

CLASSICAL ODIA

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Foreword

Odia is one of the most ancient languages of India. Eminent linguists and scholars like John Beams, G.A Grierson, L.S.S O Malley, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Pandit Nilakantha Das, John Boulton, Dr. D.P. Pattnayak, Dr. Bijaya Prasad Mahapatra and others have time and again argued in favour of the antiquity of Odia language. Odisha is the only state, where discovered three types of Brhami script like -PreBrahmi, Brahmi & Post Brahmi-. The Indian script 'o' (tha) was discovered from yogimatha rock painting of Nuapada district. It is the ancient form of Indian script and it is the first glimpse of possible origin of the Odia language and script. The paintings found at Vikramkhola, also contained pre-historic, undeciphered pictographic inscriptions. Some letters are only in paint and it was the method regularly employed during period of Brahmi inscription. The color of the paint is red ochre. An examination of the letters, which at first sight give the impression of having Brahmi forms, shows that the writings was a mixture of Brahmi form and a developed type of the Mohenjo-Daro script. According to the famous historian K.P Jayaswal, "the Vikramkhola inscription supplies a link between the passage of letter from the Mohenjo-Daro script to Brahmi" (**The Vikramkhola Inscription." The Indian Antiquary", Vol-LXII**).

In the maritime history of India, Odisha (ancient kalinga) played a significant role in spreading Indian culture to other parts of the world including Africa, Rome and South East Asia. Archeological findings, explorations and excavations at various sites, epigraphic and numismatic evidences of different periods, and literary records, enable one to reconstruct the maritime history of Odisha. Besides, attacks by neighboring kingdoms, and unsound economic conditions, geological processes like tectonic activities, sea level changes and sedimentation were also equally responsible for the decline of ports of Odisha. However, the maritime traditions are preserved in the cultural festivals of Odisha, which are celebrated as commemorative traditions. The old traditions are still celebrated in the annual Bali Jatra or Boita-Bandana festival held for five days in October/November. The celebration of the Boat festival called 'Danga Bhasa ' is celebrated in Thailand and Odisha. Here we called it '**Danga Bhasa** or '**Boita Bandana**' but there this is called '**Loy Krathong**'.

Odisha is the modern name of the ancient Kalinga Empire known as Udra, Utkal, Kalinga, Kosala, Toshala and Kangoda during the historical period. It is the first example of the formation of the linguistic state of India.

Odisha has one of the largest numbers of pre-historic sites. A number of lower Paleolithic, middle Paleolithic and upper Paleolithic stone implements have been found from those sites. Similarly sites of Copper-Stone Age and Iron Age are available in plenty. The latest archeological excavation has taken place in January and February 2013 at Harirajpur near Jatani in Odisha. The findings of excavation include broken potteries, charcoal, earthen pots, stone implements for agricultural purposes, animal bones, flooring of houses, remains of heart and human skeleton, claimed to be between 4000 and 3500 years old.

Odisha is one of the few exceptions where the transition from pre literate to literate is captured by over 5775 cave paintings. These paintings are found in Vikramkhola, Ushakothi, Ullagarh, Gudahandi, Jogimath etc. The well known historian K.P Jaiswal has accepted these as pre-Brahmi script.

Reference to Odisha in diverse names is found in the Vedas, the Mahabharata and various Puranas, but the first reference to Odia language is found in Bharat's Natya Shastra(13-8-6-26) (4th century B.C.) and Astadhyayi of Panini (4-1-170). Beginning from Asoka (3rd century B.C.) through Kharavela (1st century B.C.) upto 1051 A.D. the first complete Odia inscription, the Urajam inscription, the developmental history of Odia inscriptions and copper plate grants is clearly discernible. Although inscriptions bear messages, a few Indian inscriptions, among which Kharavela's Hatigumpha inscription is one, display kavyic (literary) style of writing.

Though the recorded history of the land, now known as Odisha begins with the Kalinga war of 261 B.C. and the subsequent engraving of the two Special Kalinga edicts by Ashoka at Dhauli and Jaugada, yet the history of the land is as old as the Indian civilization itself, if not earlier. What is important about Odishan history is that eight eminent women rulers ruled Kalinga during the Bhoulakara period which is a rare phenomenon in world history. Buddhist heritage is equally very rich in Odisha. Excavation revealed the rich Buddhist remains from Ratnagiri, Udyagiri, Lalitgiri, Kuruma, Vajragiri and other places. Goutam Buddha is said to have known 64 languages including Udra that is Odia. The first two disciples of Buddha after high enlightenment were two merchants from Utkala, Tapusa and Vallika. They gave madhupinda (Arisa pitha(Cake) and Mahu(Honey)) to Buddha who gave some of his hair to these two dear disciples. They brought Buddha's hair relic to their own land and set up Kesestupas there.

Literary history of no language begins with a mahapurana, mahakabya and mahanataka or a grand novel. Hundreds of years' of oral literary history usually enrich the history of the community. Odia and Odisha are no exception. Odisha is exceedingly rich, since ancient times, in exquisite and excellent palm leaf manuscripts. Even now lakhs of palm leaf manuscripts are in private possession of the Brahmins, Zamindars, Aristocrats and eminent persons living in the rural area.

When we talk of the recorded history we straightway come down to language, recording of history or for that matter any recording necessarily requires a language. Since all the languages of the world have not developed at the same time, the historical recording or the recorded history of different regions of the world vary from each other in matters of time. Odisha as well as India did exist in some form or the other much before the invention of script and a written language.

Kalinga is a state in Philippines. Till today it is called as Kalinga and Kaling is that country which purely represents India to the world. Authors of the world history when referring to South East Asia always refer to Indian settlement in this area and Indian influence , but every time they neither referring to Kalinga or anything rather always referring to India settlement . Ancestors from these countries already accepted that people from Kalinga came here and developed our culture with Brahmin and Sanskrit ways of Odia. They developed them in their language, culture God and still have greater importance than other. **Hotley Beyer** (1918) believed that people of the Kalinga in Philippines in a Separate Migration War. Around 5000 B.C. came a group he called "Indo Asian and their decadence are found in the province of Apayao and part of abra, kalinga and Ifugao. Many of these have never changed to Christianity and preserve their ancient customs of tattooing their bodies, filing their teeth and from time to time a central tendency to head hunting (Brinton 1898.303). Even Kalinga textile design of cloths is identical with Odisha textile design.

The Buddhist Dharmachakra (wheel of life) was unearthed recently under Badchana Block of Jajpur District. The twelve spokes of the wheel symbolize the noble Eightfold path set out by the Buddha in his teachings. The wheel also represents the endless cycle of samsara, or rebirth which can only be escaped by means of the Buddha's teachings.

Odia identity is shaped by its rich language and literature. Sri Jayadev Goswami wrote the famous poem Gita Gobindam in 10th century, celebrating the divine love of Lord Krushna and Radha. He belonged to Kenduli village in the Cuttack district of Odisha. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu chanted the name of the Lord on the streets of Odisha and popularised Lord Jagannatha. His family belonged to Jajpur town of Odisha who left Odisha and settled in Nadia in West Bengal.

The blind and Dalit poet Bhimbhoi is famous for his contribution to humanism who hails from Odisha. Adikabi Sarala Das wrote the Mahabharata in Odia in 15th century enriching Odia language. Atibadi Jagannath Das (Bhagabata), Santha Achyutanada Das, Josobanta Das, Sisu Ananta Das, Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja, Dinakrushna Das, Abhimanyu Samantasingshar, Vyasakavi Fakir Mohan Senapati, Kabi Gangadhar Meher, Palikabi Nandakishore Bal, Bhaktakabi Madhusudan Rao, Katakabi Laxmikanta Mohapatra, Samanta Chandrasekhar (Pathani Samanta), Sri Gourisankar Roy, Bichitrnanda Das, Utkal Mani Gopabandhu Das, Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das, Pandit Nilakantha Das, Pandit Godabarish Mishra, Acharya Harihar Rath, Chandrasekhar Behera, Dharanidhar Mishra, Laxminarayan Mishra, Prabhavati Debi, Parvati Giri, Malati Choudhuri, Rama Debi and many others have enriched Odia language with their poetic expressions and different styles and genres and contributed a lot for Odia and Odisha. We owe them a lot and salute all these celebrated persons of Odisha.

As one of the oldest languages of India, Odia is eligible to be declared as Classical language. Govt. of India has already declared Telugu, Sanskrit, Tamil and Kannada as the Classical language and recently Malayalam language also has been given the Classical status. Around 50 million people used Odia language for reading and writing. In many states like Jharkhand, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Andhra-Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal and Delhi there are many Odia schools are functioning to cater the needs of Odia students.

While replying to my letter Kumari Selja has admitted that the criteria for High antiquity of its early text/recorded history earlier was notified as 1000 years, but subsequently four Indian languages, such as Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Sanskrit got the Classical Status I also protested such decision of the Home Ministry and demanded that all languages including Odia should be considered in the same criteria as has been extended to aforementioned languages.

‘Jatiya Odia Sammilani’ under the leadership of S.J. Rama Chandra Khuntia and Advocate Biraja Mohapatra observed the Utkal Diwas at Delhi with two demands. **“Odia language and Odissi Sangeet”** to be given Classical status. Shri V. Narayansamy, Hon’ble Minister of P.M.O., Shri Srikant Jena, Hon’ble MOS Shri Oscar Fernandez, Chairman Standing Committee of HRD and Shri Jagdish Tytler who attended the meeting assured to extend their full support for Classical language status to Odia language and Odissi Music. On 19th June, 2013, I met once again to Hon’ble, President of India and submitted the Memorandum regarding Classical status to Odia language.

When the name was changed from Orissa to Odisha, I myself raised this matter in the Parliament. While discussing about the change of the name of the state, the former Minister of Odisha SK Matlub Ali and Secretary, Sarala Sahitya Sansad, Shri Pravakar Swain, requested me to raise the issue of Classical status to Odia language in the Parliament. Then I raised as a special mention in the Parliament on 30th March, 2012, put unstarred question no 2654 on 5th Sept 2012, and again question no 2814 on 19th December, 2012 and while participating in the official language bill 2012, in Rajya Sabha on 8th March, 2013. In April 2012, Union Culture Minister replied me and said about the criteria and procedure for declaring the classical status to any language and I had submitted a Memorandums to Hon’ble President of India, Hon’ble Vice-President of India, Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Hon’ble Home Minister of

India, Union Culture Minister, Secretary, Ministry of Culture (The details are given in **Annexure 37 to 58**). After that, a meeting was arranged at Bhubaneswar at Red Cross Bhawan where many language Experts, Journalists and literary figures attended the meeting and after threadbare discussion, one Action committee was constituted, where Sh. R.C Khuntia, M.P. was elected as the Chairman and Sk. Matlub Ali as the Convenor and a drafting committee was constituted with Professor Debi Pattnaik as the Chairman of the Committee and Sh. Subrat Prusty as the Convenor. A document was prepared by the drafting committee and it was submitted to the Government of India on 20th September, 2012 and subsequently the Memorandum was submitted to the Linguistic Expert Committee, Hon'ble President of India, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Hon'ble Minister of Culture and Secretary, Culture on 8th May, 2013. The first meeting of the Linguistic Expert Committee has already been convened on 23rd July 2013. There are seven organisations and 15 Members of Parliament have signed in the Memorandum.

Members of Parliament who signed the documents

1. Sh. Rama Chandra Khuntia, M.P. (Rajya Sabha)
2. Sh. Srikant Jena, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/c) Chemicals & Fertilizers.
3. Sh. Prasanna Patasani, M.P.
4. Sh. Baishnab Parida, M.P.
5. Sh. Rabi Mohapatra, M.P.
6. Sh. Shasi Bhusan Behera, M.P.
7. Sh. Amar Pradhan, M.P.
8. Sh. Bhakta Charan Das, M.P.
9. Sh. Bibhu Prasad Tarai, M.P.
10. Sh. Pradeep Majhi, M.P.
11. Sh. Bhartuhari Mahtab, M.P.
12. Sh. Tathagatha Satapathy, M.P.
13. Smt. Renubala Pradhan, M.P.
14. Sh. Mangala Kisan, M.P.
15. Sh. A.V Swamy, M.P.

Organizations who have contributed immensely in preparing the Memorandum and submitted to the Government of India.

1. Institute of Odia Studies and Research, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
2. Agami Satabdi, Madhusudan nagar Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
3. Kanhu Charan, Indumati Sachidevi Foundation (KIS foundation), New Delhi.
4. Pallibani Mission, New Delhi.
5. Korai Mandal Sahitya Sansad, Korai, Jajpur Road, Cuttack, Odisha
6. Odia Bhasha Surakhya Abhiyan, Bhubaneswa, Odisha
7. Sarala Sahitya Sansad, Cuttack, Odisha

8. Indira Akademi, Unit-IV, Bhubaneswar
9. Utkal Ganakabi Baishnab Pani Smruti Sansada, Mahanga, Cuttack

The criteria fixed by the Govt. of India for granting classical status to language.

It is informed that with the approval of the Cabinet, Ministry of Home Affairs issued a Notification creating new category of languages to be known as 'Classical languages'. This Notification also laid down certain criteria to determine the eligibility of the languages for classification as a classical language.

The criteria to determine the eligibility of languages for classification as a classical language is as under:

- a) High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years (earlier this period was notified as 1000 years)
- b) A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generation of speakers.
- c) The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community.
- d) The Classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the Classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

The Futuristic approach and development of Odia as a Classical language

- International award to be given to two litterateurs having outstanding contribution in promoting the language.
- A chair will be established for development and promotion of the diversity of Odia language in India and abroad.
- UGC approved chairs will be established in Indian universities and overseas universities for further development of the language with special financial assistance in every academic year.
- The Central Govt. will release an initial grant of Rs. 100 Crore in one time and every five years a grant of five Crore for fundamental research ,publications with innovative and futuristic programme.
- To establish research centres expanding its horizons at International level for development of this language both written and oral and efforts will be made for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary relationship with similar classic languages of the Globe.
- To provide a forum for creative and critical dialogue between and among diverse arts, literature in Odia-traditional and contemporary through performances, exhibitions, multimedia projections, conferences, Seminars, Symposium and workshops.
- To evolve models of research programmes and various Odia traditional folk literature, festivals, tribal scripts encompassing the study and experience of the Odia language and literature.
- Opportunity will be given to develop a network of communication with national & international centres engaged in promotion and development of Classical languages and literature and to affiliate with universities and other institutions of higher learning within India and abroad to expand the knowledge base in language arts, antiquarian scripts, dialects and cultural heritage.

The benefits of Odia as a Classical language

- An university exclusively for such language will be established and as a result of which more Financial Assistance will be given for development of Odia language for research on Odia, Odia language, culture and history.
- This will open gate for teaching of Odia language in all type of education.
- The statistics and information regarding Odia language and culture, History and Cultural Heritage will be easily available.
- The Road will be opened to publish high standard Odia books and it will open new horizon for new knowledge and science.
- The opportunity to translate good Odia books in to other vernacular Languages and foreign languages so that students and general mass could get the Opportunity to read the richness of odia language and odisha.
- The present threat to Odia language in view of Globalisation and Commercialization of education system would automatically be vanished.

I express my sincere gratitude to the Institute of Odia Studies and Research and all the seven organizations and my fellow colleagues (Members of Parliament from Odisha) who join hands in presenting the Memorandum to the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, I convey special thanks to the Drafting Committee Chairman, Professor, Dr. Debi Prasanna Pattanaik (Padmashree), the language expert and Sh. Subrat Kumar Prusty for collecting, compiling and preparing the Memorandum. Their sincere effort and valuable contribution will go a long way and will be remembered by the people of Odisha in the future time to come.

RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA, M.P.

Chairman, Action Committee

Preface

The movement for classical language status to Odia was initiated by Sri Rama Chandra Khuntia, Member, Rajya Sabha who raised questions in the Rajya Sabha in 30th March 2012. Thereafter single handedly he wrote to the President, Prime Minister, Culture Minister and brought together an all party term of members of Parliament to sign a document to bestow the classical status on Odia. He then persuaded the Institute of Odia Studies and Research (IOSR) to prepare the documents. He personally requested me to take charge of the situation and prepare the document. He presented the document to the Government of India. The Cultural Ministry asked for the opinion of the State Government. The state Government asked me to be a member of the Committee they were going to set up. I told them that since IOSR had drafted the Report that should be accepted as the foundation by the new committee. Then only the Report will be combined Report, both Government and non- Government, it is to the credit of the Minister and Principal Secretary of Culture Department, that they agreed the idea of our Report being accepted as the foundation. The Report was thus completed with minor modifications and corrections, and it was possible to bring out the final version of the Report in second time.

This submission is designed to meet the four criteria stipulated by the Govt. of India to bestow classical status to one of the modern Indian Languages (in this case Odia). This has been proved that Odia has an unbroken history of language development. Ever since there has been a reference to Udra Bibhasa in Natyasastra of Bharat Muni (4th Cen. BC) through Ashokan edict, (3rd Cen. BC) and Hatigumpha inscriptions of Kharavela (1st Cen. BC) conclusive evidence has been provided to show the development of Odia language and script, until Urajan inscription of 1051, AD, the first Odia inscription using entirely Odia language and script

The difference in age between written to spoken language is 10,000 years to 100,000 years. Oral literature started almost simultaneously with the separation of mankind from other animal's kingdom. Therefore it is only natural to presume that oral literature in Odia would antedate Sarala, the Adi Kabi, Poet Laureate of Odisha (15th Cen.) by several centuries. This presumption finds support from Osa, Brata, Katha, Sodasa, Cautisa, Gitika, Gita, Samhita, Koili and many such composition prevalent orally from time immemorial. Buddhist jatakas which refer to Utkal, Kalinga, Udra and Buddhist texts which refer to 'Ugralipi' (Udralipi) learnt by Buddha goes back to Pre-Christian era.

Between Inscriptions and Odia literature is the Baudhagana O Doha (8th - 12th Cen.) which provides the link. Odia is the most ancient and most conservative among the Eastern group of Indo-Aryan Languages. It is only natural that oral and written literature of that time would have more common elements with odia than with other languages, which have

undergone several changes over time. In fact, many of the lines of Doha read like contemporary colloquial Odia and many words and grammatical formations are retained in Odia, which are no longer found in other modern languages.

The development of Odia prose is not only early, it is unique in many ways. The stories of Bratas and Osas was a strong reason for the preservation and development of prose. Some varieties of prose were also sung. Of the six varieties of Odia prose which were sung, two were Utkalika and Churnika. In the Sarala Mohabharat (15th Cen. or earlier), a letter is found incorporated. The Pre-Sarala (?) Madala Panji is written in prose. There are many other Pre-Sarala prose and poetry texts which are still under controversy over dates.

Sarala Das was a unique character among all the modern Indian language writers, who wrote three purans, **Mahabharat, Bilanka Ramayan, Chandi Puran in Odia**. He is the only modern Indian author who wrote the entire Mahabharat in one life time. He put the Odia language on a solid pedestal, blazed a trail for the sustainable growth of Odia literature in future.

Sarala Das was followed by Pancha Sakha, out of whom three were Epic writers, Balaram Das's- "Dandi Ramayan" and "Laxmipurana", Jagannath Das's- "Bhagabat" and Achyutananda Das "Sunya Samhita" of the Bhakti Literature, more particularly of Odishan Vaishnavism, a mixture of Bhakti of Janana. Innumerable number of oral texts discussed in groups, sung with the accompaniment of drums and cymbals, await to be written down.

The following 300 years (Mid 16th Cen. to Mid 19th Cen.) was the Kavya Juga when hundreds of Kavyas, narratives and descriptive poetic texts were written, continuing environment of music and scores of ragas mark this period. Many experiments were made with language and chhanda and the Odia creative imagination sprouted in abundance.

Poems, songs, lyrics and prose flourished during the next century, with social, mythological, religious themes in sample common subject. They were numerous, full of varieties and broke upon formalistic structures and assumed a distinct mind set of the ancient Odia poetry. The Bhakti movement of the 16th Cen. flourished into spirituality upto the 19th Cen. Love, which had a strong thematic presence during the Kavya era, found expressions directly in man woman relationship and indirectly through Radha Krushna love play in the songs, poems and lyrics.

The modern age of Odia literature which challenged traditional ways of learning and evaluation is supposed to have begun in the later part of the 19th Century.

The British rule, the missionary printing press, the rising Odia identity were behind Odia modernity. Besides Radhanath Ray, Fakirmohan Senapati, Madhusudan Rao, Gangadhar Meher, Nanda Kishore Bal, who were architects of Odia modernity, Barrister Madhusudan Das stands out as the architect in chief. Besides his fight for Odisha as a separate state on linguistic basis, in which he succeeded in his life time. In addition to his poetry, his extensive prose writing with remarkable logic and consistency, mostly motivated by educational purposes put him in the forefront of fighters for Odia identity.

Modern Odia literature not only came in contact and aspired to compete with modern Indian literatures, but also with foreign literatures. This literature flourished into novel, short-story, essay, criticism, subject related prose, travelogue, biography, autobiography, drama, short and long poetry.

It should be clear by now that Odia literature viewed as Ancient, Medieval or Modern or as the Sarala, Bhakti, Kavya, Prose, Pre-Independence, Post-Independence and New Flowering, they are called sarala Panchasakha or Bhanja Yuga. It only goes to show that individual authors have their own identity and yet all the authors of the era and between the eras have interlinking trends and dimensions. Although they are original in their own ways, and underwent significant changes over the time, they reacted differently to the ways of life and presented homogenized life, literature and culture. The Odia country side reverberates with the epics, the Bhakti and Kavya literature. The modern as well as the ancient are both original and display similar mental horizons, attitudes and motivations. Because of the strength, originality and creative expression, Odia has been translated into the neighbouring languages. Bichitra Ramayan by Siddheswar Das (14th - 15th Cen.) has been translated by six eminent Telugu writers into Telugu. Mahabharat by Sarala Das (15th Cen. or earlier) has been translated into Bengali. Bhagabat by Jagannath Das (16th Cen.) has been translated into Bengali and Assamese. To quote lines of the blind poet Bhima Bhoi (19th Cen), **“late this life of mine wallow in hell fire but let the world be redeemed”** is placed over one of the entrances of the UN.

The body of literature is considered as valuable national heritage by successive generations. Numbers of inter-lingual translations have grown and literature has increased in volume, quality and diversity.

DR. DEBI PRASANNA PATTANAİK

Chairman

Institute of Odia Studies and Research, Bhubaneswar

A LITTLE EFFORT FOR A GREAT CAUSE

As of now, the Govt. of India has granted classical status to five languages (i.e) Tamil (2004), Sanskrit (2005), Telugu & Kannad (2008) and Malayalam (2013). If the criteria to grant classical status to a language is considered, then Odia language certainly qualifies to be a classical language being one of the ancient and richest vernacular languages.

Odisha was the first state to be formed as a separate province on the basis of language during the British rule in the year 1936. If we analyse the uniqueness, character and glorious traditions of Odia as a language along with the richness of Odia literature, there can be no second opinion that it certainly deserves to be declared as a classical language.

Two significant Ashoken inscriptions were inscribed at Dhauli and Jaugada. Just after the Kalinga War in 261 B.C. the script (Bramhi) and the language (Pali) of both the inscriptions are the proto form of Odia language.

The Hatigumpha inscription inscribed by the great emperor Kharabela at Khandagiri cave in the 1st century B.C. bears the testimony of the language and the poetic style of the locality. Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh has defined it as the earliest indigenous literary expression of Odia language.

First poetic text of our country “Natya Shastra” composed by Bharat Muni during 4th century B.C., mentioned Udra Vibhasa- that is the proto form of Odia language.

The Buddhist text’s ‘Lalita Bistara’, gives a list of 64 scripts known to Lord Budha. Udri was one of the scripts in the list. Scholars traced the Udri with Udra script. Sangita Ratnakar also has referred to the lyrical style of Odia language. The non aryan tribal music & unique style of dance prevalent in ancient Utkal also help to corroborate the ancientness and originality of Odia language. More over the rich folklore & folktale, the beautiful architecture of ancient Buddhist Monuments (Lalita giri, Udayagiri & Ratnagiri) and temples of Odisha (Sun Temple of Konark –known as black pagoda) strengthen the demand for classical status to Odia Language. In the past, Odisha have had various names in the history (Utkal, Kalinga, Udra, Kosala & Kangoda), but its unique cultural heritage and glorious tradition speaks its richness.

The Ministry of culture of Govt. of India has given an unique opportunity for the people of Odisha whereby they can re-establish the glorious tradition of Odia on national pedestal. But neither the State Govt. of Odisha, any university of Odisha, nor Sahitya Akademi have staked any claim before the Govt. of India.

The movement of the action committee to obtain classical status to Odia language is continuing its effort relentlessly since long. I had organised a meeting on 7th June, 2012, at Rotary Bhawan, Bhubaneswar under the banner, a literary magazine “**The Agami Satabdi**”. It was the first formal meeting attended by intellectuals for deliberating upon the classical status to Odia. It was attended by Mr. R.C. Khuntia, Mr. Prassana Patasani, Mr. B. C. Parida & Rabi Mohapatra, (Members of Parliament) and Dr. Rajendra Prasad Mohanty, V.C. of Sikhya

Sandhan University, former V.C. Dr. Sukadeb Nanda, Sh. Sahadev Sahoo (Retd. Chief Secretary, Govt. of Odisha) distinguished scholar and a eminent writer, Padmashree Pratiba Ray, Dr. Aurabinda Pattanaik, Dr. Ganeswar Mishra, Prof. Dr. Bijay Kumar Satpathy, Prof. Dr. Sanghamitra Mishra, Dr. Subrata Prusty and many scholars and intellectuals of Odisha.

As the convenor of the meeting, in my welcome address, I had appealed all to come forward and work unitedly towards the goal to obtain classical status for Odia language. Odia language has sustained developmental history of 2500 years and Odia literature has continuous history of 1500 years. It fulfills all the criteria prescribed by the Govt. of India for granting classical status to a modern Indian language. In this meeting Dr. Basanta Panda presented one base paper on the subject, Chief Guest Mr. R. C. Khuntia, M.P. expressed his desire that all should work unitedly to achieve the goal and also he informed that he has already raised the questions in the Parliament on the subject. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Dr. D. P. Pattanaik. In the meeting, it was decided that Action Committee would work under the Chairmanship of Mr. R. C. Khuntia, M.P. and Sk. Matlub Ali will continue as the convenor of the action committee.

Then a comprehensive memorandum was prepared by Subrat Kumar Prusty in this regard which was presented to President of India, Prime minister of India, Union Culture Minister on 24th November 2012 with the signature of nine Members of Parliament and members of Action Committee & nine literary organisations of Odisha. This report was first of its kind. In that comprehensive report, it was also mentioned that the antiquity of Odia language, its rich heritage & historical importance would be submitted in detail along with supporting documents to the Union Govt. as early as possible.

A compendium 564 pages based on historical facts & documents was prepared by the export committee under the supervision of the eminent linguist Dr. D. P. Pattanaik and the member of the committee Dr. Natabar Satpathy, Dr. Jatin Nayak & Dr. Subrata Prusty (convenor of the expert committee). Mr. R. C. Khuntia, submitted the Memorandum to Honorable President of India, Honorable Prime Minister of India, Union Culture Minister & the President, Central Sahitya Akademi in November, 2012. In this Memorandum fifteen Members of Parliament & nine literary bodies have signed. The following hon'ble MPs who have signed in the Memorandum.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Sh.. Ramchandra Khuntia, (President) | 2. Sh. Srikanta Jena (Hon'ble Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizer) |
| 3. Sh. Prasanna Patasani | 4. Sh. B. C. Parida |
| 5. Sh. Bhakta Ch. Das | 6. Sh. Sashi Bhusan Behera |
| 7. Sh. Rabi Mohapatra | 8. Sh. Bhartruhari Mahatab |
| 9. Sh. Tathagata Satpathy | 10. Sh.. Amar Pradhan |
| 11. Ms. Renubala Pradhan | 12. Sh. Mangala Kishan |
| 13. Sh. Bibhu Prasad Tarai | 14. Sh. Pradip Majhi |
| 15. Sh. A. V. Swami | |

The literary institutions who also have signed in the Memorandum.

- 1 Institute of Odia studies and research, Bhubaneswar.
2. The "Agami Satabdi" a leading odiya Magazine, M-68, M.S. Nagar, Unit-IV, Bhubaneswar.
3. Palli Bani Mission, New Delhi

4. Korai Mandal Sahitya Sansada, Jajpur
5. Sarala Sahitya Sansada, Cuttack
6. Indira Akademi, Unit-IV, Bhubaneswar
7. KIS Foundation, New Delhi.
8. Utkal Ganakabi Baishnab Pani Smruti Sansada, Mahanga, Cuttack
9. Odia Bhasa Surakhya Abhiyan, Bhubaneswar

Six months have been elapsed after the submission of the Memorandum. No step has been taken by the Culture Ministry. Mr. R. C. Khuntia, M.P. along with other delegates called on the culture secretary & authorities of Central Sahitya Akademi and have discussed on the matter in detail. Secretary, Sahitya Akademi has informed that the committee of linguistic experts has already been constituted & had assured us for suitable action.

Throughout the movement, the active involvement of Sri R.C Khuntia Hon'ble Member of Parliament is highly commendable. The Memorandum on classical status to Odia language is being published only due to his keen interest and kind help. We all highly thankful for his assistance & encouragement. The Hon'ble Members of Parliament (Odisha) and all the members of action committee have actively participated in this programme, especially members of linguistic experts committee worked meticulously to prepare the Memorandum. We offer our sincere thanks to all the Members of Parliament, the linguistic expert committee & all the members of action committee.

Then action committee convened a press meet on 11th May 2013, at Bhubaneswar. In this press meet, Mr. R. C. Khuntia, Sk. Matlub Ali and Subrat kumar Prusty explained the plan and programmes taken by the action committee to accord classical status to Odia language. Mr. R. C. Khuntia stated that he has submitted the Memorandum to the Govt. of India and Central Sahitya Akademi and he informed that Akademi has already constituted committee of linguistic experts for the examination of the documents submitted by us.

Sk. Matlub Ali contended that resolution should be taken in the State Assembly demanding Odia language to be given classical status by the Union Govt. and Electronic Media & Print Media should create public awareness and their support in achieving the classical status to Odia language. Dr. Subrat Prusty explained that this status would contribute to the growth of Odia language, literature and Odia culture. Further Sri. Khuntia said to the media that the Memorandum will be published as a **Book** soon.

The movement must continue till the goal is achieved. We seek active support help, and cooperation from all to move ahead this movement to re-establish the Odisha's pride and honour.

Bande Utkal Janani,

SK. MATLUB ALI

Convenor of the Action Committee

15th May, 2013

M-68, Madhusudan Nagar,

Unit-IV, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

WHY NOT ODIA...?

Government of India has established four criteria for granting classical status to the modern India languages. By giving the classical status to any Indian language, the language not only brings fame but provides greater opportunities for research and development.

In this context, one can judiciously think about giving this classical status to Odia language. The ancientness of the Odia language is being proved from its soil which says about two types of language from very beginning. The development of Odia can be seen through its spoken and written forms. The spoken languages are expressed two ways. One preserved through folk forms and the other preserved through cave paintings. The songs sung at the time of birth, death and work conditions are preserved, stories are painted through cave paintings both represent the creativity of the underlying literature. The inhabitant of this land stated to drown this language at about fifteen thousand years back. The Gudahandi painting of Kalahandi district and the cave art of Khandagiri and Udayagiri are the great achievements of this primitive architecture. Towards the 13th century A.D. the deities made at Konark not only limit the language to the time and space but also wide spread to the distant country like Bali, Java, Sumatra, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaya and Philippine. **Borobudur temple** of central java and the **Angkor Wat** temple of Cambodia is the fine example of Odisha-influenced Indian architecture.

Odisha has largest number of pre-historic sites. Lots of Paleolithic stone implements have been found in this site. Similar sites of copper Bronze Age and Iron Age are available in plenty. The latest archaeological excavation has taken place in 2013 at **Harirajpur**. The findings of excavation includes **human skeleton**, broken potteries, carbon, earthen pots, Agricultural stone implements, animal bones, flooring of houses, remains of hearth, **claimed to be 4000 years old** have been found at the spot. Tel river civilization put light towards a great civilization existing in Kalahandi, Balangir, Koraput region in the past that is recently getting explored. The discovered archaeological wealth of Tel Valley speaks a well civilized, urbanized, cultured people inhabitant on this land mass around 2000 years ago. The **Radhanagar Fort** of Jajpur was the centre of circle on the periphery of which lay places like Kayama, Deuli, Tarapur, Vajragiri, Langudi etc. These sites yield inscriptions mentioning the names of Tapussa and Bhallika. Tapussa and Bhallika both came to be regarded as the first **Buddha's disciple** of all over world. On the basis of the new findings, Dr. Monica Smith of the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, claimed that the fortified city is Sisupalagarh of Odisha, flourished from around 5th century B.C and probably remained well after the 4th century A.D. Researchers say the items found during the excavation point to a highly developed urban settlement. Very early in Kalinga history, the Kalingas acquired a reputation for being a fiercely independent people. Ashoka's military campaign against Kalinga was one of the bloodiest in Indian history on account of the fearless and heroic resistance offered by the Kalingas to the mighty armies of the expanding Mauryan Empire.

Odisha in ancient days had illuminated Indian sky of knowledge so brilliantly with its own unique luster that the Rig Veda in its tenth Mandala had to advise its followers to be cautious of Odisha where indigenous people find their object of worship in wooden logs. Odisha is the land of

Jagannâth culture which is the principle of Sarva Dharma samanvaya. Jagannâth is a wooden deity (Saura). He is the Dakshinakâli for the Saktas and Vairaba for the Saivites. He is Mahâganapati for the Gânapatyas and at the same time He is the Suryanârâyan for the Sauryas. His festivals are of a Purânîc origin and the rituals are an admixture of tribal rituals and Sâkta's nyasa and mudras and many more. His majority of rituals are based on Uddiyan tantras which are the refined versions of Mahayan tantras as well as Shabari tantras, which have evolved from Tantrik Buddhism and tribal beliefs respectively. Of his *mantras* the incantation Oum is Vedic and Hlim, Slim, Klim are Tantrik. His Kaibalya (mahaprasad of rice) is of a Jaina origin and Nirmalya is of Saivite origin.

Odisha became a centre of Buddhism. The three Buddhism schools: *Vajrayana, Kalachakrayana and Sahajayana reformed in Odisha by odia people*. By 7th century A.D., King Indrabhuti of Sambalpur introduced it as **Vajrayana**, which is supposed to have travelled to other parts of the country and Tibet. Acharya Pitupada (8-9th C AD) achieved a great reputation as a scholar and a saint at Ratnagiri and promulgated **Kalachakryana**, a new vehicle of Buddhism. Vajrayana was changed to **Sahajayana** by Lashminkara, the princess of Sonepur and sister of Indrabhuti. It is believed that the great Buddhist saint Padmasambhava went to Tibet from Odisha to propagate Vajrayana Buddhism and founded a new religion named **Lama**.

In the maritime history of India, Odisha (ancient Kalinga) played a significant role in spreading Indian culture to other parts of the world. The picture of a Giraffe on the sun Temple of Konark speaks of the trade relation of Kalinga with African countries in the 13th Century. The picture of elephants in Odisha temple being carried by a boat speaks of the vigorous internal maritime activity. The maritime trade has been entrenched in the socio cultural and religious life of Odisha for centuries. The traditions like **Taapoi episode of Khudurukuni Osha, Nisha Mangala Osha, Somanatha brata katha, Boita Bandana on the next day morning of the Diwali and morning of Kartika Purnima**, the festivals like **Panchuka** of Kartika Purnima and **Bali Yatra**, imprint clear testimony of our glorious maritime heritage. In the morning of Kartik purnima, Miniature Boitas are used today as children's toys during the Odia festival of Bali Jatra. Baliyatra literally means a 'Voyage to Bali', and celebrates an ancient maritime tradition and the connection with Bali. During the ceremony, men, women and children are dressed up in traditional costumes launch tiny boats made from banana peels, paper or solapitha with lighted lamps inside, and **Odia women** perform the rite of '**Boita Bandâna**'. The festival is similar to the '**Masakapan Ke Tukad**' festival of **Bali**, to the '**Loi Krathong**' festival of **Thailand (ritualistic floating of model boats)**, to the '**Bon Om Touk**' Water Festival of **Cambodia**, and to the '**That Luang**' Festival of **Laos** all of which involve around the same time of the year.

Odisha is the only state, where three types of Brhami script likes- PreBrhmi, Brahmi & Post Brahmi have been discovered. We have seen the most ancient odia script found in more than 5775 cave paintings belonging to period 1 to 15 millennium B.C. has been found in 55 cave's of Odisha including Gudahandi and Yogimatha. The script '**Ga**', and '**o**' (tha) was discovered from yogimatha rock painting of Nuapada district. In this rock Art a person with four animals and some alphabet create a word "Gaitha" (very popular Odia word at present 'Gotha' or 'group' in English). These alphabet have similarity with Dhauli and Jaugada Inscription of Ashok. It was the ancient form of Indian script and it is the first glimpse of possible origin of the Odia language and script. But Kharavel's Hatigumpha inscription (1st Century B.C.) is the real evidence of past Odia cultural, political, ritual and social status and it is the 1st poetic stake inscription. Though Ashok has created many rock edicts and inscription before Kharavela, yet his instructions for administration have

been written in a rude and choked language. On the other hand, the Hatigumpha inscriptions show the flexibility of a language in a sweet flow.

Main feature of this inscription was based on principles of Sanskrit poetic structure: such as-

*"Sadvanshah kshyatriya bâ pi dhirodâttah gunanwitâh I
Ekabanshodva bhupâhâ kulajâ bahabo pi Jâ II
Shrungarabirashantânâmekoangirasa ishyate I
Angâni sarbe<pi rasâha sarbe nâtakasandhyâhâ II
Itihâsodvabam bruttamânânyad bâ sajjanâshrayam I
Chatwarastasya bargahâ syusteshwekam cha phalam bhavet II
Âdya namaskriyashribâ bastunirddesha eba bâ I
Kwacinnindâ khalâdinâm satâm cha gunakirttinam II*

(Sâhitya darpan- Biswanâth kabirâj)

It means that such creations will be called as poem which Protagonist would be *Dhirodatta* belonging to an untouchable kshtriya. In Rasa (aesthetics) *Srunagâra* (Love, Attractiveness), *Vîra* (Heroic mood), *Sânta* (Peace or tranquility) among them one would be the main rasa and others are remain with them as usual. All aspects of drama, historic tales and other legendary folklores are present. The description of all the four fold-Dharma, Artha, Kama and Mokshya are still present here, but one should be given priority than other theme. At the beginning it should be written as respective, blissful and subject awareness with welfare of people being hatred towards evil and devotional towards sages/saints.

When Hatigumpha Inscription was created by Kharavela, all these principles were traced by him before, which has been followed by Rudradaman (Girinar inscription-150 A.D.), Samudragupta (Prayaga inscription-365 A.D), Kumargupta (Mandasore inscription-473A.D.) etc, created their own famous creativities in a decent poetic style on many rocks in Sanskrit language. The trend of writing was not obstructed after Kharavela. From Asanapata inscription in Keonjhar created by Satru Bhanja, (a warrior of Odisha) were engraved in the temple, Laxminarayana of Simhanchalam by Mukunda Deva are such examples. At the beginning, these inscriptions had a dynamic journey from Pali to Sanskrit. They have not lost the sense of Odia. Therefore, Odia language, literature, script and culture are based on the discussions on these inscriptions. The words written in the Hatigumpha Inscriptions are still used in the present day Odia language.

The earliet literary evidence is provided by Boudh monks (8-12th Century A.D.) Short poems written by Kanhupâ, Luipâ, Sabairpâ, Gunduripâ, Sântipâ, Bhusukupâ, are collection in '**Âscharjya arjyâchaya**' popularly known as **Boudhagâna O Dohâ**, written in the proto-language of Odia. Although **Boudhagâna O Doha** is claimed as the precursor of Odia, Assami, Bengali and Maithili, which is close to odia the eldest of the eastern languages. These also sung of Bajrajana, Sahajajana, tantrajana etc., the heart land of which was ancient Odisha. The pre-Sarala literary scene was SoRasâ, Chautisâ, Webi, Loli, Gitâ, samhîtâ, Mâdalâ Pânji, Nâtha literature. One of the most important pre-Sarala literary texts was Bichitra Ramayana by Sidheswar Das. The use of Prakrit words in abundance gives evidence of its pre-Sârala composition. This was so popular that it was translated in to Telugu by six eminent Telugu poets, one after another. Similarly, Sarala Das was the major creator and consolidator of the Odia Language and the Poet Laurate of Odia Literature. His Mahabharata is not a translation but a transcreation. Many new stories with local flavour have been added to the Mahabharata. Yudhistira had married to the daughter of an odia merchant of Jajpur described in Sarala Mahabharata. His Laxminarayana Bachanika and Laxmi puran of Balaram Das is the manifesto of feminism book in all over Indian literature of that time. The popularity of

Sarala Das's Mahâbhârata was translated into Bengali. Odia Bhagavata was one of the most popular puran all over eastern India. Assamese poet Bhaktakabi **Shankar Dev** has not only popularized Odia "*Bhagavat*" in Assamese language, but also has played a key role in establishing the spiritual centres across Assam called "**Namaghara**" on the lines of Odia "**Bhagavat Tungi**". After 158 years of the release of Bhagavat in Odia, Sanatan Chakroborti was inspired to translate Bhagavata in Bengali. But the 10th "**skanda**" of the Odia Bhagavata couldn't be translated in Bengali as he found the then Bengali language was in appropriate to express the exact devotional meanings of the particular "skanda". Towards the 17th century, a different literature equivalent with Sanskrit was evolved. Kabi Samrat **Upendra Bhanja** created many words that make Odia language and literature more developed. His multi-meaning sentences are extremely difficult to be translated into other language.

Odia "chhanda" is different from Sanskrit chhanda "**matra brutta**" Odia "**akshyara brutta**" is locally named Dandi brutta. The two great odia epic Sarala *Mahabharat* and Balaram Das's *Dandi Ramayan* were written in this brutta. Dandi brutta is dissimilar number of letters per line in a pada, where as matra brutta is based on guru (High) – laghu (Low) matra equality in a pada.

The period of 300 years after the *Sangam* era in Tamil literature is known as *Dark Age*. However, there is no such 'Dark Age' found in case of Odia language, because the political instability created by foreign rulers had failed to choke the literary development of Odisha after the demise of Kharavelian Empire. Although Pali language was replaced by Sanskrit through non-Odia rulers during this intervening period, Odisha's literary activities were kept uninterrupted, traces of which can be clearly identified from various rock inscriptions as well as scholarly manuscripts created during the period.

After this discussion, finally we may conclude :

1. Odia has considerable antiquities. It predates the literatures of most modern Indian languages by more than a thousand years. Its oldest work, the Hatigumpha Inscription, dated back to about 1st Century B.C., and the **Boudhagâna O Dohâ**, the first ever possible literary expression of Odia literature, contain the earlist example of Odia language used in tantric experssion of Mahayani Boudhic tradition.

2. Odia constitutes the literary tradition indigenous to India that is not derived from Sanskrit. Indeed, its literature arouse before the influence of Sanskrit became strong and so is qualitatively different from Sanskrit or other Indian languages. It has its own rhetoric theory, its own esthetics, and, above all, a large body of unique literature. It shows a sort of Indian sensibility that is quite different from Sanskrit or other Indian languages, and it contains rich and vast intellectual tradition.

3. The quality of classical Odia literature is such that it is fit to stand before the great literatures of Sanskrit and other languages. The subtlety and profundity of works, their varied scope, and universality qualify Odia to stand as one of the great classical traditions. Everyone knows that the Bhagabata & the Mahabharata, both are the world's greatest works on ethics. There is no facet of human existence that is explored and illuminated by this great literature.

Finally, Odia culture is one of the primary independent sources of modern Indian culture and tradition. It is equally important that the great sacred works Odia Bhagavata and Odia Baishnavism (Janya mishra Bhakti Marga), beginning with the Jagannath Anthologies, have undergone the development of modern Hinduism. Their ideas were taken into the Bhagavata Purana, Laxmi Puran and other texts, and spread all over India. Sanskrit as the source of the modern Indo-Aryan languages, classical Odia is the source language of Thai, Tebet, Simhali, Bengali and Assamess. As Sanskrit is

the most conservative and least changed of the Indo-Aryan languages, Odia is the conservative and advanced updated language as well that linguists must understand its nature and development.

Unlike the other modern languages of India, Odia meets each of these requirements. It is extremely old (According to L.S.S O' Malley, as old as Latin and Vedic Sanskrit); it arose as an entirely independent tradition, with almost no influence from Sanskrit or other languages; and its ancient literature is indescribably vast and rich.

A formal notification recognizing the classicality of Odia language would be helpful in conducting in-depth researches with global input into the Proto-history of Odia language, and Odia as a nation plays a very prominent role in ancient India and its valor has been mentioned as matchless.

Swaviman Dibas-2013
Bhubaneswar

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MEMORANDUM

Submitted to
Ministry of Culture, Government of India
for granting
CLASSICAL STATUS to ODIA LANGUAGE

Presented by
Rama Chandra Khuntia, M.P. (RAJYASABHA)
and Other Parliament Members of Odisha

INSTITUTE OF ODIA STUDIES AND RESEARCH, Bhubaneswar
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KIS FOUNDATION, New Delhi ODIA BHASA SURAKSHYA AVIJANA, Bhubaneswar
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Action Committee for Classical Status to Odia Language

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| 13. Prof. A.K Pattanayak , former V.C, UUC, Bhubaneswar | Member |

MEMORANDUM

Prepared by

**Institute of Odia Studies and Research,
Bhubaneswar**

Drafting Committee

for

Classical Status to Odia Language

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