



LEGAL, ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AND THE TYRANNY OF THE BRITISH RAJ EXPOSED BY FAKIR MOHAN SENAPATI IN *HIS SIX ACRES AND A THIRD*

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ABSTRACT

The present paper deals with the topic Legal, administrative system and the tyranny of the British Rule exposed by Fakir Mohan Senapati in his Six Acres and a Third. This novel is written in the 19th century. This novel is taken as a critique of social capital and colonial modernity in 19th century Orissa and includes so many social as well as legal matters that are quite common in Indian society especially in the illiterate rural set-up. It is a fact that this novel's literary innovations have changed Oriya literature forever and has revolutionized the society as well regarding such practices. There seems unjust in the British Raj, and also the grip of the powerful and strong men of the time on the poor and weaver class people.

Key words: British Raj, Legal, Administrative system, Zamindari, Realism.

INTRODUCTION

Six Acres and a Third was written in 19th century. It is an Indian novel which is narrated and expressed by Fakir Mohan Senapati. It is also known as the first Indian novel to deal with the exploitation of landless peasants by a feudal Lord in British India. The Author who has written this novel has been considered as the 'Father of Modern Oriya Literature'. Though, this classic Oriya novel is a wonder of 19th century literary realism, complex and sophisticated, it needs to be analyzed and explained in terms of social issues as well reality instead of merely holding up a mirror to it. It seems to be a mirror in which facts and reality appear. It is a fact that this novel's literary innovations have changed Oriya literature forever.



The said novel is taken as a critique of social capital and colonial modernity in 19th century Orissa. There are other sources which can be seen as varying to the form the origin and growth of this capital, entrance of beliefs, legends and other historical memories, and still land and landholdings are seen in the center to understanding this process. Here if readers try to find out the reference he or she can point out many references in the novel. They not only define but also support the very material conditions by which work is inspired as a fictional piece. Sisir Kumar Das has said Senapati's novel as,

"The result of the tradition of realism in modern Indian literature and it contains the elements of realism in varying degrees, and presents minute details of social life and economic hints regulating human relationships."
(Sisir Kumar Das, 296)

The beginning time or we can say arising time of the said novel *Six Acres and a Third* and in which it sets in colonial Indian Society in known decades of 19th century. Its theme sings the song of wealth and greed regarding property and theft. On one level it is the story in which land lord seems to be evil type natured. There is character in the novel who used to exploit poor as well as helpless peasants by using the new legal system with a view to correcting the property of others his name is given Ramchandra Mangaraj in this novel. But it is only a theme of novel. As the text unfolds, it shows some layers of meaning and suggestion. Toward the end of Mangaraj's story, law punishes him and we can hear and see the manner of Judge Sahib to order that his landed estate, his "Zamindari", be taken away. It is sold to a lawyer, who as rumor in the village has it, "will come with ten palanquins followed by five horses and two hundred foot-soldiers to take possession of Mangaraj's large estate." (25)

The ordinary villagers react to this news by reminding one another of an old saying: "O horse, what difference does it make to you if you are stolen by a thief? You do not get much to eat here; you will not get much to eat there. No matter who becomes the next master, we will remain his slaves. We must look after our own interests." (26)

By the point of view of the horse, this novel of Fakir Mohan Senapati is written and also the ordinary villager and the foot-soldier, in other words, it has the articulation of the labouring poor people of the world of the village. Though it contains a critique of British colonial rule, the novel offers a powerful reflection of many other forms of social and political authority as well. The thing which makes the novel unusual is that it's a critical vision is personified in its narrative style or mode, in the complex way the novel is narrated and also organized as a literary text. Senapati's novel looks like the representation of the height of the tradition of literary realism in 19th century Indian literature. But its realism is not easy or simple but complex and sophisticated.



The linguistic innovations in Oriya literature forever, and is inaugurated in this winder context with the help of these innovations as the Literature of Oriya can be changed forever, and has started the age of modern Oriya prose, but they are based in a vision of social equality and cultural self-rule, and this novel is certainly path breaking in this respect. There isn't any type of romance regarding nationalism in Senapati's life, and his conception of language was based on his progressive social vision.

There was a village named Govindpur in which Ramchandra Mangaraj lived and used to lend paddy and money to the inhabitants of village. Gradually he gathered lots of land by exploiting farmers and became a Zamindar and also combined immense property by quite unfair means. There also seemed one of the biggest Zamindar of village Midampur whose name was Sheikh Dildar Miam. He owned some land in Orissa and Ramchandra Mangaraj was land over with the work of collecting income from this Zamindari. Mangaraj got success in getting a loan-bond of thirty thousand rupees signed by the Mian when the latter was full of drunk, then legal action against him for recovery of the debt and finally secured possession of the Zamindari.

In this said novel a character was given whose name was Bhagia and here seemed to be a weaver and lived with his wife Saria in village Govindpur. This couple owned a very fertile piece of land covering six acres and a half. They were both not only simple but also innocent and God-fearing folk who lived with a strong desire of having child and used to pray for it. However, here there was a display of villagers' faith in the goddess:

"To thee O Goddess, who hath her house, under the tree in the form of stone, we bow down, we bow down, we bow down thou, who rideth earthen horses and elephants and giveth children to barren women and driveth away cholera, we bow down, we bow down, we bow down." (22)

Once Bhagia needed loan from Mangaraj and that was the reason why he approached Mangaraj as without money he would not be able to build a temple which would certainly not make Goddess happy. He implemented a loan-bond, advancing to Mangaraj his six and a half acres of land. In this scene we can see wicked Mangaraj because he did not give money but took possession of their land by using legal support of court and in this way their house started to be auctioned and demolished. They had some pets like cows, goats from which a cow Neta was taken away by force. As a result weaver got mad. His wife tried to commit suicide at Mangaraj's residence. The death of Saria was reported by the village Chowkidar to the police. So as a duty Daroga investigated everything and charged Mangaraj with murder. But he was found guilty of theft for having stolen the weaver-couple's cow and was taken to



the prison. His rapid fall and trouble, as well as his wife's death, made an agonizing tale. Mangaraj had a cruel maid-servant whose name was Champa. On the occasion of arresting Mangaraj she secured the key of his treasure chest, took away his entire valuable and made her way to Cuttak, accompanied by Govinda, who was a barber servant of Mangaraj. But in the greed of money Govinda killed Champa and became master of all the riches. In order to make himself secured, he was crossing the river in a boat when he panicked and drowned. This can be obviously a picaresque plot like all the earlier novels used to be. It may be done well by modern readers and not to expect the neat inter-woven plots of the early 20th century before these also succumbed to the "stream of consciousness", etc.

The style is didactic and short as it was the fashion of the times; speech and proverbs were current coin. The author has shown how the man is destined in order to suffer inevitably the consequences of his evil deeds. Human natures are deeply analyzed by him when caught himself in problems with sins and sorrows and when he is in union.

Sarcastic satire on the shortcomings of contemporary society and some sharp criticism of British exploitation are features of the novel which may seem dated now; but when Fakir Senapati had written in 1898, it was "Pure dynamite". In particular he brought out the magic details of a legal and administrative system under which many poor people lost their lives, fleeced by greedy landlords. There are also bad lawyers and corrupted policemen involved. With a view to reaching English knowing readers, the novel has been translated by two of the author's relatives and they know the inward and outward world of the author and are thus highly educated as well as qualified. There seems unjust in the British Raj, and also the grip of the powerful and strong men of the time on the poor and weaver class people.

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