CHAPTER - I

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The ancient and medieval ages were marked by a divinely holistic approach towards life and the world at large. Subsequently, however, there developed a negative attitude towards that approach. Then in the 19th century, that negative consciousness underwent a complete change and under the guidance of Raja Rammohan Roy, the Bengali genius could transcend that mindset and enter into a new era altogether. This upsurge of intellect has been described by some as a sudden and astonishing transformation.¹ That newly awakened consciousness enlarged both the historical and geographical horizon of Bengali intellect. Of course, the influence of western education and culture had a lot to do in awakening this latent six-century old consciousness. And prose was the medium and the main prop of expressing that changed attitude of the mind. That intellectual Renaissance gradually extended from Rammohan's genius and passed through many other writers till it ripened and thickened in Annadasankar Roy who can be deemed as the ultimate and complete manifestation of the Bengali Renaissance. He has rightly been described as the ever-vigilant sentinel of the Century.² At that point of time, a group of writers revolted against all kinds of intellectual inertia while respecting at the same time the Tagorean insistence on the worship of Truth and Beauty and tried to present the contemporary maladies of the age through their writings. They belonged to the 'Kallol' age of Bengali literature. There was the other group which too was
respectful of Tagórean tradition but preferred to follow its own independent course. Annadasankar was one of that group and his motto was *go all alone* (একলা চলো) and to give shape to that lonely journey, he said:

একজনের নূতন হিসেবে নাটকবিদের ঘুলো লুপ্ত হবার নয়, কিন্তু সার্থক হবার।

And to that end has been directed all the literary endeavours of Annadasankar Roy, all the pages of his writings. His outstanding genius has touched all the branches of literature and everywhere one can discern his easy and free movement. He is not just a literary artist, but also a conscientious person with an absolutely free mind. In the critic's words, he is প্রেম ও প্রতিভায় গড়া জীবনপ্রতিমা.

Among the post-Tagorean writers, he is the one who has moved with equal freedom in not only different branches of literature but also in history, politics, culture, science, economics and etc. He has limitless and relentless eagerness and curiosity about life, the world and Man. He is indeed, a unique personality of Bengali literature.

Annadasankar Roy was born on March 15, 1904, in a 'Shakta' family of Dhenkanal of Orissa to Nemaicharan and Hemnalini Roy. His mother hailed from Cuttak, near to Dhenkanal and she belonged to the famous Palit family of Cuttak which came to Orissa during British regime. The connection of the Palit family with Bengal was much closer than that of the Roy family and the Palits were also more modern and progressive in outlook than the Roys. That accounts for the fusion of the ancient and the modern in Annadasankar. His grandmother
Durgamoni Roy was a highly intelligent and strong-minded woman, fairly educated in relation to that period, and had read many Bengali and Oriya books, both ancient and modern. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata as well as 'Kabikangkan Chandi' were at her finger-tips and she was a storehouse of innumerable native and foreign fairy-tales, stories, legends, myths, news and hearsays. Annadasankar learnt many things from that lady and, as he asserted, he learnt from her more than what he did all his life from other sources. His father was a spirited gentleman, steadfast in his views and opinions. All people knew that he was a man of word, unbending in will and firm in belief. Annadasankar's mother died at the age of only thirty-five and the poor boy could enjoy the companionship and affection of the mother only for seven years of his life.

Annadasankar's student life began at the Primary School of Abdhan where, apart from other things, he learnt many features of Oriya literature, especially a kind of prose set to tune like a song. Later on he studied in the district school of Dhenkanal and Puri. Since there was no arrangement for appearing at the Matriculation examination in Dhenkanal, he went in 1921 to Cuttak for the purpose. His intention was to set out to see the world for himself and make his destiny after completing the examination and he believed that this would inevitably lead him to America and thus would be fulfilled his father's wish- you should be Washington when you grow up. But his dream remained unrealized, for immediately following his passing of the examination with flying colours, came the shockingly unexpected news of his mother's demise and America remained a far cry for him. He got admitted to the famous Ravenshaw College of Cuttak, where he had
the opportunity of coming across many learned teachers, vast collection of books and companionship of fellow students. In 1923 he passed I.A. examination of Patna University by securing the 1st position and in 1925 he obtained 1st class 1st position in English Honours from the same University. 

This outstanding achievement steered his life to a new path and while doing his M.A., he appeared at the ICS examination in while he secured 5th position in India. He appeared again the next time and not only stood first but also broke all previous records of marks in ICS. Thereafter he studied in London School of Economics and London School of Oriental Studies. Then began his journey across the moving world and finally the emerged as a thoughtful philosopher and writer. Annadasankar is the fruit of an unique blending of intellect and art, of philosophy and history.

Rites and rituals in the Roy family conformed to the Shakta view and so the names of the children of the family were given as Annadasankar, Abayasankar, Rajrajeswari and Ajayasankar, Shakta’ religious principles were followed as long as their grand father Sreenath Roy was alive, but after his death, Annadasankar's father came under the influence of Vaishnavism and got initiated to Vaishnava faith. That was why his youngest daughter was named Brajendra mohini and the family idol of worship was Gour Gopal (Lord Krishna).
It was a government lady doctor of Dhenkanal named Mrs. Anderson who had cut the umbilical cord at the time of Annadasankar’s birth, and so he wrote later that he had an umbilical relationship with Christianity. That lady would often come to their house and take great interest in the child’s welfare and upbringing. Her husband would also often visit their house. Vaishnavism was widespread in Dhenkanal at that time and gradually its impact fell upon that Bengali Shakta family. In fact, it was in an environment of mixed religious faiths—Shaktaism and Vaishnavism—that Annadasankar grew up. Besides, he had the opportunity and freedom to mix with Muslim and Brahmo friends, for which he was free from all religious bigotry and narrowness. There would be regular religious gatherings in the Roy family where people of different faiths and languages would take part. Annadashankar’s mother would sing songs of Joydev which his father would sing those of Vidyapati. Oriya and Bengali speaking people would take in their own languages and often in the languages of each other and in this way, young Annadasankar began to grow up in a mixed culture of Bengali and Orissa.

After the completion of his university education, Annadasankar went to England and stayed there for two years. He traveled extensively around the continent during that period and then on his return, was appointed to a government post in Bengali. About a year after his return from England, an extraordinary incident took place in his life. An American lady came to Calcutta (now Kolkata) to learn Indian music. Her name was Alice Virginia Orndorf and Annadasankar met the lady and invited her to visit Murshidabad where she stayed for three days. Then they met again at Calcutta during Puja vacation and they
went to visit Ranchi together. There they got married and Annadasankar returned with his wife who had then assumed the name of Leela Roy. Pramatha Choudhuri and Indira Debi Choudhurani were present in their wedding. Annadasankar could not be Washington, as his father wished, but he got married to a woman of America. Leela Roy was an ideal woman, soft, gentle and humble by nature but possessed of great intellect and sharpness of mind. Besides, she was a good poet, essayist, translator and above all, a musician who could play on the piano the immortal compositions of Chopin, Wagner, Mozzart and Beethoven wonderfully. In the words of Probodh Chandra Sen, Annadasankar's wife was an ideal image of Lakshmi and Saraswati mixed together. It is not possible to know Annadasankar without knowing Leeladi.

Leela Roy went to her home in England after marriage but her family could not accept her marriage and told her to get a divorce from her husband and stay in England. But she refused and returned to India. She did not go to her parents for thirty eight years following that. She never saw her father again. When she went to see her mother, the old lady could not recognize her.

Annadasankar went to England again at government cost and stayed there for two years. Meanwhile he had started his literary exercises. He traveled extensively around Europe and got inspired by the vitality and creativity of the people of that continent. In 1929 he returned to India and resumed his service in Bengal. He decided to live in Bengal because he had already made up his mind to undertake literary activities in Bengali language. His assistant Karuna Kumar
Hazra became his first advisor and inspirer in this respect. Gradually he began to forget all his western rites, habits and interests and it was his wife who helped him greatly in this matter. Leela Roy had a great part to play in making his novel *Satyasatya* attain success and Annadasankar has openly acknowledged this contribution of his wife.

The Salt Movement under the leadership of Gandhiji had already started and ever since the emergence of the Mahatma, Annadasankar had become his staunch follower. He started using Khadi-made garments. Even when in England, he would often were khadi suits and, while in service, he would do the same regularly without fail. The Roy family had taken a solemn vow to create a Bengal of their own that would have their soul within it. When serving as the District Magistrate of Nadia, his literary activities faced some hindrances, but the exercise continued as usual. It was at that time that Annadasankar met Rabindranath, Zamindar of Patisar, and this meeting was to have a lasting effect on modern Bengali literature.

To Annadasankar's wide variety of interests were added his sincere concern for communal harmony and other contemporary problems. His extensive travels in connection with his official works offered him opportunity to gather information and experience of the lives, societies and problem of different sections of people of the country and these not only gave him food for thought but also helped him emerge as a socially conscious essayist. He took Gandhiji's non-violent principle as the remedy for all the national crisis and conflict and in his essays we find his unstinted support for that principle. In a number of his essays we find his thoughtful observations
on communalism, one of the greatest maladies of Indian social life, especially after the political division of the country. He expressed similar resentment for religious conflicts, social discriminations, political dishonesty, corruptions, nepotism etc. His powerful writings on these subjects have established Annadasankar as a luminous lighthouse of Bengali intellect and Bengali genius.

Despite being an ICS, he remained a free-thinker and his nationalism was ever-shining. He always thought deeply about his country and the various problems of the society and he endeavoured through his essays to enlighten and enlarge the minds of his countrymen so as to create an ideal India where there would be no differences in castes, creeds and religions. He believed that such an India could emerge only through the psychic unification of the men of all religious faiths. Without true national feeling, there cannot be the creative promptness of modernism. This zeal for unifying all classes of people was not confined to India alone. Wherever he saw humanity in peril, his pen became active to stand in defence of it. He was greatly aggrieved when military rule was imposed in Pakistan in 1958 and we find expression of it in his essays Chandragrahan and Ekesvarbad. He could not bear to see any disregard shown to democracy. The most terrible and shameful happenings of Assam in 1960 provoked Annadasankar to express his strong reaction in the essay Dragoner Daant (The Teeth of the Dragon). The border conflict between India and China induced him to write the essay Yogabhrasta, where he found out the actual character of Truth. The communal clash that took place pertaining to Hazarat Bal episode in 1964 was the source of the essay Nakshatrer Alo. In all these essays
we find him a fearless and strong-willed individual unwilling to compromise with what he thinks to be contrary to his conception of the ideal and the truthful. In the essay *Jaubane Biswas* composed in 1965 he writes:

> যৌবনের ধর্ষ হচ্ছে অনমনীয়তা। যুবকের মন কিছুতেই দমনা। যার মন দম যায়
> সে যুবক নয়, জরাঙ্গু।

All through his life, Annadasankar has held his brief for non-violence. Even while sanding on the devastations caused by nuclear bonds, he had dreamt of an ideal world of Platonic conception, a kind of world where there would be no war, no violence, no hatred, no jealousy. According to him:

> সত্যিকারের নতুন বাবন্ধ হচ্ছে সেই বাবন্ধ যাকে খাড়া রাখতে বাহবলের প্রয়োজন
> হয় না, তা সে হোক না কেন একারবতী রাখতে বাহবল। যে দেশে পুলিশ নেই,
> শিলিটারি নেই, সে দেশে যে বাবন্ধ আপনার পায়ে আপনি দাঁড়াতে পারবে,
> অধিকাংশের আত্মক সহযোগিতা পাবে, অধিকাংশের বাধা ও ব্যাঙাত হারিয়ে সহা
> করবে সেই বাবন্ধই সত্যিকারের নতুন বাবন্ধ। তেমন বাবন্ধ দিকে প্রথম
> পদক্ষেপ হচ্ছে আত্মসার জয়।

Divorce of idealism and realism has disturbed him but he has never compromised with what he has thought to be true and just. In the essay *Yaubane Biswas* he writes:

> .......... যে দেশে যৌবন সর্বর কাজ করছে সে দেশ বারবর পড়ে গেলেও
> বারবর উঠে হাড়ায়। সে দেশে আবার আদর্ষাদী জন্যায়, আবার তপস্যা শুরু
> হয়, আবার জোয়ার আসে।

Wherever and whenever, freedom of man has been curtailed by the oppressive and powerful machinery of the tyrants, Annadasankar's strong voice of criticism and protest has been heard. When
Gourkishore Ghosh was put behind the bars during the Emergency of 1975, he rushed to the prison and gave him courage and support. Muzibar Rehman's murder in Bangladesh induced the pained heart of Annadashankar to express its agony through the essay *Cry, Dear Country* and much later, the old man of ninety went to the office of the Bangladesh High Commissioner and waited upon him in the sun for three hours pleading for the Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen who had been sentenced to death by the fundamentalists of that country. He also tried his best to garner international support for the controversial writer as a result of which she could come out safely of Bangladesh in 1974.

Annadasankar's world of essays has been filled with the abundance of diversity of subjects in conformity with the diverse interests and experiences that he gathered from his eventful career. This multifaceted genius is indeed a unique phenomenon in the world of Bengali literature.

Annadasankar's professional life and literary exercises went on simultaneously. He had an inborn curiosity about life, the society and the world. Born and brought up in an atmosphere of Vaishnavism, two verses of Padabali entered very early into the heart of his hearts:

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জনম অবধি হয়  রূপ নেহারনু
নয়ন না তিরিপিত ভেল।
লাখ লাখ যুগ  হিয়ে রাখনু
তৈয় হিয়া জুড়েন না পেল।
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His aesthetic sensibilities developed from that point of time and along with that, his creative genius too began to flourish papers, journals and
books stored in the school library inspired him to come out as a writer and an editor. Among the papers and journals were the various ones like *Sandesh, Mouchak, Manashi, Marmabani, Bharati, Sabujpatra, Utkal Sahitya* etc. He had already gone through Kabikankan's *Chandi, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Vaishnava poetry*, Tagore's novels, his *Chayanika*, D.L. Roy's drama, Nabin Chandra Sen's poetry etc. He also read many other books borrowed from the school library and his neighbours containing travelogues, history, geography and lives of great people.

He comes into contact with *Sabujpatra* edited by Pramatha Choudhury alias *Birbal* when only twelve years of age and one of Tagore's poems title *Sabujer Abhijan* published in the first issue of the magazine generated great excitement in him:

> ওরে নবীন, ওরে আমার কীচ্চা। ওরে সবুজ, ওরে অরুঁকা।
> আধ-মরাদের যা মেরে তুই বীঁচা। ইত্যাদি।

This inspired him to read other Tagore poems and also *Sabujpatar gaan* by Satyendra Nath Dutta which ends with:

> আমরা সবুজ, আমরা সবুজ, - আলোছায়ার আলিঙ্গ, রাত আত্মির সজীবিগীর, নির্জনের প্রেমাণ।

In the next issue was published an essay *Youbane Dao Rajtika* written by Birbal and Annadasankar was further inspired by the verve and vigour contained in it. In his essay *Tarunya*, he writes:

> জীবনের চেয়ে মৌননের মূল্য বেশী। জীবনকে যে হরণ করে, সে সামান্যই হরণ করে, মৌনকে যে হরণ করে সে সর্বম হরণ করে।
Sabujpatra had another aim - to blend modernism with tradition, East with West and it further sought to propagate and establish the colloquial language. However, it was Tagore's Sabujer Abhijan which had the greatest impact upon him, for it gave him the confidence to move ahead in life. He obtained two other things from Sabuj Patra - eternal feminine thoughgth and need to integrate East and West. He also discovered the language in which to compose his own works. His later success as a writer owed itself to these things. He was particularly impressed by the language and technique of Birbal although initially he did not know that Pramatha Choudhury and Birbal were one and the same person.

The magazine Prabashi contained, apart from literary writings, many news and information on the country and the world - including events of World War I, scientific discoveries and inventions, women's movement, women emancipation etc. Ramananda Chattopadhyay, the leader of Brahmo samaj was the editor. Annadasankar also came into contact with Dwijendra Nath Basu, another Brahmo leader, in whose house he found many valuable books. Gradually, he became greatly Brahmo - minded - liberal and modern in outlook. In his childhood, he had read Jesus Christ and formed a good idea of Christ's religion of love and on the other hand, he had the atmosphere of Vaishnavism around him. The two combined and produced a strange sensation in his mind. He got as a prize Tolstoy's Twenty Three Tales for securing second position in the school annual examination. Tolstoy's simple narrative style deeply impressed him and in the same style he translated a story from the book and sent to the office of Prabashi. Annadasankar was sixteen years of age when the story got
Annadasankar had already entered the domain of Oriya literature and got intimate with Kalindi Charan Panigrahi and Baikuntha Pattanayak. He also developed a great interest in outside books, papers and magazines. Discussions would be held on Dickens and Tolstoy, world events including the outcome of World War I, Russian Revolution etc. He would place before him an atlas and mentally move around the world. He dreamt of becoming a journalist after passing Matriculation examination so that he could roam all over the globe and report on all events and incidents of the world. It was at that time that Sarangadhar Das, the pride and glory of Dhenkanal, returned from America after staying there for a long time. In the reception function held in his honour, Annadasankar wrote the opening song. He was greatly inspired on hearing about the liberalism of American society, how the American people gained their Independence by fighting against the British. He remembered how his father Nemai Charan had told him, *you must become a Washington when you grow up* and how he read the biography of that great man which his father had given him. To him then America, was the symbol of freedom. To prepare himself for a career in journalism, he would read the monthly *Modern Review*, the weekly *Telegraph*, Bengali monthly *Prabashi* etc.

He had decided to sail to America after appearing at the Matriculation, but Fate ordained otherwise. His mother suddenly passed away. He writes:

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......... মাকে বেশ ডাল দেখে এসেছিলুম, খবর এল তিনি নেই। কোথায় আমি
চলে যাব আমেরিকায় না তিনি চলে গেলেন স্বর্গে।
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Deciding to postpone his America visit to a future date, he came to Cuttak and started a new life. He found great friendship in Kalindicharan Panigrahi, Baikuntha Pattanayak and other literary personalities and he decided to embark upon a literary career instead of a journalistic one. Along with Kalindicharan, Baikuntha, Harihar Mahapatra and Sarat Chandra Mukhopadhyay, he formed a group called **Nonsense Club** which became famous in no time. The literary trend they established later came to be known as **Sabuj Sahitya** and the members were called **Sabuj Gosthi** of which Annandasankar was the central figure. They decided to publish a paper and a hand-written paper named **Abakash** came out. It was later named **Sadhana**. Annadasankar would write in three languages-English, Bengali and Oriya and send his writings to College magazine and **Prabashi**. Oriya articles would be sent to **Utka! Sahitya** and **Sahakar**. Later, he sent his Bengali writings to **Bharati**.

Meanwhile, Annadasankar had already occupied an important position in Oriya literature as an essayist and a story-writer. His foray into the field of Bengali literature was still hesitant. It was in 1923 that he sent an article in the Bengali magazine **Bharati** titled **Paribarik Narisamasya** (Domestic Women Problems) where he supported divorce and living together. The article created a great commotion and Anindita Chakrabarty, a writer of the Progressive Society, bitterly attacked him through a letter titled **Banganari** in **Bharati**. At that time Annadasankar raised further storm of controversy by writing another Bengali essay called **Nana Katha** (Miscellaneous views) and **Narachakshure Nari** (Women in the eyes of Men), an Oriya essay published in **Utkal Sahitya**. These writings show that he was at that
time greatly influenced by Western literature, philosophy, history and sociology and getting inducted into modern ideology. Annadasankar was the first writer to write thoughtful essays in Oriya on modernist concepts and contemporary literature. It was while studying in the college at Patna that he had earned recognition as a celebrated writer in Oriya language and his two poems *Srijanswapna* and *Proloy Prerana* are still regarded as valuable creations in modern Oriya literature. It was at that time that he along with his four friends, already mentioned, published a book of verses in Oriya titled *Sabuj Kabita*, in which major contribution was Annadasankar's. The word *Sabuj* (green) was culled by him from Tagore's poem *Sabujer Abhijan* and subsequently this Bengali word become a part of Oriya vocabulary. Besides, he used to write in Oriya also under the pen-name *Bangotkal*, thereby revealing his Bengali blood and Oriya nativity, gradually, however, he realized the impossibility of maintaining that dual identity.

By 1925, Annadasankar found himself in the midest of a dilemma - which language to adopt as the medium of literary creation? About this problem, he writes in this way:

> আমাকে দুটার একটা বেছে নিতে হবে, যেমন নিয়েছিলেন বক্তিপূর্ণ, যেমন নিয়েছিলেন সাইকেল। ঠিক এরকম একটা সঙ্ক্ষপ এসেছিল কবির রাধানাথ রায়ের জীবনে। তিনিও নিখুঁত বাংলায় ও ওড়িয়ায়। দুই ভাষায়। নামও হয়েছিল বেশ। এমন সময় তিনি বাংলা ছেড়ে দিয়ে কেবলমাত্র ওড়িয়ায় লেখেন। অল্প সময়ের ফলে আধুনিক উৎকলের প্রস্তুত কবি বলে গণ্য হন। আমি কি রাধানাথের বিপরীত সিদ্ধান্তে পৌঁছাই। আমি বেছে নিই বাংলা।

He wrote one last poem in Oriya named *Kamalbilashir Biday* and bade
adieu to Oriya literature. This was a dramatic event of his life. Had he stuck to Oriya, he could certainly have emerged as the greatest and the best litterateur in Oriya literature. But he left that certain prospect of glory and entered the arena of Bengali literature in search of his rivals.  

Meanwhile, he had sent the essay *Raktakarabir Teenjan* to the new magazine *Bichitra* through his friend Kripanath Mishra. The editor of the paper Upendra Kishore Gangopadhyay asked for more articles from him. Anandasankar had then got ready to go to England after obtaining the top position in I.C.S. He told the editor that he would send in instalments the account of his travels across Europe. It was published serially in *Bichitra* with the title *Pathey Prabashey*, and instantly he earns fame as a Bengali writer of repute. He caught the notice of Tagore and Pramatha Choudhury and the latter volunteered to write the preface to *Pathey Prabashey*, when it was published in book form.  

Then he started writing *Jar Jetha Desh* for *Bichitra* which subsequently became the first part of the novel *Satyasatya* published in six volumes. At that time *Köllol* was the new mouthpiece of Bengali literature along with other associated papers such as *Sanghati, Uttara, Kalikalam, Pragati* etc. *Prabashi* and *Bichitra* were indulgent and sympathetic towards new literature and new writers. Opposed to this was *Sanibarer Chithi* of Sajani Kanta Das. In 1926, Premendra Mitra, Sailajananda Mukhopadhyay, Muralidhar Basu, Sisir Neogi and some others published the paper *Kalikalam*. Till then, Anandasankar's notable composition was a long poem *Krishna* published in 1925.
However, it was with *Pathey Prabashey*, Annadasankar precisely but at the some time, very firmly revealed certain aspects of his own thoughts and character. The novel *Satyasatya* was another great achievement of his during that period of his career.

Annadasankar was invited by Achintya Kumar Sengupta, Muralidhar Basu and Sisir Neyogi on behalf of *Kallol* to send articles. It was a time when in Europe, following the post-war depression, there was a movement of the younger generation against the older people. In keeping with that spirit, Annadasankar wrote nine essays for *Kalikalam* and these were - *Tarunya Dharma, Dharmashya Glari, Sristir Disha, Prachchanna Jadabad, Ekla Chalo Re, Jati o Sati, Pratimabhanga, Mone Mone* and *Nabyaneeti*. In 1928, Sudhir Chandra Sarkar took first seven of these essays and published them together as a book named *Tarunya*. It is Annadasankar's first published Bengali book. This book encouraged and inspired inmemorable political prisoners and attracted even intellectuals like Professor Shibnarayan Roy. *Mone Mone* was written in 1928 on the backdrop of the literary debate between the progressive and conservative people of the time. Here Annandasankar has tried to explain the religion of modern literature. In 1929 he wrote *Nabyaneeti* in small instalments and when it was later included in the book *Ishara*, its name was changed to *Neetijigyasa* contain in them the reflections of a very modernist mind - a distinct revealation of Tagore's influence. These were naturally and inevitably followed as such by the essay *Rabindradiritya*.

On his return to Kolkata from foreign travels, he got acquainted with Achintya Kumar Sengupta, Bishnu Dey and others. He also met
Pramatha Choudhury whom he revered secretly as his master, and went to the office of *Bichitra*. Thus, gradually his name and fame spread all around. Once he went to Santiniketan along with Achintya Kumar to meet Rabindranath. The poet asked him: *why did you choose Bengal? I would have opted for the United Province.* Annadasankar replied: *I am a writer of Bengal literature and so Bengal is the right place for me.* While the district Magistrate of Nadia, he had the opportunity to come closer to Tagore, the effect of which was far-fetched for him.

Annadasankar was greatly concerned with two very vital issues communalism and contemporary social problems. He began to write on them in *Sabuj Bangla, Bulbul, Parichay* and such other papers. He came to Santiniketan once again, thinking it necessary to stay beside the poet, since he now felt quite at ease in verse composition. In this way he gradually became a very busy writer of the vast world of literature.

In order to understand Annadasankar’s philosophy of life, one must take his autobiography titled *Binur Boi* (Binu’s Book) as the source, for this Binu is just the shadow of this man, Annadasankar, who epitomizes youth has nourished Bengali literature and helped in its flowering and branching. He is equally adept in stories, novels, rhymes, travelogues, essays and some of his works are unparallel creations. An epic novel like *Satyasatya* has perhaps no rival in Bengali language. He has also written plays, lyrical drama and juvenile fiction. But among the post Tagorean writers, his fame chiefly rests upon his essays in which he is the true successor of Bankim and Rabindranath.
His essays through ample and very scholarly light on art, literature, history, sociology, politics and contemporary social problems and issues.

Annadasankar himself has pointed out that since his boyhood, he has been nurtured by two great literary forces - one is the three thousand year old Indian literary tradition and the other, the five hundred year old European Renaissance tradition. And, in his writings, there has been a unique fusion of the two forces, and a wonderful blending of thought emotions, beauty and epic spirit. Bertrand Russell wanted wisdom, love and a rebellions spirit to guide him and Annadasankar has sought illumination and the agony and ecstasy of love. We find expression of it in many of his essays. He always kept himself abreast of whatever was happening far and near, and both the East and the West equally inspired him. He has said that he started his literary journey by following the West and his love for literature prompted him to take voluntary retirement from government service and devote himself to literary pursuit. Freedom of man and liberation of human spirit constitute the central theme of his writings and he believed that this could be achieved through struggle, through women. Truth, Love and Beauty comprise the essence of his literary output. Creativity is the mark of his personality. To him individual freedom has the greatest value. As an essayist, he represents the era of Tagore and Pramatha Choudhury. But, though inspired by them, he never copied them. He moved in his own way along the path scripted by him. The bulk of his huge works can be branded as Annadasankar Encyclopedia.
Annadasankar's essays taken together are made of reason, intellect and argument and though there are touches of light-heartedness in them, they are not like the typical humorous sketches. They are thoughtful pieces written through the compilation of facts and figures and presented judiciously and analytically. To him, the inner world of the artist is more active than the outer world. Indeed, his essays reveal his personality in the best way.  

Following the Awami League's return to power in Bangladesh, Annadasankar was invited to attend the Silver Jubilee celebration of the party. He stayed there for four days as the state guest. On his return therefrom, he wrote *Mukto Banger Smriti*. In 2001 was published from Dhaka a collection of verses and essays on East Bengal named *Amar Bhalobashar Desh*. By that time he was getting physically weak and exhausted, but his mind remained as young as ever. When an old man asked him about his health, he replied, *I am 97 years young*. On August 8, 2000, he had to be shifted to a hospital since his health was fast deteriorating. When he recovered a little, he wrote a poem which was published in the Puja issue of *Sandesh*. He also wrote a few pages of memoir and then his pen stopped for ever. Thus came to an end a life which was a hundred years long journey across a vast tract of land spread in different directions.

Annadasankar's vast literary career was extended to various fields - stories and novels, rhymes and verses, travelogues and essays. Subjectwise, that literary world can be divided as follows:
The whole corpus of Tarasankar's essays has till this date been published in nine volume. Of course, a few collected works of his essays on literature, art and culture, had already been published in book form, e.g., *Art* (first published in 1968), *Tolstory* (first published in 1980), *Sahitye Sankat O Annyanya* (first published in 2000), *Banglar Renaissance* (first published in *Singhabolokan* in 1984) etc. Apart from these, his novels, short stories, poems and rhymes, translations from
various literatures have been published in ten volumes.  

Indeed, Annadasankar’s life was a wonder of 20th century Bengali literature. His long life bears testimony to an outstanding genius of rare creativity. His life remains for ever the bacon light to all who seek to pursue a literary career. Like an ever awake sentinel, he has been showing the path to all in all walks of life. He was the epitome of the intellectual upheaval which took place in Bengal through the leadership of Raja Rammohan Roy. His relentless and tireless literary exercise spanning almost the whole of the 20th century not only enriched the Bengali literature, but at the end of his long life, he became the light of conscience in the growing darkness of the two Bengals.

After the passing away of Annadasankar, poet Sankha Ghosh wrote:

Poet Subhas Mukhopadhyay said:

The Democratic Artistes’ Association of West Bengal remarked:

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In 2005, Sahitya Akademi arranged a big seminar to celebrate Annadasankar's birth centenary where widespread discussions were held on his thoughts and creativity. Amlan Dutta, the great thinker said:

अन्नदासंकर के जन्म का सप्ताह में भीड़ रही, निकटवर्ती सदस्यों ने अन्नदासंकर के जीवन का संदर्भ में अनेक सूत्र और प्रश्न उठाये। अपरिहार्य से उनका चार्पाँजी के समय का नियम नहीं करा पलातक के काम।

Dheeman Dasgupta said:

अन्नदासंकर के संदर्भ में कवि और कवक के द्वारा यह दृष्टि भी है कि जीवन का जीवन बनाने द्वारा अन्नदासंकर एक वरदमानी जीवनवीक्षा निष्ठाग्री ने जीवन के प्रबल और प्रतिकूल।

Sunil Gangapadhyay said:

अनेक केब्रिटी अग्रज लेखकों के अन्नदासंकर के साथ यथार्थ श्रद्धा एवं सम्प्रदाय है, उन्हें लेखा लेखा नहीं है।

So, he recited a few poems and rhymes of Annadasankar in the seminar. Abdur Rauf spoke on Annadasankar's secular mindset, just as Professor Hossenur Rahman dwelt on Annadasankar's endeavour to show India as an instrument of secularism and diversity. In the conference held on the subject *Annadasankar and his vision of Life*, Chinmoy Guha said that Annadasankar carried forward, along with Romain Rolland, the tradition of fearless outspokenness. It was from Rolland that he learnt how to abide by the dictates of the conscience. Sibnarayan Roy reminded that Annadasankar remains indebted to all by trying to resolve all conflicts through unity, but he did not become a votary of anybody—his I is completely modern and European.
NOTES AND REFERENCES :-

3. Taking this particular portion of Tagore's poetry, Annadasankar wrote one essay in his book *Tarunya*.
9. Ibid, P-59, 60.
30. -Do- P-19, 20.
32. *Sabujer Abhijan* (Poem) from Tagore's Verses "Balaka".
42. Ibid.
49. Ibid, P-2.


53. Complete list of Annadasankar Roy's vast literary creation is not given due to scarcity of space.


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