



## Dasharathi Pattanaik - The Father of Library Movement in Orissa

*Braja Paikaray*

When we think of Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das, the picture of a frail person dressed with coat, jacket, pant, boot, long Advocate's gown, a turban on the head having bold look in the eyes with a fat law book on his side comes to our mind's eye. Similarly when we imagine of Dasharathi Pattanaik we visualise the picture of a tall, frail barebodied Khadi clad oldman having an Oriya turban (Theka) of red napkin on the head, a Khadi bag on the shoulder and a long lathi with his right hand. Though from outward appearance he seems like a common man in reality he was a great and uncommon personality of Orissa. As his life's only ambition and mission was to create awareness among the people of our state regarding the necessity of libraries he can be rightly designated as the father of library movement in Orissa.

Late Dasharathi Pattanaik was born in the year 1907 in a little known village namely Udaypur in the district of Nayagarh. By his sheer will power and sincere effort he could be able to keep his foot print in the literary and cultural fields of Orissa overriding the iron barriers of little education, economic scarcity and under-developed rural atmosphere. In stead of indulging his 90 years span of life in family affairs he had preferred to include himself among innumerable elites, poets, writers, bureaucrats and politicians

of Orissa and in course of time had become their beloved "Dasia Aja" from Dasharathi Pattanaik.

Though I had heard his name previously I had the rare opportunity of meeting "Dasia Aja" for the first time in the residence of eminent poet, writer and lawyer late Ramesh Chandra Dhall introducing myself to 'Dasia Aja' late Dhall said that "Braja happens to be the nephew of Saheed Dibakar Parida, the pioneer of Ranapur Praja Rebellion and is the founder President of state level Saheed Raghu-Dibakar Smruti Committee. Moreover he is an Advocate at Bhubaneswar Court and is a writer and poet. Patting my back Dasia Aja told me that he has gone through my articles and poems from different daily newspapers and magazines. Then he urged me to donate him four annas only. It was a pleasant surprise for me. I felt amused and gave him four *annas* at once. He further advised and told me that "you may pursue and practise the legal profession for a living but do not stop writing." I became spellbound and nodded my head with applause. In course of time I became known and close to Advocate Prabir Pattanaik the son of "Dasia Aja."

By sheer will - power and continuous endeavour "Dasia Aja" could able to establish "Banchhanidhi Pathagar" an excellent library in which he has preserved more than 50 (fifty)



thousand books in different languages, 65 (sixty five) thousand magazines and periodicals. there are also 5 (five) thousand palm leaf manuscripts which are in fact more than 100 years old.

He has established Sri Aurobindo Sangrahalay (a nice museum) which has housed rare collections of old records and valuable letters of distinguished personalities. There are over 42 (forty two) sections in this museum. The foremost and exceptional collections preserved in the museum are (1) Radiating soil of Hiroshima city of Japan after 2nd World War (2) Fragmented pieces of Berlin wall of Germany (3) Soil Collected from surface of moon and (4) fossils of Dinosaur.

The Art and craft gallery adores old art and craft pieces like Patta paintings, contemporary paintings and also rare sculptures. The armoury

section contains cannons, swords etc. from medieval to modern times.

He has established "Jadumani Sahitya Sansad' named after the great Oriya poet Jadumani which holds cultural and literary conferences, seminars, exhibitions and honours distinguished persons of the State in the fields of art, culture, literature and social service etc.

Dasharathi Pattanaik breathed his last in 12th September 1997. But he has become a source of inspiration and legendary figure for the future generation for his missionary zeal of establishing the Orissan heritage in the world platform.

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*Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik felicitating brilliant students reading in schools managed by the Department of ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare. Hon'ble Ministers Shri Lal Bihari Himirika, Shri Ramesh Chandra Majhi and Principal Secretary, ST & SC Development Department Shri Santosh Sarangi are also present.*