CHAPTER-V

IMPACT ON ORIYA LITERATURE, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The bhakti movement influenced the whole country at different times, and had a definite impact not only on religious doctrines, rituals, values and popular beliefs, but on arts, culture and the state systems as well. The social protest and popular movement in medieval Orissa not only had a close bearing on the bhakti movement, it influenced almost the entire body of the contemporary society and culture. In this Chapter there is an attempt to discuss the impact of Sarala Dasa, Panchasakhas and Sri Chaitanya on Oriya literature and culture in the subsequent periods. Their influence on the ruling class of contemporary period has also been noticed. Numerous social changes that appeared in medieval Orissa like the growth of education and moral upliftment with the emergence of the Bhagavata Ghara, development of Pala, goti-pua dances, performance of suangas and organisation of Dola Yatra bear the unmistakable marks of the movement.
Influence of Sarala Dasa:

Sarala Dasa is generally recognised to be the father of Oriya literature. He enriched the Oriya language with an immense colloquial strength. He introduced the "dandi brutta" to write the Oriya Mahabharata and established the brutta worthy of writing the puranas. The "dandi brutta" is a kind of lyric in which the number of letters between two lines may not be equal but the last letter of both the lines must be same for the sake of rhythm. The reciter of the Purana could adjust it while singing the cantos although the number of letters between the two lines were not equal.

Balarama Dasa, and Achyutananda Dasa, two eminent saint-poets of 16th century were influenced by the "dandi brutta" and they composed the dandi Ramayan and the Harivamsa respectively by following this brutta. Jagannatha Dasa, also composed a "Tika Mahabharata" with his "nabakshari brutta" (nine lettered lyric), which, was the summary of Sarala Mahabharata from the view point of arrangement of parvas, themes and description of different characters.

Sarala Mahabharata was widely read in Orissa and Bengal as well. Sarala Dasa composed his Mahabharata in the late 15th century and his Mahabharata after being delineated in Bengali script, was widely read in Bengal till the Bengali
Mahabharata came to be written by Kasirama Dasa. Kasirama Dasa's Mahabharata was heavily influenced by the Sarala's Mahabharata. The legends of "Jarasandha Killing" (Sabha parva), the story of "True Mango" (Vanaparva), "Draupadi-Hidimbika Quarrel" (Madhya parva) were borrowed by Kasirama Dasa, from Sarala's Mahabharata. Kasirama Dasa had a close relation with Orissa and he lived in South-Western Bengal (Radha Desa) which was a part of the Gajapati empire of Orissa during 15th and 16th centuries. This region was deeply influenced by the Oriya culture and literature during the times of Kasirama Dasa.

Sarala Dasa continued to inspire Oriya literature right down to our own times. One such examples was Pt. Gopabandhu Dash, a 20th century poet, reformer and statesman. Sarala Dasa's endeavour to identify the different places of Orissa with the various shrines of all India importance, for example, finds echoes in Gopabandhu Dash's poetry. Sarala Dasa wrote:


"Odra-rashtra exists in the Bhratha khanda, which is nearest to the Jambu island. Great Utpaleswar also exists on the Southern bank of Chitrotpala. Varanasi exists at the Jajpur Dwaraka, the land of corns is the holy Srikshetra (Puri). Sri Yameswar Mahalinga is here on the northern shore of the Bay of Bengal and the ecclesiastical banyan tree on the beautiful blue mountain."

Pt. Gopabandhu Dash writes:

"India that is a lotus in the pond like world, Neelachala is the stamen of this flower. Wherever I go inside India I feel as I have been in my own room. The Indian stones are Gods in my eyes, All the places are just like my endear-ed Puri,


Sarala Mahabharata (Adya), p.10.
All the waters like the water of "Five shrines",
To me all the shrines like Neelachal.
All the trees are ecclesiastical banyan tree,
Lord Jagannatha pervades everywhere,
With love, liberty and equality.
The holy Neelachal, the heart of India.
Wherever I be in the corner of India,
I feel to have been
Under the shadow of the "Great Blue Wheel." 4

In the Sarala Mahabharata there is also a reference to
the Supreme God-head in the following lines.

"Victory to you, Oh Lord,
One without beginning,
without shape and the fearless.

4. "Jagata sarase Bharata kamala,
To madhey keshar punya Nilachala.
Thile jahin tahin Bharata bakshare,
Manibi mu achhi apana kakshare.
Mo netre Bharata Sila Salagrama,
prati sthana mora priya Puri dhama.
Sakala Salila panchatirtha jala
Prati dharmalaya mora Nilachala.
Bharatara prati bruksha kalpabata.
Prabhu jagannatha sarbatra prakata.
Samya swadhinata prema samudaya
Nilachala suddha Bharata hrudaya
Thile jahin tahin Bharata sayale,
Minili mu achhi Nilachakra tale."

Gopabandhu Dash, Bandira Atmakatha.
Thou art the unmanifest Purusha.
The light without shape."

The poet believed in the doctrine of sunya or nirakara, which influenced the later poets. The sunya philosophy of Sarala Dasa got reflected in the Bhrahmanda Bhugol and Virata Gita of Balarama Dasa, Tulabhina of Jagannatha Dasa, Sunya Samhita of Achyutananda Dasa (all 16th Century) and in the Stuti Chintamani and Brahma Nirupana Gita of Bhima Bhoi, a revolutionary tribal poet of 19th century Orissa. They were influenced as we will see below much more by the Panchasakhas.

Impact of the Panchasakhas

Among the Panchasakhas Balarama Dasa, Jagannatha Dasa and Achyutananda Das, as we saw earlier, occupied special positions. Balarama Dasa composed his Ramayana in the style of writing puranas which was a deviation from the writing of Valmiki. The new themes incorporated in the Ramayana, influenced the later poets for writing the epics on the life and deeds of Rama. The story, originally not found in the Ramayana of Valmiki and considered to have been innovated by

5. "Jay tu Anadi Abhay Nirakara,
    Anhata purusha tu anahata jyoti."

Sarala Mahabharata (Adiya), Ch.I.
Balarama Dasa, has influenced poet Upendra Bhanja (18th century) to incorporate it in his "Vaidehisa Vilasa". The story runs like this, Rama, Laxman and Sita once, started their journey from Bharadwaja ashram to Chitrakuta hill and on the way the forest women were surprised to have seen their divine appearances. Some thought them to be Gods and Goddess taking a round in the forest. After all probability, they came nearer to Rama, Laxman and Sita and got their information. Although, Upendra Bhanja's description of the story has been more lucid and meaningful than the original one in Balarama Dasa's Ramayana, it comes from, description, the poetic imagination of the latter.

The episode of Rama's collecting the message of Sita from a crane and his offering of boon to the bird that he will get food at the door-step of his nest in the rainy season, is not an original story found in the Valamiki Ramayana. But this is found in Balarama Dasa, which has been adopted not only by Upendra Bhanja but also by Rama Dasa, the author of the "Janakisa Vilasa Ramayana".

9. Rama Dasa, Janakisa Vilasa Ramayana: Kiskindhya, Ch.VI.
In the Adyakanda of *Ramayana*, poet Balarama Dasa has characterised Laxman as a "dignity conscious prince" which certainly influenced upon the many poets to follow the original description. He has made Laxman to advise Rama (at the time of marriage-ceremony of Sita) that he should not pick-up the bow by bowing down his head as it would be insulting to their solar dynasty and the kings present in the ceremony might laugh at the incident. In the words of Laxman,

"Oh Lord Sri-Rama, accept my words,
Do not hold on this bow
keeping down your head.
All the kings are looking at you,
And It may be looking like saluting.
Ours is the glorious solar dynasty,
the people should not laugh at us.
Hearing this Sri Rama became pleased
and appeared powerful to hold on the bow".\(^{10}\)

---

10. "Bho deva Sri Rama tumbhe mora bola kara,
Mauli nuai tumbhe e dhunu na dhara.
Eka drusti kari chahinchhanti nrupa bare,
pranama kala parae disiba sabhare.
Niskalanka Suryabamsa ambhara atai,
Tohara sanchila ehi sapta dwipa mahi,
Sunina Sri Ramakara pulakai kaye,
Biswa rupa dharina bikrami ubha hoye".

The echo of this version has been conspicuous in the Upendra Bhanja’s *Vaidehisa Vilasa*, Jadumani Mahapatra’s *Raghava Vilasa* and Radhacharan Nayak’s *Ramayana Manjari*. The tone of Balarama Dasa and Radhacharan Nayak resemble so closely that it is clear in their writings. In the words of Radhacharan:

"Said Laxman, Oh Lord, please see the bow,
If you want to hold on it
then do not bow down your head.
It would look like saluting
the Kings will laugh at us.
And it would be insulting to
our Solar dynasty
if they gossip behind."

In the post-panchasakha period, when emphasis was given on Oriya language and literature at primary levels Balarama Dasa’s "Kamal-Lochan-Chautisa" was introduced as a distinguished syllabus material which continued up till the begin-

11. "Lakshman boile bho deva dhanu dekhiba jai,
Dharibara dhanu hoile lain dhariba nahin.
namaskara pray disiba Rajamane hasibe,
Tapan bamsaku kalanka heba pachhe bhashibe."

ning of twentieth century. Thus Balarama Dasa's writings also shaped Oriya Society and culture in a remarkable measure.

Jagannatha Dasa was another celebrated poet of the Panchasakhas. He is remembered not only as an author of the "Oriya Bhagavata", but also as the innovator of the nabakshari brutta (nine-lettered-rhyme) in which he composed his epic. Although, the Dandi brutta introduced by Sarala Dasa, was in use of writing the Puranas, he felt that a new form of rhyming had become necessary to give poetic lines internal rhythm and to induce proper development of moods or rasas as a new dimension. His new nabakshari brutta enjoyed immense popularity as it combined flexibility of recitation with the facility of easily remembering the rhymed lines and singing them in variable patterns and methods. Even though five + four was the normal break-up of the nine-letter line, it was capable of being broken up into various other permutations. This also opened up immense possibilities of reciting the lines into two + three + four or three + three + three the lines which could be read slower, more melifluously if the occasion so demanded. In fact, in medieval poetry the rhythm and sound-patterning introduced by the nabakshari brutta was a unique development.

Many contemporary poets and poets of later period were deeply inspired by Jagannatha dasa's nabakshari-brutta and many poetic creations came to be composed on the lines celebrated by him. More immediately Balarama Dasa followed this nabakshari brutta to compose his Brahmananda Bhugol, Gupta Gita, Amarkosha Gita and Vedantasara, Gupta Gita. Jasobanta Dasa, another contemporary saint of Jagannatha Dasa also adopted the same brutta to write his Premabhakti Brahma Gita. Mahadev Dasa and Dwaraka Dasa (both of 17th century) composed the twelfth and thirteenth Volumes of the Bhagavata in the same Chhanda. Dibakara Dasa's Jagannath Charitamruta (17th century), Rama Dasa's Dardhyata Bhakti (17th century), Bhupati Pundit's Prema-Panchamruta (17th century), Brundabati Dasa's Purnatama Chandrodaya (17th century), Arakshita Dasa's Mahimandal Gita (18th century), Prahlad Dasa's Vishnu Purana (18th century), Upendra Bhanja's one chhanda of Vaidehisa Vilasa and Ch. V of his Koti Brahmanda Sundari (18th century), Pt. Gopabandhu Dash's Gomahatmya (20th century) and Madhusudan's Drustantamala (20th century) are examples of the successful application of this chhanda.

Jagannatha Dasa accepted and used tatsam words in ample measure. He also adopted the generally accepted and frequently used local tadbhab words and blended them marvelously with the tatsam words to forge a new poetic language.
The language steered clear of the twin extremes of excessive Sanskrit word use with their complex meanings and word joining and an over-dependence on the rugged local folk-idiom that had sometimes not gained wider currency. He thus created a new poetic language which was balanced, elastic, effective and creative. Later poets took this ideal of blending *tatsam*, and *tadbhab* words in right proportions as an objective of poetic craft. Upendra Bhanja said, "the poets job was to please the mind with divine and non-divine lines." (*Divya-ādīvya padare mannas mohiba*). These two words broadly refer to words derived from Sanskrit which was looked upon as the divine language and the local prakrit. Abhimanyu Samantasimhar also said the same thing, "the lines will attain perfection in language both divine and non-divine." (*Divya-ādībya bhashare pada heba siddhi*). Evidently, these two great poets of 18th century were influenced by the language created by Jagannatha Dasa. His language transcended all barriers and acquired universal appeal and significance. This explains why Jagannath created a new language which was not just the local regional language, rugged and colloquial, and which almost fully rejected the Sanskrit Vocabulary. He wanted to speak as much to the common man, the illiterate as also to the learned and the elite. This is a measure of his greatness and it explains the difference in the use of language between him on the one hand and Sarala Dasa, Balarama Dasa and Achyutananda on the
other. The language of Jagannatha Dasa was reasonable to assert, which inspired and made possible the later chhanda sahitya in Oriya.

Numerous Kavyas, poems, lyrics, plays and verse-plays have been composed based on themes taken from the Oriya Bhagavata. It is not possible to present a comprehensive list of all such works inspired or influenced by Jagannatha Dasa. In the following pages only some of the more important authors and their works where his influence is fairly distinctive and noticeable have been discussed.

Balarama Dasa was a contemporary and elder to Jagannatha Dasa. In his Uddhava Gita, however, one can clearly notice the influence of the ideas and language of the Bhagavata. In several episodes of the former work, such as, Uddhava’s description of the attributes of the Gopis in the Gopapura, there are clear influence of Bhagavata’s corresponding lines and arrangement of themes. This is remarkable, as it provides a testimony to the popularity of Jagannatha Dasa’s composition even among his contemporaries.

Rama Dasa, the author of Dardhyata Bhakti and Dibakara Dasa, the author of Jagannatha Charilamruta (both 17th century) were two eminent Vaishnav poets and followers of Jagannatha Dasa. The language, style, emotions and rhythm of Bhagavata are clearly noticeable in their writings. In the Dardhyata Bhakti, poet Rama Dasa has described the bio-
graphical sketches of numerous medieval saint-poets in the form of conversation between mana (mind) and Chaitanya (consciousness) unlike the style of conversation between Suka and Parikshita, Kabi and Nimi, Narada and Basudeva, Abdhut and Jaduraja, Krishna and Uddhava, and Suta and Shaunaka in the Bhagavata of Jagannatha Dasa. Similarly, Dibakara Dasa was so much inspired by greatness of Jagannatha Dasa that he wrote his biography i.e. Jagannatha Charitamruta.

The eternal love between Krishna and Gopis, sportive activities of Radha and Krishna in the Bhagavata of Jagannatha Dasa described for the first time in Oriya, made the epic popular and inspired the later medieval poets to accept the theme of love between Radha and Krishna in their poems. Devadurlava Dasa's "Rahasya-manjari" (17th century) is a poetic narration of Radha-Krishna theme and is considered an important Vaishnav Kavya. The pattern of the narration and more particularly the treatment of Krishna as identical with Lord Jagannatha show clear and unmistakable signs of the Bhagavata's influence. Ushavilasha by Sisu Shankara Dasa (17th century) is an important Kavya in Oriya literature and is justly celebrated. When Usha looks at the portraits of Aniruddha, her feeling of emotive elation and secret desire are beautifully described. The description follows a similar episode in Bhagavata in its broad outline and frame. Kartika Dasa's Rukmini Bibha (17th century) takes the main
thematic development of the Kavya - Rukminis marriage to Krishna and the connected episodes of her sending a messenger to Krishna, her prayer to Goddess Bhavani, Krishna's abduction of Rukmini, her brother Rukmana's humiliation in the hands of Krishna—from the Bhagavata in its essential outlines and its linguistic structure.

Besides the above poets, mention may also be made of Bhupati Pundit's Prema Panchamruta and Danai Dasa's Gopi Bhasha as works belonging to 17th century and 18th century which show the influence of Jagannatha Dasa's Bhagavata. The latter, particularly is a highly evocative and well-crafted Kavya with Radha-Krishna love relations as its theme. While it is true that Radha does not find even a mention in the Bhagavata, the language, the emotive pattern and the thematic growth of Gopi bhasha borrows quite a bit from the former. In particular character delineation of the Bhagavata, Bhupati Pundit was not merely another fine poet but also a follower of the Vaishnavism of Atibadi (Jagannatha Dasa) school. No wonder he was deeply influenced by the philosophy, literary style and life attitudes of his mentor. In fact, in Prema-Panchamruta he mentions of the work being conceived as an off-shoot of, and in line with, that classic. Like Jagannatha, Bhupati Pundit was also a believer in Advait philosophy and Bhakti. In Bhagavata, Jagannatha Dasa has assigned the name of Brundabati to the Gopi with whom
Krishna had stealthily escaped during the *Rasa leela*. The description of this episode in the two works runs closely parallel.

The soul of *Gopi* literature existed on the basis of the contribution of Jagannatha Dasa's poetic imagination and emotive expression of the heart-felt love of women-folk through the *Gopis*. His description of the approach of love, sweetness of attraction between lover and beloved have been self-complete and perfect. After two hundred years of Jagannatha Dasa, his poetic instinct and characterisation of the common women-hood have been reflected in the poetry of Banamali (18th century). He, thus, delineates the desire of a *Gopi*.

"Oh Shyama, do not be dressed like this,
Even the stone melts
Looking at such your dress
How could the young *Gopi*’s live?
If you put on your yellow clothes
it should not kiss the ground,
Oh Shyama, do not be dressed like this." ¹³

---

¹³. "Shyama nagara he, e besa hoiba nahin,
a besa hoile Pashana tarale Jubati banchibe nahin.
Pindhithiba jebe Pitambar tumbhe bhuinre lotiba nahin". Banamali
Abhimanyu Samantasmihar’s Bidagda Chintamani is yet another major poetic work of the 18th century, which shows in many lyrical passages the distinct inspiration of the Bhagavata both in language and in theme. Krishna playing his flute – an episode in the twenty-second chapter of the tenth volume in Bhagavata – has a very close emotive and linguistic parallel in the seventy one chapter of Bidagadha Chintamani. In his poetry, expressing her emotive feeling for Krishna, one Gopi says to another:

"Please do this much for me if I die,
Write name of Shyama on my heart
Wrap my body with a black cloth
Also envelops me with the black coloured soil
And bury me by your own hand
On the path Shyama had walked on."¹⁴

Here the description has been so much lucid and lively. His delineation of the feeling of a Gopi is really unparallel.

---

¹⁴. "Jibana gale etiki kariba,
   Shyama nama mo hrudare lihiba.
   Shyama rupa mruttikare ladai,
   Shyama basana angare ghodai.
   Shyama gati pathe
   Mo shaba potiba apana haste."

Abhimanyu, Bidaqha chintamani, Ch.39, Canto: 36.
Dinakrushna Dasa's *Rasakallola* (18th Century), a major work of poetry, closely resembles in certain episodes, like Ugrasana trying to check the escape of Basudeva with Krishna from Kamsa's prison; the escapade of Krishna with Brundavati, a gopi, during the rasaleela and Akrura carrying a message for king Nanda from Kamsa. The episode of "Kamsa's Letter to Nanda" is not an original discussion in the Sanskrit *Bhagavata*. It is only poetic imagination of Jagannatha Dasa.

Bhakta Charan Dasa (18th century) was a devoted admirer of Jagannatha Dasa and a follower of his poetic craft. Several episodes and passages in his *Mathura Mangala* closely follow the theme as narrated in *Bhagavata*. Kamsa's message to Nanda, the Characterisation of Akrura, Krishna's *maya*, Krishna consoling the Gopis, the wailing of Yashoda and the Gopi's, some of the parallel themes developed on identical lines in the two works. In particular, Krishna's visit to Mathura by the invitation of his uncle Kamsa and Krishna's consolation to the Gopi's are interesting episodes. The Gopis out of emotions were restless realised the heart-felt love and unbearable feelings of the Gopis and to console them he sent a message through Sudama to tell the Gopis that he would come back after four days only. Jagannatha Dasa writes thus:

"Realised Krishna the sorrow of the Gopis, called then his faithful friend Sudama,"
Made him to sit down nearby
Told everything earnestly
to console to the Gopis (that)
He will come back after four days".15

Bhakta charan has closely followed the same writings of
Jagannatha Dasa and delineates thus:

"Hearing wailing of the Gopis,
Krishna told to Sudama
Please pacify the Gopis
And tell them to live here."16

The other important poetic work of the 18th century in
which the Bhagavata's influence is clearly discernible is
Shyama - Rasotsava of Brajanatha Badajena. Krishna's flute
playing and the illusion and romance it creates in the
hearts of the Gopis is described in a manner and style

15. "Gopi bikala Krushna Chahin; Gopal Puaku je kahi.
Sudama name gopabala; Tare biswasa Nandabala.
Tahaku nikate basai; kahile biswasa karai
Gopinku kaha tu bahane; Ambhe asibu charidine."

16. 'Gopinka arata bachana suni,
Sudamunku chahin Muralipani.
Boile gopinki kara santosha;
Nischinte rahithaa nija basa."
Mathura mangal, Chhand: IX, Conto-X

280
closely resembling the passages in the Bhagavata. The echoes of Bhagavata are also found in Upendra Bhanja, another major poet of the 18th century but, the language use and style of the two authors are very different even when certain thematic treatments look parallel.

In the 19th century Kavisurya Baladeva Ratha was influenced in his jananas (Sarpajanana, Jagannatha Janana and Mahabahu janana) by the emotive contents of Jagannatha Dasa. The blind tribal poet Bhima Bhoi's Stuti Chintamani, a major poetic creation of the 19th century, shows the extent to which Bhima's anguished quest for divine light found a parallel expression in Bhagavata. Many of the lines in Bhima Bhoi's work are, indeed, lines taken from the Bhagavata and only slightly rearranged and modified. Even in the poems like Mahajatra and Tulasi stabak of Radhnatha Ray (20th century), one can portray the influence of Jagannatha Dasa's Bhagavata. One can also discern the influence of the great epic in the Gomahataya of Pt. Gopabandhu Dash.

Jagannatha Dasa's Bhagavata was extensively popular in eastern India as a whole. Sanatana Vidyavagisha, the author of the Bhasabandha Bhagavata has acknowledged to have borrowed the Oriya language and style of Jagannatha Dasa for completing the tenth volume (dasham skandha) of his Bhagava-
Besides this, the Tulabhina and the Dhrubacharitra of jagannatha Dasa and the Oriya Rasalila and the Oriya Garuda Puran were printed in Bengali scripts with Oriya language and extensively read out in Bengal—suggests the impact and popularity of the Oriya poets spread across the neighbourly political boundaries.

In the light of the Bhagavata of Jagannatha Dasa, Janaki Ballabha karasarma of Bhogarai in north Orissa, composed another Bhagavata in seventeenth century. Besides this, Dwaraka Dasa, mahadeva Dasa and another jagannatha Dasa who wrote Guptav Bhagavata, Ghateswara Das wrote Bhagavata Bala Charita, padmanabha Dasa wrote Bhagavata mahatmya, Krishna Dasa and Ananta Dasa wrote Bhagavata Ratnamala, Sandhu Charan wrote bhakti Bibhava Bhagavata, Bipra Uddhava

17. "Suna Suna Srotaganakari nibedan,
Pratham haite grantha likhlu apan.
Dasamer sesa sashtha bhasha na paina,
Anekata pasi grame grame bitaina.
E hetu Utkal bhasha karila likhan,
Jagannatha Dasa kruta apurba likhan.
Grantha samapan hetu utkantha haiya,
Bangaja bhashaya Utkal misaiya.
Dasama skandha Bhagavata Sampurna haite
Sadha adhya likhilam Sri guru krupate."


wrote Lilamrita Bhagavata and Dasia Bauri wrote "Baligana
Dasa Bhagavata" under the influence of "Atibadi" Jagannatha
Dasa.19

Achyutananda Dasa, the most revolutionary saint poet of
the Panchasakhas had a remarkable impact on society and
culture. He emphasised in his Gurubhakti Gita that before
one gets initiation from Guru one has to invite four persons
from the four different castes and entertain them equally as
honoured quests. This was clearly meant to be for a blow at
the notion of high and low castes, and specially at the
supremacy of Brahmins. The instruction to invite four
persons from the four different castes and treat them with
equal honour was going straight against an old sacrosanct
ideology. That perhaps more than anything else, symbolised
an avowal that by the initiation one was going to look
beyond all discriminations of caste and rejection of a
society that believed in it. Again, in another book,
Achyutananda proclaims that one born in a low caste or a
person who is an outcaste is not debarred from aspiring

after God realised.20

Hadi Dasa (b. 1772), a saint-poet of 18th century, was born in a poor black-smith family of the village of Champuspur nearest chhatia of Cuttack district, was highly inspired by Achyutananda. In his numerous writings he identified himself to be Achyutananda Dasa in his previous birth. He also composed a number of devotional songs and superscribed them to have been composed by Achyutananda Dasa and Ananta Dasa, which suggests the impact of Achyutananda Dasa on the poet. No wonder, in medieval society, when the less gifted saint was established himself by creating an illusion he was a prominent and well-known saint in his previous birth. However, his own works include—Ananta Gupta Gita, Sankhanabhi, Gruhasama, Bhavanabar Nilamadhav Gita, Kshetra Mahatmya and Luxmidhar Vilasa.

Yashovanta Dasa’s Tika Govinda Chandra was extensively popular when it was sung by natha mendicants in the village.

20. "Jatihina kehi achhanti je rahi,
    dukhena kianti dina,
    Mukhe Ramanama gayan karanti
    Prabhunkare thai mana
    Hele jatihina nahin tahin mana
    Srikrushna basana thaé,
    Kalakatore je pankare budile
    Panka na lagai dehe."

Sunya Samhita, Ch. XVII, p.102.
streets. This melancholy song with the tuning of Kendra attracted the children and women folk to such an extent that could not be described. This song brought out a remarkable change in the value system and popular belief of the people that a real guru could be worship although he belonged to a lowly Untouchable community. For instance, the king Govindachandra who renounced the world was believed to be a follower of Siddhacharya Hadipa, an Untouchable by caste. The popularity of the story of Govindachandra is still current in Orissa.

The Saint-Traditions after the Panchasakhas

The saint tradition of Orissa declined after the Panchasakhas. They were divided into numerous branches and sub-branches. All the branches realised and propagated to be the root of the main tree and they could not see anything except maintenance of self-identity and separatisst ideas. They measured the strength of their power with the number of followers. The five seats (gadis) of the Panchasakhas lost closeness among them and remained busy of self-consciousness and false vanity.21

With the decline of the Gajapati empire Orissa was divided into numerous principalities and the rajas or the 'feudal' chiefs became powerful and oppressive. They patronised the Gaudiya Vaishnavism as earlier, but they did not allow the saints to emerge in their estates. The Panchasakhas had tolerated persecution of the king and priests, nevertheless, they did not come to the side of the authority. But, their followers could not tolerate the oppressive rule of the local rajas, and therefore, they fled to forest and lived in caves. They preferred to meditate and write in the lines of the Panchasakhas than propagating their ideas in the locality. There were some devotees who secretly followed their path and visited their monasteries on festive occasions.

In seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the saint-poets, who created the nirguna-literature with impact of the writings of the panchasakhas were Chaitanya Dasa (17th century), Dwaraka Dasa (born 1662 A.D.), Debananda Dasa (17th century), Hadi Dasa (born 1772 A.D.) and Arakshita Dasa (born 1772 A.D.). They devoted themselves in practice of Yoga and worship of Sunya. However, the anti-caste and anti-authoritarian pronouncements are quite audible in most of their writings.

22. Ibid, p.325 f.
Chaitanya Dasa (17th century) was born in a gardener's family in the village of Khadiala of the Sambalpur district. In the history of Oriya literature, Chaitanya Dasa was the first poet from Western Orissa who contributed to the growth of Oriya literature. He composed the Nīrguṇā Mahātmya and the Vīshnu-garbha Purāṇa. He was a worshipper of Sunya and thus he sang in his Vīshnu-garbha Purāṇa.

"He is unknown figure
without image and colour.

Having no existence
thus a Great Void.

He is not handsome
but imageless body,
He remains Void
in the void itself".23

Dwaraka Dasa was born in 1662 A.D. and like panchasak-has he declared himself to be a Sudra, although he was born in a Karan family. He was deeply influenced by Balarāma Dasa and Jagannatha Dasa of 16th century. He made the

23. "Agochara Purusha se nahin rupa Varna,
Thae thiti nahin tara atai mahasunya.
Rupabanta nuhain se arupa tara dehi.

Vīshnu-garbha Purana, Ch.III."
people to believe that he appeared in the world as Balarama Dasa in his previous birth and composed the twelfth and thirteenth volumes (skanthas) of the Bhagavata, which was completed with the eleventh volume by Jagannatha Dasa himself. He criticised the idol worship in his Parache Gita and wondered how the people were confused and failed to recognise the God who remained always in their self. Influence of the Panchasakhas ideology is quite conspicuous in the writings of Dwaraka Dasa. He thus writes:

"Unknowingly the ignorant people
do not worship soul but others,
Leaving me they worship the idols,
Do not know that I am the soul
They worship happily the paintings,
idols of wood, stone or metal
Do not know me with illusion
'I exist in their body
but they fail to recognise." 24

24. "Emanta na jani mudha chittare,
Atma na pujanti pujanti anare.
Mote chhadi ana dia pujanti,
Mu atma bolina se na chihnanti.
Daru chitrapata Sila dhature.
Pratima kari Pujanti sukhare.
Emanta Pratima thapan Kari,
Pujanti ehi dia boli kari.
Emanta boli durbudhi Pamare,
contd....p.289
The anti-caste pronouncement is very much striking in the same work of Dwaraka Dasa. He has hammered on the ignominious position of the people in the unjust caste-based social orders. To him, the true devotee of any caste or out-caste is nearest to God and even a Brahmin could not come to the par of his position. Thus he has made the God to utter in His words:

"Who is devoted to me
    May he be Brahmin, Kshatriya,
    Vaishya or Sudra,
    May he be born of illicit love
    A Brahmin is not equal to him
    Told before you, Oh Arjuna!
    All the nirguna's are my devotees
    irrespective of castes or out-castes,
    They are my dear devotees."25

Mote na chihnanti maya mohare.
    Tankara dehare mu rahithai,
    Mote na chinhanti agyana hoi."

Parache Gita, Ch. X.

25. "Mora bhagati jahathare thai,
    Brahma, kshatra, Vaishya, Sudra hin hoi,
    Papa jonire jata hoi thau,
    Tahaku bipra sari nohe aau. contd...p.290
The *Baichandra Gita* of Debananda Dasa (17th century) was another important work of the this period. Poet Debananda has described the whole work in a form of question-answer between Shri Rama and sage Vasistha. He has lucidly described the erotic love between krishna and Gopis in this work. However, the poet's emphasis on life and character of Gopis with krishna suggests the influence of Jagannatha Dasa. He has followed both the theme and 'nabakshari brut-ta' of Jagannatha Dasa. Thus he writes:

"All the daughters of the sages,  
Numbered about sixteen thousand  
they are on deep meditation,  
To gain your love and grace.  
They will be born at Gopa  
And will remain as your maiden.  
You will sport with them in different colour  
Playing the flute on river bank  
or enjoying in Sri Vrindaban  
You will make Rahasa (the Autumn festival)"

contd...fn.25...

To age Kahilu suna Arjuna;  
Bhakata Loke sina niriguna.  
Ajati jati lekha aau nahir;  
Sabu hun sretha mo bhakta atai."

*Ibid*, Ch. VII.
Accompanying with the Cowherd boys and girls."

Like Panchasakhas, Debananda Dasa also emphasised both on bhakti and jnan, which were inseparable for a perfect devotion. To him, there was no distance between the bhakti and jnan. Thus he sang:

"Who could proceed on this way
Without perceiving bhakti inside
Who can go ahead,
There is no salvation without bhakti
When will bhakti arise,
Knowledge will prevail upon you."

Hadi Dasa, a saint-poet of eighteenth century was born in 1772 A.D. in the village of Champapur, nearest Chhatis of the Cuttack district. He was born in a poor black-smith.

26. "Jateka rushikanya gana; Sola sahasra boli jana.
Tumbhanku labhibar pain; Tapasya karuchhanti rahi
Semane Gopi bese hoi; Janmibe Gopapure jai.
Tahanku sangatare gheni; Krida kariba range puni.
Banshi bajai nadi tire; Ramiba Sri Vrindabanare.
kariba Rahasa mandal ; Sange gheni Gopi Gopal".

Baichandra Gita, Ch.XIX.

27. "Bhakati bina antargate; Ke gamipare ehu pathe.
Bina bhaktire mukti nahin; Ka aba gami je parai.
Bhakati upujiba jebe; Yoga prapata heba tebe".

Ibid, Ch.XIX.
family. In his numerous writings he identified himself to be Achyutananda Dasa (16th century) in his previous birth and also composed a number of bhajans and padas in the name of Achyutananda Dasa and Ananta Dasa. He composed the Ananta Gupta Gita, the Sankhanabhi, the Gruhasama, the Bhavenabar, the Nilamadhab Gita, the Kshetra Mahatmya and the Luxmidhar Vilasa. Poet Hadi Dasa not only took the name of Achyutananda Dasa for his establishment, he was also deeply influenced by the philosophy of the Panchasakhas. In his writing, the Philosophy of Sunya and imagelessness of the God are quite conspicuous. Thus, he writes in his Sankhanabhi:

"He is in the mind still mindlessness

He remains voidless after showing the void.

He is not at a place but at the placelessness,

He is not in the knowledge but in the ignorance.

He is not an idol but remains void.

He can not be perceived in the thought, thus unthinkable.

He remains in the endlessness.

And also roams around the endlessness.

The Lord is like this
And who is able to speak of Him."28

Arakshita Dasa (1772-1803 A.D.) was an extra-ordinary saint poet in the saint-traditions of Orissa. A prince of the Southern Orissa, Arakshita Dasa left his palace at the age of eighteen and wandered in search of the divine truth by acquainting himself with poverty, misery and sufferings. After eighteen years of strenuous religious tour he established his monastery on the Olasuni hill of the Cuttack district. He was contemporary of the saint Hadi Dasa, who also established his monastery at Chhatia, thirty kilometres away from Olasuni. Arakshita Dasa condemned caste, and he accepted food from Brahmin to Chandal unhesitantly. He composed the Mahimandal Gita with 'nabakshari brutta', considered to be a remarkable work on nirguna literature.

Arakshita Dasa criticised the contemporary fraud sanyasis, who depended on Kaupin and beard, but not on bhakti. He did not believe that bhakti was to arise itself if one accepted a person as guru (preceptor). He vehemently opposed to the tradition of gurubada, and to him this system

28. "Manare thai se amana; Sunya dekhai se bisunya
Sthana nuhanti se asthana; Jnana nuhanti se ajnana
Murti nuhanti se amurti; Chinti nuhanti se achinti.
Enu se aseṣpāre thanți; Aseṣha lagi bilaganti.
Emante prabhu ate jehi; Ta guna ke pariba kahi".

Sankhanabhi, Ch.VII.
of 'Hero worship' may lead to exploitation and closeness of mind. So, thus he sang in his fearless voice:

"No bhakti lies in the hands of a guru,
Where does the guru come from?
Nothing but a human being,
So, I did not serve the guru,
Worshiped my God alone." 29

Like Panchasakhas, he condemned the idol worship, rituals and pilgrimage which were not the means of obtaining the grace of God. He begged for devotion in his prayer which was essence of worship and God realisation. In his words:

"You will get nothing
If you search Him in the
Wood, Stone and rudraksha beads,
Neither in rituals, nor in pilgrimage
Oh Lord of Void, that is Vaikuntha

29. "Gurunka hate bhakti nahin,
Guru bolante Kahun asi, manushya dehe sina bhashi.
E gheni guru na sebili; Eka prabhu bharasa kali".

Mahimandala Gita, Ch.47.
Oh father, I beg bhakti to you."30

Arakshita Dasa called upon the people not to be confused of God in the images of brass, wood and stone. He advised them to realise the existence of God in their self and accept the method of bhakti to worship him. Thus he wrote in his Mahimandal Gita:

"God exists in this body
Ignorant mind does not know this,
Worships brass, wood and stone
taking them to be Gods."31

It is a phenomenon of great significance that Bhima Bhoi, a saint-poet of nineteenth century, who was a blind low caste Kondh, became the progenitor of a religious system which disowns caste-system and idolatry. The old texts relating to Mahima cult and the literary works of Bhima Bhoi were more in the genre of medieval bhakti literature. His

30. "Kastha pashana Rudrakshare; Khojile nahiti tahinre.
Mantra jantra dhyanare nahin; Tirtha bratpare sehu Kahin.
Ahe Vaikuntha Sunyanatha; Bhakati maguachhi tata".

Ibid, Ch.13.

31. "Debata ehi dehe chhanti; Eha na jane mudhamati
Pitala Kastha Pashanaku; Debata boli puje taku".

Ibid, Ch.38.
writings were more in the line of medieval mysticism than philosophical speculations. In the writings of Bhima Bhoi, the "Sunya Param Brahma" is characterised more precisely with the concepts alekha (indescribable), nirguna (without attributes), nirakara (formless), anadi (eternal), niranjana (Pure or without support) and mahima (raddiance, glory) all of which already appear in the medieval Panchasakha literature for describing Sunya Brahma or as synonymous for Him.

Achyutananda of the Panchasakha group also spoke of ekakshara brahman, the brahman that is unique and does not ever face dissolution. He also describes it as Alekha swarupa i.e. as the unwritten one.

Bhima Bhoi's revolutionary ideas and his Sunya philosophy are reflected in his writings and his statement on caste system is quite revealing. Thus he sang:

"Caste is not asked to the people
Who are divided into
thirty-six clans and fifty - two professionals.
Caste is just like water
Which differs from one to another
Oh wise men; give justice on it.
You will find one-person one caste
if you enquire into the whole Universe
They are made into hundreds
for the creation of the World."32

The tone of social protest and anti-authoritarian feelings of Bhima Bhoi are clearly reflected in his writings. He said that they (the followers of Mahima) were neither subjects to the king nor borrowers to the money-lender and therefore they did not fear to anybody.

Thus he sang;

"We are not subjects to the King
nor borrower to the money-lender,
We go there wherever the Guru takes to us
can any body prevent us from ?33

Bhima Bhoi Characterised the God to the sunya and formless. He Cherished the religion which characterised the formlessness of God so perfectly that it was not probably revealed by anyone. He sang in his Stuti Chintamani:

32. "Chhatisa kula je bauna patak jati hahin bola jae;
    Pani antara patak sin ehu supundita kara nyaye,
    Tini brahmandare lodi asa tunde eka jana eka jati
    Sehi sabuku sata jati karichhi tahar ranchila Pruthi".

Stuti Chintamani Boli: 70.

33. "Rajara Paraja nohu sina ambhe
    nohu sahura khataka;
    Jahin guru nebe tahin jau ambhe
    Ke aba karu ataka".

Idem.
"He reveals in the temple of the Void,
The one without shape and form,
No, you can never see His two feet
but do submit to the one
His house is in that nameless unknown realm,
Oh wise men, remember there
Neither it is too warm, nor too cold." 34

In Stuti Chintamani and many of his bhajans, Bhima Bhoi gave a powerful expression to not only the mystic ideas of personal salvation but also the redemption of man in society from his cruel destiny. His poetry had not merely the meditative philosophical quality of Panchasakha literature but it also brought to it the lyricism and musical quality which was associated with earlier poets like Gopal Krishna, Banamali or Kabisurya Baladeva Rath. In extremely lyrical lines Bhima Bhoi brought forth the essence of the well-known mahima cult in his celebrated lines quoted below. His heart was filled with love and compassion to have seen the sorrow and misery of the living beings. He was even prepared to

34. “Sunya mandire bihara; Rupa rekha nahin jaro.
Dui pada na mishai; eka pada dhar dhar.
Alekha patana pura; Se thabare tanka ghara
Nahin sarada usuma; Sadhu jane hetu kara”.

consign his soul to the hell if it could save humanity.
Thus he sang for the redemption of mankind:

"Boundless is the anguish
and misery of the living,
Who can see it and tolerate
Let my soul be condemned to hell,
But let the Universe be redeemed."35

Impact of the Chaitanya Movement

Chaitanya's bhakti movement in Orissa had also a phenomenal impact on literature, culture and state systems as well. Although the cult of Radha - Krishna and the trend of prema-bhakti were in prevalent in Orissa, they came to be expressive, pronounced and wide - spread only with impact of Chaitanya's movement. With the influence of Chaitanya Krishna became indentical with Lord Jagannatha and also the life of Radha-Krishna became themes of literary works during 17th and 18th centuries.

35. "Praninka arata dukha apramita
dekhu dekhu keba sahu,
Mo jibana pachhe narke padithau
Jagata uddhar heu".

Bhima Bhoi, Stuti Chintamani.
Before the advent of Chaitanya a few literary contributions, such as, Sisuveda, Amarakosha Gita and Charikhani of Achyutananda were composed, in which the central theme was Krishna but they were not purely related to Vaishnavism. But later on, the authors like Narasingha Sena (16th century) wrote 'Gopa', Balarama Dasa (16th century) wrote Uddhava Gita and Brundabana Dasa (17th century) translated the Gita Govindam into Oriya. They have lucidly delineated the Krishna idea with Radha-bhava. Brundabana Dasa, has however, expressed the gopi-bhava in a different colour. Raghunatha Arakashita composed some devotional songs relating to the love of Radha and Krishna. Kanhei Khuntia, a disciple of Sri Chaitanya composed the Mahabhava Prakash on the same theme. Historically, the importance of this work lies in the description of the Muslim invasion of Orissa in 1511 A.D.36

The women devotees like Madhavi Dasi (16th century), Brundabati Dasi (16th century) and Gauri Patta mahadevi (queen of Prataprudrdev and disciple of Jagannatha Dasa) composed numerous devotional songs on Krishna corroborating to the teaching of Chaitanya.

36. Idem.
Ishwar Dasa, another distinguished Oriya poet composed Chaitanya Bhagavata in the Second half of seventeenth century. This work informs us regarding history of Vaishnavism and the allied sects in Orissa. Nanak, Kabir, Virasimha, Jangali, Nandin, Jagai, and Madhai are all introduced indiscriminately in this work. He describes Chaitanya’s association with the Panchasakhas in detail. Secondly, he is the only author who rises above the sectarian feelings.

Medieval Bengali literature also flourished under the influence of Chaitanya’s faith and movement. We have some distinguished Vernacular poems in the Sanskrit lyrical gem. The tradition of composing Vaishnava Padas in the style of Gita Govinda flourished with the impact of Chaitanya movement. The best biographical account and at the same time one of the greatest productions of Bengali literature was Chaitanya Charitamruta by Krishnadasa Kabiraja. A mention may be made that Chaitanya Bhavagata of Brundaban Dasa was the earliest biography of Sri Chaitanya written within the fifteen years of his death.

Some medieval Oriya poets not only enriched the Oriya literature, they also contributed to the growth and development of Bengali and Hindi literature with the impact of Chaitanya movement. Among the Bengali works by the Oriya poets, Krishnalila of Ramananda Patnaik, Manasamangal of
Dwarika Das, Govardhana Utsava of Goura Chandra Parichha, Basanta Rasa of Pindika Srichandan, Jayananda Pala of Raghnatha Das, Dolarasa of Natabara Das, Dwarikapati in the light of Luxmi Puran of Sital Charan Das, Navanuraga of Shyamabandhu Patnaik, Ganga Mahatmya of Jagannatha Das, Bhuban Manqal of Raghusnatha Das, Siddhanta Chandrika of Rama Chandra Das and Palas of Kabi Karna are important.37

Similarly in Hindi Brajaboli Geeta of Ramananda Patnaik, Jaya Chandrika of Prahlad Dube, Gundicha Vije of Brajanatha and poems of other twenty poets are available in manuscripts. Besides, manuscripts written in Telugu, Tamil, Sarada, Newari, Persian and Urdu are also preserved in the manuscript gallery of the Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar.38

Another striking influence of Chaitanya’s teaching is that people from lower classes became the guru who initiated the people of all classes, high and low, men and women and consequently formed a particular lineage. Among them were Shyamananda, Rasikananda and Hridayananda. With the strict guidance and convincing personality of Chaitanya that made possible for the creation of the neo-Vaishnavism.

38. Ibid, p.662.
Impact on State and Politics

The Gangas and the Suryavamsi Kings established Brahman sasanas and patronised Brahminism. The trend of the religion took a new shape with the advent of Sri Chaitanya during the reign of Prataprudradev. Vaishnavism took the place of Brahminism, which was never tolerated by the Brahmin priests. Nevertheless, it had a remarkable impact on the contemporary state systems and brought out a change in the cultural life of the people.

First of all, king Prataprudradev extended royal patronage to Sri Chaitanya, his followers and helped in propagation of the new cult. No doubt, the king remaining at the apex of politics and administration, bore a significant religious commitment, and his patronage to Chaitanya movement corroborates the influence of the latter on earlier. Secondly, with the royal acceptance the neo-Vaishnavism appeared to be a State religion. The State Officials and the feudal Chiefs (the Rajas) accepted and patronised this faith. Thirdly, the neo-Vaishnavism swayed over other religious sects and beliefs of the contemporary period. Between the two trends of Vaishnavism, the Utkaliya School of Vaishnavism under the banner of the Panchasakhas and the Gaudiya School of Vaishnavism under guidance of Sri Chaitanya, although maintained their distinct identities, the Gaudiya
Vaishnavism became impressive, wide-spread and dominant with the patronage of the royal court at the Centre, i.e. Puri and 'feudal' courts at peripheries.

Ray Ramananda was an important official of Prataprudradev, who held office of the Governor of Rajhmundry, the then a part of the Gajapati empire. He was not only an administrator, but also a poet, dramatist, scholar and a great exponent of the Premabhakti. Chaitanya and Ramananda, both of them were influenced by each other, and ultimately Ramananda resigned from his job at the instance of Chaitanya and stayed in Puri.39

Although Prince Birabhadra, the young and inexperienced son of Prataprudradev took over the office of the Governor of Rajhmundry after Ramananda the internal administration was seriously affected. However, in Puri a lot of measures were taken to organise and propagate the faith of Sri Chaitanya. A religious council namely, Gaura Parishad, was formed under authority of the king and Pundit Sarvabhauma, Ramananda and others remained Parshads (Members) of the

39. "Bishaya Chhadia tumi jaha Nilachale
   Ami tirtha kari tahan asiba alpakale.
   Dui jane Nilachale rahina ekasange.
   Sukhe goaniba kal krushna katha range".

Krishna Das Kabiraj, Chaitanya Charitamrita, (Madhyali), Ch.VIII.
council. Ramananda was the Chief organiser of the Council and he was also paid his salary although he resigned from his job.40

Another incident corroborates to the impact of Chaitanya in the internal administration of the State. Once, Gopinatha Badajena, Governor of Midnapur in the northern Orissa, fell in arrears of the State revenue to such an extent that Prataprudra ordered his execution. But after some days the king himself pardoned him only to keep Sri Chaitanya peaceful and undisturbed in Puri.41 Of course, Chaitanya did not have interfered in this affairs, but the king did it by his own consideration. To keep a saint undisturbed, a corrupt official was not only to be pardoned but he was also reinstated with his earlier job. This impact on administration was deliberate and even it was welcomed by the king at the cost of royal treasury and maintenance of law and order.

Some historians have also noted the negative impact of the Chaitanya movement. They hold the Bhaki movement of


Chaitanya was responsible for the decline of medieval Orissa. According to R.D. Banerjee,

"Suddenly from the beginning of the 16th century, a decline set in the power and prestige of Orissa with the corresponding decline in the military spirit of the people. The decline is intimately connected with the long residence of the Bengali Vaishnava saint Chaitanya in the Country. If we accept one tenth of what the Bengali and Sanskrit biographies of the saint state about his influence over Prataprudradev and the people of the Country, we must admit that Chaitanya was one of the principal causes of the political decline of the empire and the people of Orissa."42

The argument put-forth by R.D. Banerjee has been unhesitantly supported by H.K. Mahatab in his *History of Orissa*, Vol. I and Mayadhar Mansingh in his *History of Oriyâ Literature*.

Can the decline of medieval Orissa be linked with the great Vaishnav saint Sri Chaitanya? On account of its acceptance by the royalty, the religion preached by him had become almost a fashionable cult, and important officers of the state had embraced the new faith with uncommon zeal. However, Chaitanya never asked the ruling elements to give up their responsibility for the protection of the State. Although Ray Ramananda resigned from the Office of the

Governor of Rajhmundry and joined the Chaitanya movement, a suitable and efficient person could have been appointed in his place. It is not possible that a system has to fall down in the absence of one individual. Pratarudradev did try to retrieve the fortune of the Gajapati House. But he lacked both military and diplomatic skill and could not add or recover what he had lost. The medieval Orissa declined in 1568 A.D. i.e. after thirty five years Chaitanya passed away (1533 A.D.) and king Prataprudradev was also engaged in warfare to protect the boundaries of his empire. Numerous factors are responsible for the decline of medieval Orissa but not an isolated, baseless reason that Chaitanya's religious movement was able to perish the mighty Gajapati empire.

It may be argued that Prataprudra dev was not a stubborn fighter like his grand-father, Kapilendra dev. He did not have given up military campaign, although he possessed a religious bent of mind. His defeat bears solely the militaristic factor and it was due to the simultaneous attacks from two frontiers i.e. Bengal from north and Vijayanagar empire from south. In 1509, he had gone to the south, in view of the hostile preparations of Krishnadev Raya. The invasion of Hussain Shah of Bengal in 1511 compelled him to march upto the northern frontier of Orissa to expel the enemy. He again went back as far south as the banks of the
Nellore river to guard his southern frontier. In 1512 he returned to his capital. These expeditions exhausted his army. Thus, Hussain Shah's raid into northern Orissa indirectly helped Krishnadev Raya to gain a decisive victory over Prataprudradev. At the same time it must be admitted that the king of Vijayanagar was an able commander and his well planned Orissa campaigns which began in 1513 give an indication of his brilliant and forceful personality. Thus, he could easily outgeneral his adversary. 43

Again, Prataprudradev must be criticised for neglecting the defence of the military outposts in the Godavari-Krishna Doab. Quli-Qutb Shah of Golkonda encountered little resistance when he seized Kondapalli, probably in 1531. The whole of the Godavari-Krishna doab was lost to Orissa shortly after the death of Prataprudradev. The sense of frustration caused by humiliating peace with Krishnadev Raya and the assassination of his only competent son Virabhadra by Govinda Vidyadhar made a deep tragic impression upon Prataprudra's mind. 44 He eschewed militarism for which Chaitanya can hardly be blamed. Prataprudra left to his weak successors a territory which was held by the Ganga kings in their palmy days. Moreover, the weak successors and treacherous

43. P. Mukherjee, op.cit, 1979, pp.80-81
44. Sarala Devi, op.cit, 1963, p.32
officers added fuel to the process of decline of medieval Orissan empire, founded by Kapilendradev.

A quietist movement of social equality, brotherhood and love alone can hardly be held responsible for weakening the political structure of a kingdom. A variety of social, economic, political and military factors must bear the responsibility.

Impact on Society and Culture

The social impact of Chaitanya movement is remarkable with certain Untouchable communities of Orissa. In the villages of Balasore and Cuttack districts there are some adhikaris or non-Brahmin priests who conduct worship of Chaitanya. They profess Vaishnavism and amongst them the Kandaras and Panas worship Radha, Krishna and Chaitanya. They are called 'Kalindi Vaishnavas' who officiate as priests among the concerned Untouchable communities. They perform samkirtan and their social position has been little improved which may be ascertained as an impact of the Chaitanya movement in Orissa.

After Sri Chaitanya, the doctrine of his neo-Vaishnavism having a close assimilation with the sahajiya cult, influenced the growth of erotic literature, patronised by
the 'feudal' courts. This doctrine had also two other directions, namely, performance of music and songs and worship of God Krishna and Goddess Radha. The literature on the one hand was confined to the court and the performance of song and music was confined to the goti-pua nacha (dance of young boys being dressed as girls); thiapala (performance of Puranic themes through song, dance and music instruments by five men) and daskathia (similar with thiapala, but performed by two men) which entertained the people in different manner. This tradition is still current in rural Orissa.

a). The Gotipua dance

The gotipua dance was introduced by the Gaudiya Vaishnav community from the time of Ray Ramananda, because of their aversion to see the dance performed by the women. So they introduced this dance to be performed by the young boys being dressed like girls.45 Since the late 16th century, the gotipua dance was trained in an Akhada ghar (house where song, dance and actions were trained) generally patronised by a local zamindar. The dance was performed in the spacious drawing room of the local zamindar, or in the premises of

45. D.N. Patnaik, Odissi Nrutya, Orissa Sangit Natak Academy, Bhubaneswar, 1974, p.53f
the temple or in a monastery. The gotipuas acted, danced and sang to entertain the audience with different themes. This tradition continued till the first half of the twentieth century and gradually it declined with the impact of the theatre, cinema and radio. The gotipua tradition flourished mainly in Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam districts of the State. They moved Orissa and outside to perform this dance and music. Oddissi dance was derived from the gotipua dance and in fact, all the famous Odissi dance teachers were gotipua dancers during their early young age.46

b) The Suangas:

The Suanga, a kind of drama, played a vital role to entertain the people and to mould the Character of society and culture of Orissa. The "Luxmi-Narayan Vachanika" of Sarala Dasa is considered to be the first Oriya suanga literature. In 16th century, the "Luxmi Puran" of Balarama Dasa, was performed in form of suanga, as a source of folk-entertainment. It influenced the people and generated self

46. For example, Shri Pankaja charan, Kelu Charan, Debi prasad and Mayadhara started their career from the gotipua dance. Famous Oriya singer Bhikari Charan Bal and reknowned Violin player Sunakar Sahoo once had acquired good name in the field of goti-pua dance. Vide-Ibid, p 60f.
respect among the women, and the Untouchable devotees.47

The suanga acted as a vehicle of expression and it did not merely entertain the people, it also expressed the thought of the people, their consciousness, freedom and expectations.

c) The Pala:

The Pala is an improved form of the folk-play which developed out of the cultural contacts between the tribal sabari dance of Orissa and the sahajia cult.48 It developed into the present form of Pala with the cultural interaction of the Vaishnavas of Orissa and Bengal during sixteenth century. Rameswar, Ramadasa, Bishweswara, Ramakrishna and Kabichandra Ayodhya Ray wrote number of Pala books during this time. In 17th century Kabi Karna also composed a number of Pala books in the mixed language of Oriya and Bengali. In the "Vidhyadhara Pala" Chaitanya was highly honoured and described to be an incarnation of God. In the Abhina madan Pala some stray references to the Rangani Port and conflict between the Oriyas and Marathas are available. In the Sadananda Saudagar Pala, the names of two parts,

47. Raicharan Das, Prustha Bhumi in the Orissara jatara of Dhiren Dash, Orissa Sangita Natak Academy, Bhubaneswar, 1981, p.130f

namely, Ranganighat and Hinguli ghat have been mentioned. In 17th and 18th centuries, a number of Pala books were composed by Kabi Vallabha, Bhruguram, Durija Vasudeba, and Dwija Vishwanatha in the mixed language of Oriya and Bengali.49

d) The Erotic Court Literature:

We have earlier mentioned that some erotic court literature developed under the impact of the Gaudiya Vaishnavism. In 17th century Raja Govinda Bhanja of Keonjhar in his Bhakti Vinod described the erotic love of Radha and Krishna and in Charan Sudhanidhi he characterised Chaitanya as the incarnation of Krishna. In 18th century the character of Radha has been the central theme in the works like Purnatma Chandradaya of Brundavati Dasi, Preeti Chintamani and Vidagdha Chintamani of Abhimanyu Samantasimhar, Gopibhasha of Janardana Das, Chora Chintamani, Nama Chintamani and Prema Tarangini of Sadananda kabisurya Brahma, suggests the impact of Chaitanya on the later poets.50

49. Raicharan Das, op.cit, pp.133-34
e) The Melan Festival:

Chaitanya did not initiate any person, nevertheless, his influence on the religious history of Orissa was profound. His teaching brought about a phenomenal change in the concept of Radha-Krishna cult which was exalted by the contemporary and later poets. Chaitanya faith had also an effective impact on the vassal chiefs of the declined Gajapati empire, who patronised the Radha-krishna cult in their respective principalities by following the selective mentality of their monarch. The king and the vassal chiefs also organised the "melana" (get together) festivals on the occasion of Holi, where the deities of Radha-Krishna from different regions were brought to a large ground with the purpose of the get together of idols of Radha and Krishna. This festival is still current in Orissa.

f) The Kirtan Music:

Chaitanya was credited with the introduction of Nama Samkirtan in the first quarter of the 16th century. The simple and at the same time enchanting mode of singing initiated by Chaitanya went a long way in carrying the message of Krishna-bhakti to the common people. According to Vrindavan Dasa that Chaitanya was also a demonstrator of Kirtan music and dance. Dance with emotional forgetfulness
was a part of the Kirtan music. Thus, devotional songs, dance and Kirtan music were integral parts of the Chaitanya's Samkirtan movement and in fact, they were the creative media for externalising the faith and movement. It has deep-rooted impact on Oriya devotional songs and music of the later period.

The Oriya Koili Sahitya and its Impact:

We can include the wealth of the Koili Sahitya (Cockoo literature), Chautisha and bhajanas which have come down to this day from the hoary times of Sarala Dasa. It is difficult to ascertain where exactly the folklorish phase of literature came to an end, to give way to the Koili literature. From this point of view, the modern trend is yet to make a real dent. From various discussions, the Koili Sahitya has been ascertained as the duta-kavya or the messenger-poem.51

Poet Markanda Dasa, a contemporary of Sarala Dasa, is regarded as the initiator of the Koili in Oriya literature. In his Kesava Koili, the poet describes the grief of mother Yashoda for Krishna who has gone to Mathura. In Koili poems the cuckoo has been addressed in place of Krishna, because

of its similarly in colour. The Kesava Koili of Markanda Dasa (15th century) influenced Balarama Dasa (16th century) who composed the Kanta Koili, Jagannatha Dasa (16th century) composed the Artha Koili. Shankar Dasa (17th century) wrote Baramasi Koili and Natha Dasa (17th century) wrote Jnana Udaya Koili. The impact of Oriya Koili literature also spread over to Assam which led to the development of Ketaki literature in the Assamiya Sahitya. Late poet Raghunatha Choudhury composed number of poems taking Ketaki (a bird of Assam) in Assamese, which is certainly believed to have been influenced by the Koili Oriya literature.52

Growth of Bhagavata Gharas

The growth of Bhagavata ghara or tungis in the villages which brought about a significant change in socio-religious and cultural life of the people of Orissa, is a yet another evidence of Jagannatha Dasa’s impact. The date of establishment of the institution could be traced from the late 16th century since Dasia Bauri (early 17th century) a devotee-poet of Baligan village near Puri mentions about his regular listening to Bhagavata recitation in the Bhagavata

ghara of his village.\textsuperscript{53} The tradition that Bhima Bhoi, another distinguished saint-poet of 19th century acquired knowledge of old time Oriya literature be merely listening to Jagannatha Dasa’s Bhagavata and other Puranas in the Bhagavata Ghara of his village,\textsuperscript{54} indicates the extent of influence of this institution.

The Bhagavata ghar was a multi-purpose institution in the village. The Bhagavata which was written on palm-leaves, generally known as the pothis, was kept in this house located in the middle or in the corner of the village. The people assembled in the evening where the Bhagavata was read and discussed widely. The village folks got relaxation of the day's labour by listening to the stories and morals of the Bhagavata. A number of lessons and morals were pictured in Bhagavata, which tallied with the character of the Oriya people. The house was used for a number of purposes by the inhabitants of that village. It was a temple, a school, a club, a library, a guest-house and a place to settle disputes. It was, indeed, the nerve centre of village life right upon the beginning of this century. The people of Orissa became keenly interested in educating

\textsuperscript{53} B. Mohanty-Bhaktakabi Baligan Dasa, Jagannatha Publishers, Bhubaneswar, 1st Ed. 1986, pp.2-8

\textsuperscript{54} S. Mohapatra, Bhima Bhoi, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1983, p.9

317
their sons who could recite the **Bhagavata** at the time of their death. It was a popular belief that the soul could attain **Vaikunthapur** (the heavenly abode of Lord Vishnu) if the person listened to **Bhagavata** at the time of his death. The students who could recite the **Bhagavata** well, believed to have got good education. Thus, there was a wide spread of primary education in Orissa. The **Bhagavata** became a link between the value system of the people and spread of education in Orissa. The **Bhagavata** became a link between the value system of the people and spread of education in Orissa. The Oriyas regulate their food habits, social practices and religious activities by its teachings. Many lines from the **Bhagavata** have acquired the status of socio-religious sanction and have entered into the deeper psyche of the people. On every conceivable occasion, an Oriya can recite some lines from the **Bhagavata**. Perhaps, no other epic is quoted so extensively and so often than the **Bhagavata**.

Sankardev from Assam saw for himself the tremendous impact of the **Bhagavata ghar** in the life of Orissa and started the institution of **Nama-ghar** in Assam. In the darkest days of the Oriya people when they lay dismembered and scattered as neglected and exploited minorities, their language and nationality systematically extirpated by neighbours. It was this **Bhagavata** of Jagannatha Dasa, more than any other book or institution that kept their Oriya identity alive, enabling them even in hostile and inhospitable pock-
etc., to be recruited again as a homogeneous people after centuries of suffering. Even today this Bhagavata may be found in a hundred thousand homes outside the political boundaries of Orissa - in Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh the commonest and the surest symbol of Oriya identity. 55

The interaction between the Hindus and the Muslims produced curious syncretic cults and practices in medieval Orissa. The Hindus offered sweets at the Muslim shrines and Muslims responded with similar acts of mutual understanding. The spirit of mutual toleration found expression in growing veneration of the Hindus for the Muslim saints and a corresponding Muslim practice of regarding Hindu saints and it ultimately led to the common worship of the Satyapira (the true saint) and Dargha Sahib. Salabeg, a Muslim saint poet of 17th century was a staunch devotee of Lord Jagannatha and he also composed a number of devotional songs in Oriya and Brajaboli. His devotional songs are indiscriminately sung by the Hindus as well as the Muslims in Oriya till today bears another bright example of the cultural reciprocation. It could be possible due to the feeling of friendliness between the two communities since the medieval times.

The popular movement of medieval Orissa, however, led to the cultural awakening and also contributed to the growth and development of art, architecture, music, dance, drama and a good-number of devotional songs. Political stability during the Gangas and the Gajapatis in Orissa helped to flourish in healthy economic condition which supported the growth of art and culture.

Conclusion

Thus the social protest movement which began with Sarala Dasa's Mahabharata and reached its climax under the leadership of the Panchasakhas had an unmistakable impact on later literature, culture, religions doctrine, rituals, popular beliefs and on state and political ethos.

Sarala Dasa's Oriya Mahabharata and his 'dandi brutte' influenced particularly Balarama Dasa and Achyutananda Dasa to compose their Ramayan and Harivamsa respectively by following the same dandibrutta. The thematic influence of Sarala Mahabharata is also discernible in the writings of Balarama Dasa, Jagannatha Dasa, Achyutananda Dasa and much later in Bhima Bhoi and Gopabandhu Dash. Kashirama Dasa's Bengali Mahabharata was also bore obvious marks of Sarala Mahabharata. Jagannatha Dasa made a lasting contribution to the Oriya language and literature composing the Oriya Bhagavata and creating a new lyric that is the "nabakshari brut-
ta". He also innovated a marvellous poetic diction blending the tadbhab and tatsam words together. The later poets, Rama Dasa and Dibakara Dasa (17th century), Abhimanyu Samantasimhar, Dinakrushna Dasa, Bhakta Charan Dasa (all 18th century) were deeply influenced by this diction. Further, Sanatana Vidyavagisha took help of the Oriya Bhagavata to write his Bhagavata in Bengali. We also discern the influence of Achyutananda Dasa, Yashovanta Dasa and Ananta Dasa on the later saint-literature (18th-19th centuries). The saint-poets who created the nirguna literature with impact of the writings of Panchasakhas were Chaitanya Dasa (17th century), Dwaraka Dasa (17th century), Hadi Dasa (17th century) and Arakshita Dasa (18th century). They devoted themselves in practice of Yoga and worshipping of sunya. It is remarkable that "anti-caste" and "anti-authoritarian" pronouncements are quite audible in most of their writings.

The growth of Bhagavata-gharas, in almost every village of Orissa, indicates the extent of impact of the Oriya Bhagavata of Jagannatha Dasa. The Bhagavata gharas developed since the early 17th century. It was a multi-purpose institution used as a temple, a school, a club, a library, a guest-house and a place to settle the village disputes. It was, indeed, the nerve-centre of village life right up to the beginning of the present century.
Besides other things, Sri Chaitanya's bhakti movement in Orissa (1510 A.D.-1533 A.D.) had a remarkable impact on contemporary "state and political ethos" as well, effecting a change in the cultural life of the people. His neo-Vaishnavism appeared to have worked nearly like enjoying patronage of a state religion, the state officials and the local 'feudal' chiefs too. Chaitanya's impact however, cannot be taken as the sole factor responsible for the fall of the Gajapati empire. Numerous economic, social, diplomatic and military factors contributed to it. Chaitanya was perhaps the only saguna-bhakta who had actively led an "anti-caste" movement despite his adherance to the conventional religious modes connected with Vaishnavism. His movement had a far-ranging impact on socio-religious life of the people and he successfully popularised the cult of Radha-Krishna through his creative communications like samkirtan, devotional music and songs, emotional dance and nagar-kirtan.

The writings of Sarala Dasa and the Panchasakhas also strengthened the popular belief that Lord Jagannatha, far from being a part of Brahmanical order, was primarily a God of "Little Tradition." He was worshipped by a tribal chief in the forest before His sanskritization. In the arena of religious doctrine, the panchasakhas protested against the 'idol-worship', popularised the sunya-cult and even their followers also characterised Lord Jagannatha as Alekha and

322
Nirakara. To them, Lord Jagannatha, the nucleus of Oriya culture was an apostle of social equality and in his Srikshetra (Puri) caste and sectarian zeal has no place. Lord Jagannatha came to be known as the patita-paban or the "Redeemer of the Fallen" in the devotional songs of these radical poets. The bhakti movement of Chaitanya, even if its notes were different, provided a moral justification to the movement of the Panchasakhas; their struggle gained momentum, even though as subordinate partner, when the Gandiya and Utkaliya Vaishnavas worked together in Orissa.