
The Positive Aspects of Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak 's Personality

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Abstract:

Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak stands as a colossus of twentieth-century Oḍiā fiction, celebrated for his evocative depictions of life spanning rural hamlets to the complex human subconscious. While his vast oeuvre resonates with emotional depth, his autobiography, "*Jībana Pātra Mo Bharicha Ketemate*," provides a uniquely unvarnished portal into the "light and shadow" of his personal journey. This study addresses a critical scholarly gap by examining the convergence of Paṭṭanāyak 's innovative personality, prolific literary output, and unwavering social responsibility. By synthesizing these facets, the research illuminates the enduring legacy that has rendered him an immortal figure in Oḍiā literature.

Keywords: *Oḍiā* Literature, Fiction, Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak, Study, Movement, Social Reform, Writing, Profession, Personality.

Introduction:

Oḍiā fiction literature is a living reflection of Odisha's cultural, social, and historical consciousness, which has meticulously depicted human values, lifestyles, and various facets of society over centuries. As a unique component of *Oḍiā* literature, through stories, novels, legends, and folk tales, it reflects Odisha's rural and urban life, heritage, and contemporary issues (Mishra, 1982, pp. 1 & 2). Starting from Fakir Mohan Senāpati to authors like Gopināth Mohanty and Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak, these litterateurs have elevated this genre to unparalleled heights while creating new streams. In Fakir Mohan Seāapati's writings, social issues and rural life are vividly portrayed, whereas Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak 's pen deeply presents social consciousness and psychological analysis. *Oḍiā* fiction is not merely entertainment; rather, it plays a crucial role in bringing change to society and enlightening readers with new perspectives. By enriching topics such as social inequality, women's empowerment, and the impact of modernity, it has positioned Odisha's literary and cultural identity on the world map (Mishra, 1982, pp. 41, 111, 142).

In *Oḍiā* literature, Śrī Bibhūti Bhūṣaṇa Paṭṭanāyak is renowned as a high-calibre storyteller and novelist. This literary figure was born in Dingesvar village of Jagatsinghpur district on October 25, 1936, during the *Āśvin* month, *Śokḷa Pakṣa*, *Saptamī tithi* (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 1). The author was born into a joint and lower-middle-class family (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 9). His father's name was *Guṇamaṇi Paṭṭanāyak*, and his mother's name was Tuḷasī Debī (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 581). His father was the headmaster of *Paḷāsoḷa* Primary School in Jagatsinghpur district (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 2). Therefore, although he paid sufficient attention to his son's education, due to a lack of interest in studies, the author could not become a meritorious student (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 8).

However, his educational journey began in a rural environment. After completing upper primary education, he enrolled in the fourth class at *Śrī Kriṣṇa* Academy in Jagatsinghpur (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 12). Thereafter, he studied in high school, completed his graduation at Christ College in Cuttack, and later started his postgraduate studies in history at Ravenshaw College in 1960. Additionally, in 1966, he also obtained a postgraduate degree in *Oḍiā* language and literature (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 51, 581).

From his student life, he participated in many movements as a student leader and gradually entered the field of politics from student activism. He took part in various socialist movements that occurred in Odisha (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 62, 69). His role in the *Utkaḷa Sammiḷanī* was also significant (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 133). In 1956, he served as the general secretary of the established '*Jagatsinghpur Sahitya Samsad*' (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 140). However, gradually distancing himself from politics, he focused on government service (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 214).

Crossing the poverty line and adopting literary pursuit as a vow of life, he has created a unique identity in *Oḍiā* literature and in the hearts of every reader. He was not limited to poetry, stories, and novels alone; rather, he also wrote books according to the curriculum implemented in schools in the contemporary education system (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 108). Therefore, broadly speaking, teaching was his profession, but literature was his passion. He married Suraprabhā Paṭṭanāyak (Devi), a daughter from a joint family in Baripadā, and they have one son and two daughters (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 402, 582). After retiring from his teaching career, his pen is still active in the literary field even today.

In the context of reviewing the autobiography, first looking at the author's childhood, it is known that he descended to earth on a stormy rainy night during *Āsvīna* month, *Śukḷa pakṣa*, *Saptamī tithi*. Therefore, based on that, he has named the first chapter of his autobiography '*The Child of Storm on Saptami Tithi*' (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 1). As a child of storm, he therefore always maintained a strong resolve to face any problem.

Although the author was born into a joint and lower-middle-class family, his childhood was neither affluent nor deprived (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 10). Since his father was the headmaster of the village primary school, he gave special attention to his education (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 2). Furthermore, due to the joint family, from childhood, he was nurtured in the affection and warmth of his father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, uncles, aunts, and great-grandmother. He observed the love, affection, respect, and sympathy that existed among every member of his family. There was no place for violence, jealousy, or hatred, nor was there any ugly attitude of distinguishing between one's own and others (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 22, 23). Therefore, the seed of unity and attachment towards everyone that was sown in his mind from childhood blossomed later and is reflected in his personality. In childhood, his great-grandmother Bālakṛṣṇa Paṭṭanāyak taught him to recite the *Bhāgabata*. Regularly reciting that *Bhāgabata* unknowingly created inspiration in him for composing verses and word arrangements in poetry (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 7). Besides, since his mother was devout and devoted to God, that also had a profound impact on him (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 19). From the goodwill among his village neighbours, he observed the picture of mutual coexistence. The tradition of everyone standing by each other during marriages, vows, dangers, or difficulties, and resolving village issues by calling a village assembly, had such an impact on the author's mind from childhood that it not only found depiction in his literature later but is still reflected in his personality today (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 27, 44).

In today's society, especially in rural areas, this mutual affection, warmth, brotherhood, joint family relationships, and sense of unity are gradually breaking down due to the cunning of politics. Observing his student life, it is seen that at that time, the school in his village only offered education up to the upper primary level. Since there was no high school facility, after completing upper primary education, the author enrolled in the fourth class at *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Academy* in Jagatsinghpur outside the village (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 12). Due to the lack of road facilities, he had to cross the village boundaries and travel through unfamiliar paths with great difficulty to reach school (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 15). In this manner, his student life progressed forward.

Movements:

A new turning point appears in his student life with his entry into politics. While studying as a student at Christ College, the author's attention was drawn to student politics (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 61, 62). It influenced him so profoundly that he gradually transformed into a highly capable student leader. He was elected Secretary of the Baripadā M.P.C. College Student Union and, in 1959, President of the '*Student Union Bhadrak Sammilāni*' (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 66, 67). He also served as General Secretary of the '*Utkal Student Union*' and President of the Christ College Student Union (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 69).

From student politics, he unconsciously stepped deeper into Odisha's major movements and mainstream politics, emerging as a dedicated propagator of the Socialist

Party (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 69). In 1956, he actively participated in the historic ‘Boundary Movement’ in Odisha. This movement was launched to press the States Reorganisation Commission to restore the *Oḍiā*-speaking regions of Sadheikaḷa and Kharsuām—then merged with Bihar—back to Odisha (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 79). When the Commission failed to honour its promises, massive protests erupted across Odisha, and the author himself played a leading role in them (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 79, 131). On the advice of the then Chief Minister of Odisha, Śrī Nabakṛṣṇa Choudhury, he played a crucial part in sustaining the agitation (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 81). Many student leaders and politicians were arrested on false charges and injured in police lathi charges. Consequently, the author had to remain extremely cautious to avoid arrest so that the movement could continue (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 87, 88).

In the same spirit, the author also joined the *Bhūdāna* Movement that was gaining momentum in contemporary Odisha. Led by Acharya Binobā Bhābe, this movement aimed to secure land for landless farmers (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 255). To ensure justice for the landless, the author himself participated in padayatras alongside Binobā Bhābe, Ramā Debī, and other activists. Even though he had to survive on mere *bagadā* rice and plain *dālamā* during the marches, he never wavered from the cause (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 257).

Likewise, in 1975, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi imposed the Emergency across India, a powerful ‘Anti-Indira Movement’ erupted in protest (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 242, 243). Instead of removing poverty, Indira Gandhi had used the Emergency to dismantle democracy. Feeling that the country was once again heading toward subjugation, left-wing forces launched a movement against her to protect the hard-won freedom (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 242, 243). As a leftist himself, the author actively joined this agitation and played a key role in making it successful.

While describing these multifaceted dimensions of Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak—who entered politics from his student days—another prominent *Oḍiā* writer, Gobinda Candra Miśra, also deserves mention here. He too was a fiery revolutionary and a central figure in political movements (Paṭṭanāyak, 1977, p. 72). In the early decades of the twentieth century, as a young boy, he lived in the darkness of the princely state of Daśapalla, only to later plunge into the mainstream of the national movement (Miśra, 1940, pp. 70, 71). Coming into contact with Andrews and Mahatma Gandhi, he established several ashrams in Odisha, and it was through these ashrams that he began his political career (Paṭṭanāyak, 1977, p. 74).

Similarly, Harekrṣṇa Mahatāb was one of the foremost commanders of India’s political struggle. Until 1946, he remained deeply involved in the Indian National Movement, and in that very year, he assumed office as the first Chief Minister of Odisha (Mahtab, 1987, p. 245). His autobiography *Sadhanara Pathe* reveals his complete immersion in the *Salt*

Satyāgraha, Gandhiji's *Utkala Padayatrā*, the formation of ministries, and the evolving political atmosphere of Odisha (Paṭṭanāyak, 1977, p. 76).

Broadly comparing Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak with these figures in the political arena, Mahtab's role appears far more extensive and sustained. While Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak actively participated in various political movements in Odisha, he withdrew from active politics after the 1975 Anti-Indira Movement and devoted himself entirely to teaching (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 303, 304). In contrast, from the moment Harekṣṇa Mahatāb entered politics, he remained inseparably linked to it almost until the end of his life (Mahtab, 1987, p. 56).

Social Reform:

The author Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak can also be called a reformer. Because in his autobiography, he has mentioned that the practice of the bride's side giving a dowry to the groom's side during marriage, and throughout the year sending various gifts from the bride's home to the groom's home on different festivals, was widely prevalent in the society at that time (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 140). Although this practice continues in society even today, it is not as intense.

According to the author's description, this had a special impact on the bride's side. In poor families, since they lacked the capacity to give a dowry, the daughters of those homes could not get married. Those who mortgaged their homes and lands or took loans to give dowry and arrange their daughters' marriages found the ongoing gifts after marriage to be like adding insult to injury. Moreover, if there was any shortfall in giving dowry or gifts, the daughter had to suffer the consequences in her in-laws' house (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 140).

Therefore, the author was also involved in the voice raised by the then youth organisation against such a social evil. By joining the anti-dowry and anti-gift movement, which aimed to abolish all gifts except one for Sābitrī, the author tried to bring reform to that evil practice (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 140). As a social reformer, Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak can be compared with Bairāgi Caraṇa Mīśra. Because he too, in his youth, opposed the child marriage practice prevalent in the society at that time and brought reform to it (Paṭṭanāyak, 1977, p. 85). He also succeeded in promoting the practice of widow remarriage. Not only did he implement that reform in society, but he also practised it in his own life. Therefore, he brought two widowed girls into his home as daughters-in-law (Paṭṭanāyak, 1977, p. 86). Here, like Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak, we get a glimpse of Bairāgi Caraṇa Mīśra's great personality and noble mindset.

Along with being a socialist and reformer, the author was also a teacher. As an *Oḍiā* professor, he taught in various colleges. As a teacher, he was very affectionate towards students and could deeply study the mentality of boys and girls (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 448, 452). His autobiography mentions how adult education was being neglected at that time and how adult students, instead of being attentive to studies, enrolled in college merely for job promotions and neglected their education (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 448). At that time, the author

was working as an *Oḍiā* professor at the evening college in Bhubaneswar (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 447).

Profession and Personality:

Therefore, as a good educator, he inspired the students to eliminate such attitudes and become focused on their studies. His teaching career began in 1970 as an *Oḍiā* lecturer at B.J.B. Autonomous College, and until his retirement as a professor from there in 1995, he was known as a dutiful, disciplined, and student-friendly teacher (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 581). Along with this, he also edited magazines such as '*Kṛṣaka*' and '*Gaḷpa*' (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, pp. 213, 581). In this context, Banamāḷi Brahmācāri can also be discussed here. Because he too was known throughout his life as an ideal teacher and an established children's litterateur (Paṭṭanāyak, 1977, p. 98). He not only taught but also established many educational institutions and shaped numerous students into ideal human beings. The message from his life is that a teacher, through a life of sacrifice, can turn the impossible into possible (Paṭṭanāyak, 1977, p. 99). Therefore, both Banamāḷi Brahmācāri and Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak are eternally venerable.

Wielding the Pen:

Above all, Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak is an enduring talent in the world of *Oḍiā* literature. His literary pursuit truly began from his student life (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 42). Even though he was a student leader, later a prominent socialist who participated in Odisha's politics, and then moved forward as a teacher after withdrawing from there, his literary pursuit continued at every stage. In his student life, he set foot in the literary world by writing poetry (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 43). Later, he wrote stories and poems only in newspapers and magazines (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 56). However, his novel writing started only after joining the socialist movement. Socialist leader Sāraṅgadhar Dās became the source of inspiration for his novel writing (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 100). Among his writings, the first poem – '*Prajātantra*' – was published in *Mīnābajār* (1950), while the first story – '*Naī o Puruśa*' – was published in *Jhaṅkār* (1954). Besides, the first novel – '*Śeṣa Basanta*' (1955) – was published in '*Janasāhitya*' magazine (Paṭṭanāyak, 2022, p. 581; Panigrahi, 2022, p. 419). After this, the author wrote novels such as '*Abhiman*', '*Parapuruṣa*', '*Oda Matir Sparsha*', '*Ranganati*', '*Capaḷachhandā*', '*Ujāṇi yamunā*', '*Aśvamedhara Ghodā*', '*Badhū Nirupaāa*', '*Premikā*', '*Naṣṭa Caritra*', '*Nayikāra Nāma Śrābaṇī*', '*Pāpapunya*', '*Nagari Ra Niḷapari*', '*Bandi Jajābar*', '*Dhūḷi Ghara*', '*Māyabi Hṛdaya*', '*Raṇī Mahumāchi*', '*Śeṣa Abhinaya*', '*Śeṣa Rātira Sūrya*', '*Prema O Pṛthibī*', '*Keśabatī Kanyā*', '*Gāre Kajjaḷa Dhāre Luha*', '*Nadī Narī Nakṣatra*', '*Asabarṇa*', '*Cahalā Paṇira Dheu*', '*Dīpa Taḷara Dṛśya*', '*Niḥsaṅga Nakṣatra*', '*Adina Srābaṇa*', '*Bhoka Śoṣara Sahar*', '*Bhala Jhia Kharāpa Jhia*', etc. (Maharana, 2024, p. 807). Apart from novels, he has written many stories such as '*Mahiśasurara Muham*', '*Mana Bhala Nāhim*', '*Rājakanyāra Dukha*', '*Kaḷikāḷa*', '*Kete Je Basanta Sate*', '*Jībanara Jatiḷatā*', '*Nirbacita Gaḷpa*', '*Chabira Maṇiṣa*', '*Niṣiddha Pallira Nāyikā*', '*Niḷa Ākhir Nadi*', '*Ākhi Bujidele Satyayuga*', etc. (Maharana, 2024, p. 726). Having had the opportunity to travel to many places during his teaching career, based on his experiences and observations, he has written two travelogues: '*Dvarikā Darśana*' and '*Tīre Tīre Tīrtha*' (Maharana, 2024, p. 941).

Evidence of his multifaceted talent in the field of *Oḍiā* literature can be seen in '*Oḍiā Upanyāsara Samājatāttvika Ruparekha*', '*Sāmpratika Sāhitya*', '*Sāhityara Sūcīpatra*', etc. (Maharana, 2024, p. 670). Besides, he also edited two magazines: '*Kṛṣaka*' and '*Gaḷpa Ekabimśa Śatābdī Ra*' (*Paṭṭanāyak*, 2022, pp. 213, 581).

The main characteristic of Bibhūti Paṭṭanāyak's creations has made him highly regarded among readers and given him a unique identity in the world of *Oḍiā* literature. The speciality of his writing is that he always vividly expresses the surrounding social, political, and personal lifestyles along with human psychology in his creations through both direct depiction and implication (*Paṭṭanāyak*, 2024, p. 192). While novels like '*Ei Gām Ei Māṭi*', '*Śeli Māusi*', '*Badhū Nirūpamā*', etc., portray the nature of rural life, '*Capaḷachandā*', '*Sultāna*', and '*Śeṣa Ratira Sūrya*' bear the stamp of historicity (*Paṭṭanāyak*, 2024, pp. 196, 197), whereas in '*Nāyikara Nāma Srābaṇī*', '*Bandi Jajābar*', and '*Chabira Maṇiṣa*', he has exposed the ugly face of politics and the deceitful and selfish followers of it (*Paṭṭanāyak*, 2024, p. 196). Again, in novels like '*Premikā*', '*Priya Bāndhabī*', '*Topae Sindura Di Pata Shankha*', etc., the picture of love emerges (*Paṭṭanāyak*, 2024, p. 194). Not only in novels, but in all his writings, such as stories and travelogues, realism and intimacy are so pervasive that they always keep the readers bound to him.

For his literary pursuit, he received the *Odisha Sāhitya Ekāḍemī Award* in 1985 (for '*Aśvamedhara Ghodā*'), the *Śāraḷā Puraskār* in 1999 (for overall works), the *Kendra Sāhitya Ekāḍemī Award* in 2015 (for the storybook '*Mahiṣāsūrara Muhaṁ*'), and the '*Atibaḍi Jagannāth Dās*' Sammān in 2016 for overall contributions (*Paṭṭanāyak*, 2024, p. 808). Along with this, his works like '*Badhū Nirūpamā*', '*Hakimbabu*', '*Gāre Kajvaḷa Dhāre Luha*', and '*Māya Miriga*' have been adapted into films and have also been awarded. The author himself received the 'Film Critic Award' for the telefilm '*Chabira Maṇiṣa*' (*Paṭṭanāyak*, 2022, p. 582). Besides this, he served as a member of the *Oḍiā* Film Censor Board from 1992 to 1998, as a member of the *Oḍiā* Advisory Council of Kendra Sahitya Ekāḍemī from 1993 to 1998, and as convener from 2008 to 2012 (*Paṭṭanāyak*, 2022, p. 581). In this way, his contribution to the literary field is truly incomparable and unique. It is a matter of great fortune that even today, his pen remains active in the direction of literature.

Conclusion:

Bibhūti *Bhūṣaṇa* Paṭṭanāyak's autobiography is a unique addition to *Oḍiā* literature, providing a vivid portrayal of the real picture of his life and the contemporary social, political, cultural, and economic situations. Born into a lower-middle-class joint family, he has made invaluable contributions to education, literature, and social movements. Despite an initial lack of interest in education, he entered the world of knowledge by obtaining postgraduate degrees in history and *Oḍiā*. From his student life, he fought for social justice and reform by participating in movements such as the Border Movement, *Bhūdān* Movement, and Anti-Indira Movement. His creations, like '*Śeṣa Basanta*', '*Badhū Nirūpamā*', '*Mahiṣāsūrara Muhaṁ*', and others, present lively depictions of rural life,

historicity, and political critique. These works are filled with realism and intimacy, which deeply attract readers. In his teaching career, he was known as an affectionate teacher towards students, and even after retirement, his pen continues to flow. Written in simple and fluent language, this autobiography successfully presents the illuminated and dark aspects of life, which has immortalised him in *Oḍiā* literature. His autobiography is not merely a reminiscence of the past but rather inspires readers through the various facets of society and his struggle-filled life.

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