

## Vikram Dev Verma

*Er. Nirakar Mahalik*

Vikram Dev Verma was born on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1869 in Parvatalapeta of Srikakulam Taluk on the right side of the river Vansadhara about 3 km from Mukhalingam in Andhra. He was the son of Rekha Devi and father Krushna Chandra Deb. Unfortunately he lost his mother at the age of nine and father at the age of fifteen. He was adopted when he was only eight years old by the Madugula Raja family and since then known as “Madugula Raju”. His adoption was challenged in 1881 in the court of law. Invalidation of his adoption compelled him to back to his father again. He had to run from pillar to post in quest of his own livelihood and finally settled at Visakhapatnam. He had learnt Telugu, Odia and Sanskrit from his father, a Telugu teacher Buchi Raju and his Purohit's brother Raghunath Rath previously. He learned English from Mr J.S. Bard (Baudi Saheb) at Visakhapatnam. He married daughter of queen Sulochana of Nawarangapur who happened to be a prince of Chouhan family of Patna during 1908 AD and blessed with a daughter Mani Devi after two years. Mani Devi got married to Bidyadhar Singh Deo, son of Sureswar Singh Deo in royal family of Ichagarh in Singhbhum district.

Vikram Dev Verma had spent his childhood and youth in Andhra particularly in Visakhapatnam where he was much influenced

by Telugu Culture. He was a prolific writer in Telugu language. His creative contribution in Telugu literature had honoured him variously. Some of his Telugu books were also prescribed as text books in the colleges of Andhra University.

He was a founder father of ‘Odia Samaj’ (Utkal Samaj) at Vishakhapatnam in Andhra in 1886 AD which subsequently played a vital role in safeguarding Odia culture and the interest of the Odia speaking people of Vishakhapatnam area in the then Madras Presidency. He established a permanent drama pandal named “Jagannmitra Hall” there and donated ten thousand rupees to furnish the pandal. Telugu dramas were staged there by the ‘Jagannmitra Samaj’ where he was the chairman. He formed an Odia Samaj and staged the first Odia drama ‘Sangeet Shree Radha Madhab’ written by him. Afterwards many Telugu dramas like ‘Shree Nivas Kalyan Natak’, ‘Krushnarjuna Charitam’ and ‘Manavati Charitam’ written by him were staged there successfully. He also formed one Ramalila team to perform ‘Shree Rama Lila’ there.

He was the undisputed leader of the Odias. He never hesitated to put forth their claims and grievances before Municipalities, District Board and other authorities of Madras Government as Jeypore is the part of Vishakhapatnam district at that time. Government

of India (Madras) was pleased with him for his recognition of charities and gave a Sananda (certificate) as under -

Madras,  
12<sup>th</sup> December 1911.

By the command of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General-in-Council, this certificate is presented in the name of his most gracious Majesty, King George-V, Emperor of India on the occasion of his Majesty's coronation Darbar at Delhi. (Manaswi Vikram Dev Verma Nirakar Mahalik – P-126)

To

M.R.Ry Sri Vikram Deo Verma Garu,  
son of Sri Krishna Deo Garu in recognition of his charities and encouragement of scholarship.

Sd/- A.Stewart  
Ag. Chief Secretary to the Govt of Madras

Vikram Dev Verma was a life-member of the prestigious 'Utkal Sammilani'. He presided the tenth session of Utkal Sammilani held at Paralakhemundi in 1914 as president. His eloquent presidential address on this session was unique and unprecedented which touched the hearts of all the national leaders of the then Odisha. He felt greatly anguished to state the plight of Odia living scattered in different parts of Madras (Andhra), Madhya Pradesh (C.P.), Bihar and West Bengal. He pleaded strongly that the Odias should be brought under one rule on the basis of language. He highlighted the demand of political, administrative, education particularly female education, health, industries for Odia state and First World War problems and solutions.

In 1914 AD the Govt. of Madras appointed him a Magistrate first class at Vizagapatnam for his loyalty, experience in political field, patron of art, learning and culture. He

worked for five years. He was praised by the general public as well as Govt of Madras for his sincere work.

He violently reacted against the decision of the Simon Commission as its recommendations went against the interest of the Odias as under- (Manaswi Vikram Deb Varma- N.Mahalik – 122)

### **Madras Odias and the Simon Commission**

The recommendations for a boundary commission along with a few words of sympathy in the report of the Simon Commission seems to have caught the imagination of some of our friends. x x x x x x x x x We cannot allow scattered limbs of Orissa to be turned as under in the way proposed by the Commission which never waited to solve the problem. The proper course for the Oriyas, therefore is not to accept the recommendations, unless the Oriya speaking tracts of the Vizagapatnam Agency are included in the proposed Oriya Province.

Sd/-Sree Vikram Dev Verma

Vizagapatnam  
15.01.1930

Rama Chandra Deb-IV (1920-1931 AD) the king of Jeypore Raj family died on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1931 at Prayag while he travelled Allahabad having no issue behind. On his death Vikram Deb, the son of Krishna Deb, the last surviving member of Jeypore Raj succeeded to the Gaddi of Jeypore throne at the age of sixty-two. The widow queen of Maharaja Rama Chandra Deb-IV entered into a family settlement with Vikram Deb-IV. At the fag end of his life he became the Raja of Jeypore on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1931. He dedicated himself whole-heartedly to the service of the neglected tribals and the people of Jeypore. Though a king he lived the simple life of a sacred man. He is rightly called a royal saint.

In 1932 the Govt of India appointed a Boundary Commission under the Chairmanship of Sir O' Donnel to enquire into the amalgamation of different Odia speaking tracts. Vikram Deb produced witness from Jeypore before the Commission for amalgamation of Vizagpatanam Agency tract particularly the whole of Jeypore with Odisha. He loved Odias deeply and tried his best for their well being. A separate province of Odias was formed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1936 including the Jeypore Agency. R.C.S. Bell, I.C.S. became the first Collector of Koraput.

Vikram Deb Verma was a scholar, a poet, a patriot, a play-wright, a leader with multi dimensional personality. He was a prolific writer being proficient in Telugu, Odia, English, Hindi and Sanskrit conferred with literary epithet Sahitya Samrat for his outstanding contribution to literature. He was awarded D. Lit and Sahitya Samrat by the Andhra Bharati Tirtha Research University in 1933 May 6<sup>th</sup>. He was the Kulapati (Chancellor) of this University previously. He was one of the main writers of newspapers and Journals such as Nav-Bharat, Sahakar, Navin, Shishir, Dainik Asha, Pradeep, Mukur, Utkal Sahitya, Sambalpur-Hiteishini etc. 'Bhagabata Gita Mahatmya' is the first writing in Odia language of Vikram Dev. He wrote 'Sarasa Gitavali' in his youth and wrote many strotas Kabacha and Chautisha etc. afterwards.

Largehearted Vikram Dev Verma was a great Philanthropist. He donated one lakh of rupees annually to the Andhra University, Waltair. His donation both in cash and kind for setting up various institutions in Andhra and Odisha is commendable. He was the founder father of Jeypore College of Technology and Science at Waltair (Andhra) and provided to women dispensary, a Theatre Hall (Jaganmitra Hall) and

an Industrial Museum at Vishakhapatnam. He donated one lakh thirty thousand for the S.C.B. Medical College at Cuttack and rupees ten thousand for Post graduate scholarship to Utkal University. He had also donated necessary funds for the publication of the book entitled the Hill Tribes of Jeypore written by Laxmi Narayan Sahu.

In 1934 he bore all the cost of publication of Purna Chandra Bhasakosa- IV volume and donated ten thousand to Gopal Praharaj for the publication of its V volume.

Sri Vikram School of Arts and Crafts Jeypore was established in 1946 by the late Maharaja Vikram Dev Verma. This school is now maintained by the Govt. of Odisha. Next year he started Jeypore college with 49 students on 01.07.1947 and afterwards its name is changed to Vikram Deb College Jeypore.

Vikram Dev Verma ruled Jeypore only for a span of two decades. In 1935 he adopted the second son of his only daughter Rama Krishna Deb as heir and successor to Jeypore throne as he had no male issue. Maharaja Vikram Dev Verma died at the age of 82 on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1951 and the estate was taken under the management of court of wards as his adopted son Ramakrishna Deb was a minor. In 1952 the Estate Abolition act was passed and the Estate Jeypore was taken over by the Government of Odisha.

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