

10 September 2016



Sahitya Akademi

meet the author

Banshidhar Sarangi





almost defined his Age, God no longer seemed a secure refuge for humanity; he rather became a pitiable object of ridicule. 'Death' became a powerful religion in Banshidhar's poetry substituting God in many of his poems included in the first collection *Samaya Asamaya*.

But a determination to transcend 'Death' and find a celestial abode is clearly perceptible in his subsequent collections.

He achieves this, as J M Mohanty observes, by going "back to the atmosphere of ancient mystical poetry ... so that the modern futility can be reshaped and reformulated with greater certainty and hope." Many of the poems at the latter phase of his career affirm his faith that non-attachment and self abnegation are the essential panacea for all ill and suffering. The vibrant voice of a worldly mendicant reverberates in such poems.

Banshidhar succeeds in creating a new and fresh poetic philosophy causing a clash of *Prabruti-Nibruti* and *Saguna-Nirguna* in his second collection, *Sthabira Aswarohi* where the horse-rider is a symbolic portrayal of an impotent Time and Consciousness. An obsession with an ideal code of conduct required for the salvation of the soul is a recurrent pattern in many of the poems of Banshidhar's next collection of verses *Sabari Charya* for which he was awarded with Odisha Sahitya Akademi award in 1991. The poet realized that man must move higher, transcend the disintegrated consciousness of the present time, even Death, and reach a higher level of consciousness if he has to have

“His poetry is characterised by vivid imagery and a celebration of the traditional values of human life”. Thus wrote the noted poet Jayanta Mahapatra as he was referring to the distinctive features of the poetry of Banshidhar Sarangi that make him stand a class by himself. He surprises the readers with the wide-range of imagery he employs and the diversity of themes he explores, but more significantly, as Sitakant Mahapatra observes, “he writes powerfully on death and decaying tradition”, and “futility and hope finely blended characterise many of his poems.”

Born in the rural setting of the village Rayrang, some seven kilometers away from Khurda, Odisha in 1940, the early life of Banshidhar Sarangi is characterised by a struggle for education, and a fascination with the beautiful forms of Nature that filled the countryside. His inordinate struggle, before he found a job and rose to fame as a poet, generated in him a sense of futility of, and inevitability in human life, although a progressive note of optimism never left him in his poetic journey.

Perturbed by rending emotional distress and thwarted desires that

some peace. Integrating the consciousness of the contemporary life with our culture and tradition he was able to evolve a code of conduct that is unparalleled in modern Odia poetry .

Death – consciousness overcome, the poet now prepares himself, and so do the readers, to transcend to a heaven which is attained not after death, but here in this world by attaining culmination in meditation with this body. He now opens up new avenues of establishing link with the bodiless world that ultimately generates a feeling of bliss and fulfillment even amidst nothingness. In contemplating a celestial world in the midst of the quest of life lies the essential principle of the art of poetry. Banshidhar's subsequent collections, *Chhaya Darshan* and *Sunya Samhita O Anyanya Kabita* bear such spiritual vibrations. The poet transforms commonplace words into Mantras, and they become expansive as they are suffused with life.

Banshidhar's maturity of poetic craftsmanship and transcendental consciousness reach a culmination in his Sahitya Akademi award winning collections *Swarodaya*. Achieving ironic meanings for words by their unconventional use through word- imagery, the poet strives to find a new identity for Truth. He is now certain that by following the path of righteousness alone can man overcome his sense of helplessness, despair and alienation.

Banshidhar's latest poetry collection *Aau Kete Baata* contains some solemn and resigned proclamations borne out of the maturity and wisdom of old age. The poetic art in this collection shines finely than ever with simpler diction and richly suggestive imagery . The poems are suffused with delicate emotions, and are pleasant reading .

Apart fro writing poetry, Banshidhar has also edited a number of books and co-edited a few. His *Swarodaya* has been translated into Hindi



With wife Kabita



With daughter Ipsita in a poetry conference at Konark

by Rajendra Prasad Mishra, and many of his poems have been translated into English and published in book form.

With his penetrating vision and sensitive heart that enable him to transform ordinary experiences into extra-ordinary observations, Banshidhar Sarangi stands supreme as an Odia poet. Redefining myths and traditions in the context of contemporariness, he not only excels as a worthy inheritor of Odia poetic legacy, he also offers Odia poetry a new dimension and dynamism in the backdrop of Indian poetry.

A Select Bibliography

Poetry in Odia

- Samaya Asamay.* Cuttack : Lark Books, 1977.
Sthavir Aswarohi. Cuttack : Friends Publishers, 1980.
Sabari Charya. Cuttack : Friends Publishers, 1989.
Chhaya Darshan. Cuttack : Arya Prakashan, 1995.
Sunya Samhita O Anyanya Kavita.

- Cuttack : Arya Prakashan, 1998.
Swarodaya. Bhubaneswar : Apurba, 2004.
Aau Kete Bata. Bhubaneswar : Lekhalekhi, 2013.

In English

- Day In and Out* (Tr. Harisankar Acharya, Krushna Ch. Nayak, Samarendra Prasad Das and Nisamani Kar). New Delhi : Samkaleen Prakashan, 1984.
Poems (Tr. Jayanta Mahapatra) Bhubaneswar : Grossroots, 2008.

In Hindi

- Swarodaya* (Tr. Rajendra Prasad Mishra). New Delhi : Sahitya Akademi, 2016.

Critical Edition in Odia

- Rasa Panchadhyayi* (with Krushna Charan Sahoo). Cuttack : Books and Books, 1979.
Jagannath Dasanka Rachana Vali (with Kunja Bihari Mohanty). Bhubaneswar : Odisha Sahitya Akademi, 2000.
Jagannath Dasanka Bhagavat :



Receiving an award from Biju Patnaik, Ex-C.M. of Odisha

Dasam Skandha (Gopalila).
Cuttack: Arya Prakashan, 2001.

Compilation in Odia

Galpa : Aji O Kalir. Cuttack : Vidya
Mandir, 1976.

Se Yuga O E Yugar Kahani. Cuttack :
Jagannath Rath, 1984.

Padya Manjari (with Girish Chandra
Mishra). Bhubaneswar : Odisha
State Bureau of Text Book
Preparation & Production, 2000.

A Chronology

1940 Born on 4 December
1958 Passed Matriculation
1963 Passed B.A.
1966 Passed M.A. in Odia
1967 Joined Nimapara College as
a Lecturer
1970 Got Married to Kabita
Mishra
1982 Awarded D. Litt. Degree

1989 Awarded best Poet Award of
the Year by Sanibar Sahitya
Sandhya Samsad, Puri

1991 Received Odisha Sahitya
Akademi Award for *Sabari
Charya*

1994 Invited as a Poet to the Poetry
Reading Ceremony organised
by Sahitya Akademi and
Kalinga Sahitya Samaj at
Bramhapur

1994 Received Hrudvakya
Samman for Poetry

1995 Invited as a Poet in
Conference of Poets
organized by Zonal Cultural
Centre and Odisha Sahitya
Akademi in Bhubaneswar

1995 Attended the Seminar on
"Post-Independent Odia
Poetry" organised by Sahitya
Akademi and Brahmapur
University at Brahmapur

1996 Invited as a Poet to the "Poetry
Translation Workshop"
organized by Mahatma
Gandhi University, Kottayam,
Keral

1997 Awarded Atibadi Jagannath

- Das Samman by Sriksheetra
Lekhaka Sammukhya, Puri
- 1999 Awarded Bagmayee Samman
by Natua, Nimapara
- 2000 Retired as a Reader in Odia
- 2001 Invited as a Poet to the "All
India Kavi Sammelan"
organised by Dept. of
Tourism and Culture, Odisha,
Odisha Sahitya Akademi,
NBT of India and Sahitya
Akademi at Konark
- 2002 Awarded Konark Sahitya
Utsav Samman at Konark
- 2004 Invited as a Poet to the "Kavita
Ashar O Alochana Chakra" at
Jagdarpur, Chhatisgarh
organized by Odisha Sahitya
Akademi
- 2006 Received Sahitya Akademi
Award for *Swarodaya*
- 2007 Presided one session of
"National Festival of Poetry"
organised by Sahitya
Akademi at Shillong
(Meghalaya)
- 2008 Invited as a Poet to
"Kavisandhi" organized by
Sahitya Akademi in
Bhubaneswar
- 2008 Awarded "Kavi Ratnakar
Samman" by Sulekha
Sahitya Samskruti Parishad,
Puri
- 2008 Awarded "Pandit Godavarish
Samman, 2008" by
Godabarish Sahitya Sansad,
Bhubaneswar
- 2013 Awarded "Bramhotri
Mohanty Smruti Samman"
by Bramhotri -Bijay Krushna
Smruti Samsad, Puri.
- 2015 Awarded "Saraswata
Samman" by Odia Sahitya O
Samskruti Paishad, Puri
- 2015 Invited as Guest and Poet to
Konark Utsav Sahitya Ashar
at Konark organized by
Odisha Tourism
- 2015 Invited as a Poet to "Kavita
Pathotsav" at Lotus Resort,
Near Ramachandi (Konark)
organised by Odisha Sangeet
Natak Akademi and EZCC
- 2016 Invited Poet to the "Sarv
Bharatiya Kavita Ashar"
organised by Odisha Sahitya
Akademi, at Konark



At Kavisandhi in Bhubaneswar