presented that it is felt as if the nature is also a character in this "Kavya". In the third phase emerged powerful writings of Fakir Mohan Senapati, Ramshankar and Umesh Chandra Sarkar which were described as new and innovative creations. For instance, Ram Shankar wrote the powerful drama called Kanchi Kaveri which created profound impact on Bengali literature. Umesh Chandra Sarkar's novel Padmanali was the most modern novel in Oriya literature.

With this background an attempt will be made to highlight the literary activities of some prominent writers in the nineteenth century. To begin with, modern Oriya literature would not have developed without a great organiser.

396. For details see Mayadhar Mansingh, History of Oriya Literature (New Delhi, 1962), p. 171.
like Fakir Mohan Senapati who devoted most of his life to fight for the cause of Oriya language. He is described as the father of modern Oriya literature. He was born on 13 January 1843. He did not get systematic education but he was a self-educated man. The modern period of Oriya literature opened with him. Though he did not have much formal education, yet, he acquired proficiency in five Indian languages and a working knowledge in English. Through his writings he opposed all kinds of evils and blind beliefs which prevailed in the society. Fakir Mohan's creativity was superb. He used different forms of writings. In poetry, his excellence was marked in the works like Puspamala, Upahar, Abasara Basore, Puja Phula, Prarthana, Dhuli, Utkala Bhumi, Utkala Yabaka. The themes of his poetry were mainly taken from the heroic personalities both from India and also from the west. His subjects included Napoleon, Josephine, Jesus, Cleopatra and many other foreign characters as well as Tukaram, Shivaji, Prithviraj and Asoka from Indian history. But his personal life was quite tragic as reflected in his writings. His tragic descriptions were superlative in expression. It was extraordinary that without knowing English literature he wrote hundreds of lyrics including ballads, which clearly proved his great inborn talent. 

397. N.Samantray, op.cit., p.308.
As regards his short stories, though limited to twenty only, they were pure gems of literature both for humanistic approach and social outlook. His short story Rebati dealing with human "love and "loss" stands the passage of time and still claims a high position in the modern Oriya literature for its "eternal pathos". 398

Not only Rebati, but all of his short stories gave a clear social message to the readers. In Randipua Ananta, he describes about a boy who is nourished by his mother with great affection. But when the flood water reached the village he dedicated himself to protect his village from the heavy flood water. In another story, Patent Medicine, he describes about a drunkard person, who tactfully avoids his wife to take liquor and was beaten by his wife later on with a broom stick which worked on him like a medicine to give up taking wine completely. His "Garudi Mantra" was another successful short story dealing with female progress and development. Other stories like Dhulia Baba, Dak Munshi, Adharma Bitta, Savva Zamindara dealt with different aspects of social evils as prevalent in Orissa. He also entertained his readers with powerful satires and humours.

Like the short stories, the novels of Fakir Mohan were also unique. In his novels he depicted the social life of Orissa in a natural and realistic manner. His novel Lachchama is a historical novel based on the struggle and

sufferings of Oriya people during the Maratha period. In Mamu he describes about a person who worked against his own sister and her son by trying to snatch away all their properties. But when he was caught by the law, he became mad. In this novel the sister Chandamani is described in a natural manner as if she represented the simplicity and the embodiment of womanhood in rural Orissa. The character of Mamu represents the human weaknesses ending with repentance.

Another novel Prayaschitta is a reflection of the aristocratic life in Orissa. It contains the ego, agony, sufferings of life as confronted by the aristocratic people. The most popular novel of Fakir Mohan is Chamana Athaguntha. It symbolizes the exploitation and torture of a new class of land lords on the poor rural peasants. It is a heart-touching story about the nineteenth century Orissa. It describes the blind beliefs as existed among the common people which was taken advantage to by the noble class in torturing the innocent people.

Fakir Mohan's writings have enduring value. He has been compared often with Thomas Hardy in English literature. The writings of Fakir Mohan occupy a unique position in the history of Oriya literature. 399

399. For details see N. Samantray, op. cit., p. 304.
As Fakir Mohan was the founder of modern Oriya prose, Radhanath was the founder of modern Oriya poetry. Starting his professional career as a clerk in the Balasore Collectorate, Radhanath rose up to become the District Inspector of Schools. He was an inborn genius and a poet of nature. In his writings, the description of hills, mountains, rivers, lakes and landscapes of Orissa are so nicely sketched that it creates a picture of the nature in the reader's eyes. He was well-read in several languages. As he travelled from place to place, he got into touch with different cultures. Such outside exposures were reflected in his writings. When the language crisis arose, finding that there was acute shortage of Oriya text books, he took a vow to develop the Oriya literature to its highest level. Radhanath's works were no doubt reflections of western literature. His works like Jaiati Kesari, Nandi Kesari, Chandrabhaga and Parvati contained elements brought from western literature. Radhanath tried to bring Oriya literature closer to the level of international standard. Though the contents of his writings were brought from western literature, yet he exhibited a great sense of originality in his writings. While the matter was from western world but the description was totally his own. In fact, in almost all his Kavyas, he assimilated the texture of western aesthetics with eastern poetics. Although the themes were collected mostly from Greek poetry, they were aptly described as part of our history and anecdote, Radhanath was the founder
of a new school of literature. An age is described after him called the Radhanath Age. The speciality of his Age was that for the first time in Oriya literature, imitation and assimilation began to flow. Another speciality of the Age was the writings of narrative ballads. Radhanath's first work, Kedar Gouri (1886) was an imitation of Pyramus and Thesbe of Ovid. It is a Kavya which describes the eternal love story of Kedar and Gouri. His Kavya, Usha (1888) was written after Atlanta's Race of Ovid and The Milanion of William Morris. His Chandrabhaga (1886) and Nandikesari (1887) were taken from Ovid's Apollo and Daphne and The Scylla respectively. The Kavya Parvati was written on the materials of Agamennon a drama of Aeschylis. But it would not be fair to say that all these Kavyas were simply imitations of western literature. In every Kavya, the Great poet assimilated western theme with the history and geography of Orissa. His Kavya, Chilika (1891) was a masterpiece. It is a poetry on nature showing masterly talents of assimilation, which was totally new in Oriya literature. His Mahavatra was the work, which was based on the Indian historical epic Mahabharata. Despite his immination of western literature, Radhanath's own style of writing was unique. His contributions to Oriya literature was quite immemorable.

As regards Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924), he was a famous poet of the nineteenth century. He was born in a poor weaver family in Barpali of western Orissa. His writings
displayed spontaneity and natural freshness. He is described as Swabhāba Kabi. He was a self-taught person who acquired a deep knowledge in Sanskrit, Hindi and Bengalee languages. His themes of writing were taken from old Sanskrit literature. He remains memorable for the rare insight he exhibited in exposing the minds and souls of his characters.

Gangadhar's first work Indumati is based upon the story of Mahabharati-Aja and Indumati episode. His second Kavya Kichakabadhā won fame for him. Here, he narrated a topic from Mahabharata where Bhima, the Pandava, killed Kichaka, the brother-in-law and the general of King Virata when the later tried to misbehave Draupadi. Though the topic was not new but its presentation was quite extraordinary.

Another work of Gangadhar is Tapaswini. This is a Kavya which describes the story of Sita from Uttarakhanda of Ramayana and Uttarramcharita of Bhavabhuti. Here his description of nature was so powerful that it seemed as if nature itself became a character. He describes the sorrow of Sita after she was left at the jungle and also as to how she was welcomed by the nature as well as by Rishi Valmiki in his Ashrama. The description is simple but so wonderful that till today people in remote villages always sing his written stanzas in the Kavya.

Another master piece of Gangadhar is Pranavavallari. This is a theme from Mahabharata where Sakuntala, the daughter of Saint Kanva met Dushyanta, the King. Their marriage,
separation and again re-union were the main story of this Kavya. Here also the description of nature, the sorrow of Sakuntala and Dushyanta are most powerfully depicted.

In some of his poems like, *Arghvathali* and *Bharati Bandana*, the poet sought to infuse among a sense of love and patriotism among the common people for the motherland. He gave a new flavour to ancient themes and portrayed characters in a novel way. In all his works, the old classical characters were given a living and colourful shape. He also exhibited the most powerful feelings in a nice and spiritually expressed fashion through the devotional poems. They created an everlasting sensation among the readers.

Madhusudan Rao was another prominent writer of modern Oriya literature. He was a contemporary of Radhanath, and like him, Madhusudan was also a romantic writer. Though he began as a romantic poet, his writings became totally religious oriented in course of time. He gave a new outlook to poetry in shape of Odes, elegies, and Sonnets. He was greatly influenced by the progressive ideas of west and was a great exponent of Brahma cult in Orissa. He admired the Brahma faith and remained as a leader of that non-conformist faith in Orissa. His poems like *Utkala Gatha*, *Pruthibi Prati* and *Janmabhumi* revealed his intense patriotic feelings. His works display higher ideals of spiritualism, patriotism and humanism. Rabindranath Tagore, after reading his poems, described him as the "Saint Poet" of Orissa.
Among other poets of late nineteenth century, Nanda Kishore Bala was the most eminent. He served as a teacher and retired as District Inspector of Schools. He was famous for his folk songs in which he described the rural life and natural environment of the countryside in a vivid manner. His novel *Kanakalata* was an epitome of all his literary achievements. His enlightened ideas were reflected in his novel *Kanakalata*. For instance, he advocated the idea of widow remarriage. He was called as "Palli Kabi" of Orissa.

Writing of drama was another important section of Oriya literature in the Modern Age. It may be mentioned that following the arrival of the British, they appointed Bengalee officials for the administration of Orissa. Under their patronage, dramas became popular. Also, different Rajas of princely states encouraged the staging of dramas in their own areas. The Raja of Parlakhemundi was prominent among them. Due to his encouragement Kabichandra Raghunath Paricha wrote a drama which was staged at Cuttack in 1871 which was highly appreciated by the audience. *Babaji* was the first Oriya drama written in modern style by Jaganmohan Lala, which was staged in 1877. This drama was a story of social reforms, which sought to eradicate social evils like "prostitution" and "drinking". In the process the drama writer sought to create social consciousness among the people.

After the success of *Babaji*, another Oriya drama *Kanchi Kaveri* was written by Ramshankar Ray. When it was


staged, it became more popular than any other drama in the past. It was a historical story concerning the victory of the Oriya King over Kanchi. It created a feeling of great pride in the hearts of Oriyas. His other dramas like Ramabanabasa, Kansabadha and Chaitanyalila also received quite a bit of popularity. After Ramshankar, several dramatists contributed their writings to Oriya literature. Prominent among them were Rajkumar Bira Bikram Dev, the Raja of Paralakhimedi, Padmanabha Narayan Dev, Kampala Mishra, Harihara Rath and Bhikari Charan Pattnaik.

As regards prominent women writers of the nineteenth century, mention can be made about Sulakshana Devi, Suchitra Devi, Reba Roy and Annapurana Devi. To begin with Arnarpurna Devi (1883-1948) began his writings in the last part of the nineteenth century. Born in a poor family in Ganjam district, she was educated in Pathsala before marrying Sriram Patnaik of Purusottampur in 1900. She was a self-educated woman, who wrote more than one thousand poem. She was regarded as the harbinger of "renaissance" in Oriya literature. Her poems dealt with socio-cultural and contemporary situations like "Purdah" and "Universal Brotherhood of man". Her writing "Kalpa Kunja" is regarded as quite excellent. Prominent contemporary writers like Chintamani Mohanty, Madhusudan Rao, Radhanath Ray rated her literary works highly. Reba Ray (1876-1957) was the daughter of Jagannath Rao, the brother of

400. For details see B.C.Acharya, op.cit., p.245.
famous poet Madhusudan Rao and the wife of Sadhu Charan Roy of Jajpur. Inspite of her domestic engagements, she devoted herself to social reform activities especially for the spread of female education. In 1888, she edited Asha. She wrote "Sadhana" in memory of her husband's death. Suchitra Devi was born in an aristocratic "Karan" family in 1881, she married Raghabananda Das of Kurunjipur in Puri district. Inspired by her husband, who was a powerful writer, she produced an anthology of short stories based on traditional folklores. Her main work Kabitalahari was published in 1901, which was highly popular. As for Sulakshna Das (1829-1901) she was one of the earliest woman writers in Orissa. Having a deep religious bent of mind, she expressed her feelings in an anthology of poems entitled, Parijatmala.

To conclude, the nineteenth century witnessed a period of bold experiments in the field of Oriya literature. While the Oriya writers did not receive any inspiration from the British quarters, yet they spearheaded movements against social evils in Orissa. They showed the new light towards the next century, which represented the period of development in the field of nationalist literature.

402. For details see Savitri Rout, Odiya Sahityare Nari Pratibha (Cuttack, 1970) in Oriya, pp.49-50.
(c) **Growth of Cultural Nationalism in Orissa**

An effort will be made in the present section to analyze the origin and evolution of cultural nationalism in Orissa. As mentioned earlier, the roots of such cultural awakening could be traced to the activities of Christian missionaries and the establishment of English and Vernacular schools in the Pre-Famine period. It was, however, in the post-Famine period that cultural resurgence took a definite shape in Orissa with the emergence of an intelligentsia class which voiced its consciousness, hopes and aspirations through press, journals and public associations.

To begin with, cultural nationalism in Orissa may be viewed from two major angles. From one angle, it may be viewed as a part of the nineteenth century Indian renaissance in which neighbouring Bengal played a pioneering and dominant role. It was part of the intellectual awakening which continued to engulf India with the advent of renaissance. As described by Pyarimohan Acharya:

"... Now Orissa is a taking strides towards progress. Progress is the trend of this age i.e. nineteenth century. Today everywhere we see signs of progress ..."

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From such a perspective one has to view the developments concerning the response of Oriya people to English education and Brahmo ideas (as emanating from Bengal) as well as the efforts of native intellectuals to revive, evaluate and preserve their cultural heritage. As described by Pradhan, "the establishment of British rule, introduction of English education, recruitment of English-educated natives in the bureaucracy and apparent glamour of western civilization roused a craze for English education among certain sections of people in the society." Such a craze, however, did not materialize properly because of the costly nature of English education, poverty of the people and want of English schools and colleges in Orissa. Further, the British government adopted the policy of giving education through the vernacular medium in the school stage. Also, English officials like T.E. Ravenshaw, Campbell and John Beams supported the demand of native local elites to develop the Oriya language. In the process, development of Vernacular language became more prominent than the English education. Coupled with these developments, there was the Sanskrit system of education and culture, which was professed by men of priestly classes and patronized by some princely rulers. However, it did not receive much official sanction as it was not a spoken language. Further, its knowledge was exploited to by a section of conservative Brahmins who opposed social change and upheld traditional customs. All these

407. For details see Ibid, p.65.
developments affected the growth of English education and consequently retarded its major impact on Oriya society.

As regards the impact of Brahmo movement, it also could not make much headway in Orissa due to its internal limitations. For instance, the movement migrated from neighbouring Bengal, whose culture was very difficult for Oriya people to assimilate especially in the background of the first language agitation that transpired in the recent past. Thus, the cultural awakening in Orissa was not quite a part of nineteenth century renaissance.

As regards the second perspective, the cultural nationalism in Orissa could be attributed to the significant role played by "Oriya intelligentsia to articulate their own cultural identity. Under the leadership of Madhusudan Das, Gourishankar Ray and Gopabandhu Das, they had a feeling of being neglected and ignored for lack of a separate administrative identity". Such an explanation appears quite plausible. In fact, intense popular feelings took political expression in "Oriya Andolan" under the aegis of "Utkal Sabha" at first which got intensified later on with the formation of "Utkal Sahitya Samaj" and "Utkal Sammilani" in 1903. It is, however, proposed to highlight on socio-cultural aspects paving the way towards cultural nationalism towards the close of the nineteenth century.

408. For details see Ibid, p.64.
To begin with, the post-Famine period witnessed no major external wars, which was a most recurring feature during the eighteenth century. Also, due to political stability under the British, the Oriya people appeared to enjoy some amount of cultural development in the province.

Secondly, N.K. Jit portrayed the positive aspects of British rule as follows:

(a) A new educated and docile middle class emerged the traditional feudal society, who acted as agents of "modernization".

(b) The western education was imparted on the traditional education framework. It stimulated the spirit of "free inquiry". It sought to discover the golden past and highlighted for imbibing the western spirits of humanism, egalitarianity and secularism.

(c) The British sought to terminate the process of "medievalism" and inaugurated the process of "modernism" in the province.

Thirdly, the growth of press and journalism facilitated the process of cultural regeneration in Orissa.

Fourthly, the Oriya writers waged a crusade against the social evils as well as traditional conservatism in Orissa. The powerful writings of Fakir Mohan Senapati was an illustration in this regard. Further, to stimulate a feeling of nationalism,

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the Oriya writers reminded the native people of a historical and mythical part of the province when the land was exceedingly prosperous. Their crusade against eradication of social evils such as child marriage, dowry system, bonded labour and caste system aroused quite a bit of popular appeal among Oriya people. Further, writers like Nanda Kishore Bal advocated in favour of widow remarriage in his writing *Kanakalata*. Some writers of Oriya novels portrayed bold characters who fought against evil and wicked elements in native society. In the process the fear of social protest against the wicked people was aroused. This was a significant contribution of Oriya writers to the socio-cultural field.

Despite their limited circulation, the journals also played useful role in socio-religious fields. They protected the interests of Oriya language and literature rather vigorously during the language crisis in Orissa. They also laid the foundations of modern Oriya literature.

With the spread of English education, however, a new middle class began to emerge in Orissa. It strove hard to improve by acquiring western knowledge and by identifying itself with the wider world. Due to such exposure to the western world, they developed the spirit of "free thinking" as well as to work "collectively". These ideals became highly essential to common people in Orissa. For instance, they began to form associations, both socio-cultural and political which ignited the spirit of
cultural resurgence in Orissa within a short span of time. While some of the associations devoted themselves to purely cultural activities, other worked for social reforms and common public welfare. Initially, however, the formation of the associations followed the Bengal pattern under which such organizations worked for the cause of religion, language and literature. But with the march of time, different pattern of socio-cultural societies emerged in Orissa.\textsuperscript{410} It may be relevant to highlight on socio-cultural activities during the nineteenth century.

As regards formation of societies in the pre-Famine period, the first one was the Mutual Improvement Society, which started at Cuttack in 1859. Apart from local Oriya elites, some English men residing in the town attended such meetings. In its meetings socio-cultural aspects relating to Orissa were discussed. A second major association was called "Utkala Bhasa Utnati Bidhayini Sabha", which started functioning at Balasore in 1866. Some prominent members who belonged to the organization were Fakir Mohan Senapati, Radhanath Roy, Bholanath Samantray, and Damodar Prasad Das. They mostly discussed as to how new books in Oriya language could be published in large numbers.\textsuperscript{411}

\textsuperscript{410} For details see N. Samantray, op. cit., p.190.

\textsuperscript{411} For details see Ibid, pp.190-191 and Utkal Dipika 3 November 1866.
In the post-Famine period several prominent organizations were created to promote socio-cultural activities in Orissa. To begin with, "Utkal Bhasa Uddipani Sabha" was started at Cuttack in 1867. Gouri Shankar Ray, the editor of *Utkal Dinika* was its Secretary. The objective of the society was to prepare a list of old Oriya books and to pressurize the British government to select these text books for schools. It also gave importance to the study of ancient Oriya literature. Another organization was called "Cuttack Club" which was started at Cuttack High School during February 1868. Its members were mostly educated, who discussed regarding the promotion of English language in Orissa. It was at the venue of this club that Rajendralal Mitra made controversial remarks about Oriya language which resulted in first language agitation. Following the Cuttack Club pattern was the establishment of the "Cuttack Society" which was founded on 13 November 1863 with Kalipada Banerji as its Secretary. 412

Apart from these, a number of organisations were formed in the post-Famine period mostly along religious, caste or sectarian lines. This included the "Orissa Zamindar's Association", a powerful organisation of the landed gentry. The "Utkal Ullasini Sabha" at Cuttack was an association where Brahmins alone were allowed to become members as well as to discuss on different problems for the benefit of the Society Members. A parallel organisation called "Karan Sabha" was

412. *Utkal Dinika*, 26 May 1867, 7 November 1868.
formed at the residence of Deputy Collector, Narasimha Charan Das at Cuttack. At such meetings, social customs of the caste and necessary social reforms were brought for discussion. Simultaneously, the Cuttack Youngmen's Association was formed in 1869 where the Christian community living in the town interacted among themselves. 413

During the period from 1869 to 1872 a few more societies like "Utkal Bhasa Grantha Parikshya Sabha", Cuttack Bidyadhyapania Committee", "Puri Bhagabat Samead Sabha" "Puri Society" and "Ganjam Utkal Hitabodini at Berhampore (1872), "Utkal Brahmo Samaj at Cuttack (1869) were formed. 414

In 1873, "Utkal Bhasodipani Sabha" was established at Cuttack. In its second annual meeting held at the Cuttack Printing Company in July 1875, some articles on social problems dealing with women's education, Child marriage and superstitious customs of the Hindus were discussed thoroughly by all members. Also, in 1874 at a meeting of the Zamindars and the Rajas held at the residence of Bichitrnananda Das of Cuttack, members exchanged their views rather freely on social problems. 415

During the period from 1873 to 1879, more societies were formed. Prominent among them were "Cuttack Bhagabat Samaj", "Bhadrak Desh Hitaishini Sabha", (1877) "Balasore National

413. For details see N.R. Patnaik, op.cit., p.79 and Utkal Dipika, 15 January 1870 and 9 January 1869 and 19 June 1869.

414. For details see N. Samantrey, op.cit., p.191.

415. Utkal Dipika, 10 July 1875, and 5 December 1874.
Branch of Brahmo Samaj, "Madaka Nabarini Sabha" and "Sadabarta Math Sabha". Out of them Suhrud Samaj of Cuttack figured rather prominently in highlighting discussion regarding all-round development of Orissa.\(^{416}\)

During the period from 1880-1890, a few more associations were formed. These were "Sikshya Bidhayika Sabha", "Dhenkanal Bidhayika Sabha", "Cuttack Students Association", "Puri Students Association", "Unnati Sadhaka Committee" of Puri, "Aryaniti Pradip Sabha" of Biranarasinghpur, "Orissa Association", "Sahityaranjani Sabha", "Utkochna Sambarini O' Surapan Nabarani Sabha", "Sebaka Sabha", "Sriram Chandrapur Utkal Dharma Sudhanidhi", "Balasore Hari Bhakti Pradayini", "Utkal Sahitya Sammilani", "Utkal Sammilani Sabha", "Orissa Graduate and Undergraduate Sabha", "Sasana Damodarpur Satyadharma Prakashika", "Sikshya Samiti", "Baripada Reading Club", "Sanatan Dharma Rakshini Sabha O Gorakshini Sabha of Bamanda. Out of these "Sikshya Bidhayika Sabha" at Cuttack (1880) was quite prominent as it sought to promote the spread of education in the province with Lalit Chakravarti as its founder. The "Aryaniti Pradip Sabha" of Biranarasinghpur in Puri district was yet another prominent organisation whose role was to discuss social customs based on superstitions and prejudices as well as to find out the ways for their eradication.

\(^{416}\) Ibid, 16 August 1873, 13 June 1875, 31 August 1878, 3 May 1879, and 11 October 1879. See also N.Samantray, op.cit., p.191.
In October 1884, two societies namely, "Sikshya Bidhayika Sabha" and "Sahityaranjani Sabha" merged themselves to become "Sikshyabidhayini Sabha". Its principal aim was to encourage Oriya literature, education, language and to bring process in the society by removing differences between Bengalis and Oriyas. During this period, few more associations were created namely, "Utkal Hitaishini" in Parlakhemundi (1886), "Sarbartha Sadhini Sabha" of Athmalik (1886), "Bhakti Pradayini Sabha" of Puri (1888), "Karana Sammilani" (1889) and "Bidyarthi Brahman Hitaishini Sabha of Cuttack (1890). 417

The last decade of the nineteenth century (1890-1900) witnessed a mushrooming growth of societies, associations and clubs. The prominent associations were "The Orissa Christian Association" (1894), "Tekali Reading Room" (1892), "Utkal Bidyabandhini Sabha" of Parlakhemundi (1893), "Smarta Dharmarakshini Sabha" of Sambalpur (1895), "Bhakti Pradayini Sabha" of Angul (1897), "Sahitya Samalochna" and "Krida Bidhayni Sabha" of Cuttack (1899), "Kayastha Samaj" of Cuttack (1899), "Kayastha Sabha" of Jajpur (1899) and "Bentakar Sammilani Samaj" of Kodinda (1900). 418 The Orissa Christian Association was founded with a view to promote the moral and social conditions of the native Christian Community and to

417. For details see Utkal Dipika, 3 January 1885, 21 March 1885, 12 September 1885, 11 January 1886, 11 September 1886, 4 February 1888, 9 March 1889 and Sambad Hitaisini, 18 January 1890.

418. For details see Utkal Dipika, 11 January 1896, 6 March 1897, 11 February 1899, 12 August 1899, 13 March 1900; See also Sambalpur Hitaisini, 6 November 1895.
represent their grievances, views and problems before concerned authorities. Madhusudan Das was its founder President. In the "Graduate and Undergraduate Association" at Cuttack (1980), efforts were made for the reformation of Hindu society, glorification of woman's education, termination of child marriage and introduction of widow marriage etc. It also worked for the eradication of social evils and superstitions beliefs from the Oriya society. Madhusudan Das was once again the President of the Association. The students of Ravenshaw College at Cuttack constituted the backbone of this association.

The organization of such a large number of associations clearly produced several benefits to the Oriya people. To begin with, the young and educated men got opportunity for the improvement of the Oriya society and that a sense of cultural nationalism was aroused in them. Secondly, these societies sought to do something concrete in terms of the upliftment and development of Oriya language and literature. Thirdly, they sought to bring about a radical change in the cultural life of Orissa as they promoted the social reconstruction and upliftment activities in the province. Fourthly, through academic discussions in these associations, the major objective of bringing about a rational approach to society and religion was ensured among the Oriya intellectuals. Finally, these

419. See Utkal Dipika, 20 October 1894.
420. For details see N. Samantray, op. cit., pp. 191-192.
social gatherings paved the way towards their own social emancipation. For instance, through free-mixing, discussions and debates, the Oriya intellectuals were able to contemplate rather seriously concerning their own socio-religious problems instead of pointing accusing fingers at faults of others. In the process, the rigidity disappeared and liberalism dawned in Oriya society among young people in Orissa.

Another aspect relating to cultural nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century covered the issue of emancipation of women. It may be mentioned that development of consciousness among Oriya women emanated from three interrelated socio-religious and cultural aspects namely, (a) Social reform movements (b) Spread of Female Education and (c) Role of different women associations. To begin with, the Christian missionaries, socio-religious movements and stern action against perpetrators of hazardous social crimes reduced to a great extent the evil practices such as Sati, female infanticide and child marriage.

It may be observed that many parents began to feel the necessity of educating their girls so that they could acquire a good position in the society. But many were not willing to put them either in mixed or Christian schools on grounds of conservatism as well as due to the fear of conversions. At the same time many guardians also were not disinclined to give

422. N.R.Patnaik, op.cit., p.84.
education to their girls, so that they could occupy socially
decent jobs like teaching. But majority of the guardians
still believed rather vehemently that the women (whether
educated or not) were meant to be housewives only. However,
the spread of female education was accentuated the last part
of the nineteenth century. In this context, the role of
missionaries was quite significant. They took up the issue of
women's education with a messianic zeal and succeeded in
awakening the consciousness among Oriya women to a great extent.
As these activities intensified further, it paved the way
towards formation of women's association in Orissa during the
early part of the twentieth century.

Some women writers, as stated earlier, sought to
create socio-cultural consciousness among women in Orissa.
Prominent among them were Arnapurna Devi, Reba Ray, Suchitra
Devi and Sulakshana Devi. They sought to illuminate the
conservative Oriya society to open up the windows for new ideas
and to release women from social bondage so that they could
participate effectively in the changing social environment of
the late nineteenth century.

A final aspect contributing to cultural nationalism
was the language agitation in Orissa. Several organizations
sprung up to provide both mental as well as moral support to
the movement for regional identification and protection of the
mother tongue. In course of time, however, "Utkal Sabha" (1878)
under the leadership of Madhusudan Das played the pivotal role
in such a struggle described as "Oriya Andolan". The emergence of western-educated middle class intellectuals led by Madhusudan Das, Gourishankar Ray and Gopabandhu Das formed the core of the Oriya agitation. The "Utkal Sabha" organised several meetings in different parts of the province during the last part of the nineteenth century. Such activities, in fact, socio-cultural and political consciousness among people in Orissa. 423

Following the formation of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885, however, the Oriya agitators under the leadership of Madhusudan Das sought to maintain active links between Utkal Sabha and the INC ("Congress"). But very soon a feeling was aroused in the mind of Madhusudan that the Congress was not taking up the cause of "Oriya Andolan" rather effectively. Such a feeling prompted him to establish a provincial association called "Utkal Union Conference (UUC) in 1903, which spearheaded the "Oriya Andolan" rather effectively during the twentieth century. 424 In the process, the socio-cultural as well as political consciousness among Oriya people was considerably aroused.

By way of conclusion to the present study it may be observed that the nineteenth century witnessed the evolution of cultural resurgence and nationalism in Orissa, which manifested in several fields such as literature, journalism.

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424. For details see Nibedita Mohanty, Oriya Nationalism; Quest For A United Orissa : 1885-1936 (New Delhi, 1982), pp.48-60.
associations, reform movements, and the emancipation of women. The nineteenth century proved itself to be the golden era of cultural resurgence and nationalism in Orissa for both its society and culture. In fact, while the eighteenth century represented the period of "darkness", the nineteenth century symbolized the period of socio-cultural nationalism and progress in Orissa.