

Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu as a Lyricist: A Brief Study

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Abstract

Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu is widely recognized as the creator of the Ol Chiki script and a pioneer of Santali literature. Beyond his contribution as a script inventor and social reformer, he also made remarkable contributions as a lyricist. His songs and lyrical compositions became an important medium for spreading education, cultural identity, social awareness, and moral values among the Santali community. This paper briefly examines Pandit Raghunath Murmu's role as a lyricist and the literary significance of his lyrical works. He was also a distinguished playwright, writer, poet, linguist, carpenter, weaver, social reformer, religious guru, priest and lyricists. As a lyricist, Pandit Raghunath Murmu made a remarkable contribution to Santali literary tradition. His lyrical compositions served as powerful tools for spreading education, awakening social consciousness, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting moral and ethical values among the Santali people. Through his songs, he expressed the importance of unity, self-respect, knowledge, social progress, and the preservation of indigenous traditions. His lyrics reflected the hopes, struggles, beliefs, and aspirations of the Santali community, making them an integral part of Santali cultural expression. Pandit Raghunath Murmu's literary creations were deeply connected with the social and cultural realities of his time. His plays, poems, songs, and writings encouraged people to develop awareness about education, language preservation, and community development. As a visionary thinker and creative artist, he used literature not only as a form of artistic expression but also as a means of social transformation. The significant role of Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu as a lyricist and explores the literary, cultural, and social importance of his lyrical works. It highlights how his songs contributed to the growth of Santali literature and strengthened the cultural identity of the Santali community. His extraordinary achievements in multiple fields have made him a shining star of Santali literature and an enduring symbol of linguistic pride, cultural preservation, and social awakening.

Keywords: - Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu, Lyricist, Santali Literature, Ol Chiki, Cultural Identity.

1. Introduction

Language and literature are essential components of cultural identity. For indigenous communities, literary traditions serve not only as forms of artistic expression but also as instruments for preserving history, values, and collective memory. The Santal community of India possesses a rich oral tradition consisting of songs, folk narratives, myths, and rituals. In the twentieth century, Pandit Raghunath Murmu emerged

as a major cultural figure who transformed the linguistic and literary landscape of the Santals. Pandit Raghunath Murmu occupies a unique place in Santali literature. His literary vision extended beyond writing books and creating scripts; he used songs and lyrical compositions to communicate with ordinary people. Through simple language, rhythmic expression, and cultural imagery, he transformed literature into a tool for social awakening. His lyrical writings reflected the traditions, beliefs, emotions, and aspirations of Santali society and encouraged people to value their language and identity.

Raghunath Murmu was born on 5 May 1905 (Baisakhi Purnima/Buddha Purnima), in the Dandbose (Dahardihi) village (near Rairangpur town) of Mayurbhanj State, India. He is the son of Nandlal Murmu and Salma Murmu. His father, Nandlal Murmu, was a village head, His most notable work is the development of Ol Chiki script itself. He is regarded as father of Santali play as his play Bidu Chandan is the first play in Santali. Guru Gomke was a distinguished writer of Children Literature. He has written many His published literary works are Hor Serenj (1936), Baha Serenj (1954), Jharkhand Sangeet, Hital (1966), Lakchar Serenj, *Drama book* - Bidu Chandan (1942), Kherwar Bir (1952), Darege Dhon (1948), Sido Kanku Santal Hool (1996) (patriotic drama). books for children, such as Ol Uprum, *Ol Chemed* (primary syllabus of Ol Chiki), *Parsi Poha* (essential elements of Ol Chiki), *Ronor* (Santali grammar), *Elkha* (Santali mathematics). Parsi Apad etc. *Hital* (scripture of evolution of the Earth and human being of Kherwals myth), His first book is the *Hor Serenj'* and his first play is the *Bidu Chandan*.

Among other literary works of Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu, present paper only focused on the songs composed by Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu. The life of human beings has a close association with song. Sorrows, happinesses, misery, love, anger, agitation etc are expressed through songs. It is saying in Santali that "Talk transforms into tone. That means, where talk ends, song starts there. Song is a such an art of expression that a long episode of story could be expressed in a few stanzas. Every literature of the world was begun with songs and poetries. In this way. song occupies a significant place in Santali literature.

2. Review of Literature:

Ram Chandra Murmu-2004 **“Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu”** A Santali Book on the Biography of Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunth Murmu, the inventor of Santali script “Ol CHIKI”

Dr. Duli Hembrom, in-2019 has researched on the topic **“Pandit Raghunath Murmu jiyon kardhani”** award of Ph.D. from Vidyasagar University. she has written about life story is about Guru Gomker's life and work. Arts and Humanities Language and Linguistics Pandit Raghunath Murmu

Tudu, Manoj Kumar, 2022 has researched on the topic **“A study of Pt Raghunath Murmu s contribution in Santali literature”**. award of Ph.D. from Visva-Bharti University Pandit Raghunath Murmu and Ol Chiki Script, Necessity regarding invention of Ol Chiki Script, Santali Culture and Ol Chiki, Contribution of Pandit Raghunath Murmu to Santali literature.

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are:

1. To examine Pandit Raghunath Murmu’s contribution as a Santali lyricist.

2. To identify the major themes reflected in his songs.
3. To analyze the literary features of his lyrical compositions.
4. To understand the role of his songs in preserving Santali cultural identity.
5. To highlight the relevance of his lyrical works in contemporary society.

4. Methodology:

This study follows a qualitative and analytical research method. It is based on the study of available literary sources, books, articles, cultural documents, and discussions related to Santali literature and Pandit Raghunath Murmu's contributions. The research uses textual analysis to examine the themes, language, and cultural elements present in his lyrical works. Secondary sources related to Santali history and indigenous literature have also been consulted to understand the broader cultural context.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu's Contribution as a Lyricist: -

1. **Hor Serenj** – collection of songs, noted as one of his early significant contributions to literature. "Hor Serenj" is known as the first poetry collection by Pandit Raghunath Murmu. It is an anthology of songs that portrays Santali folk music, culture, and traditions, capturing aspects of Santal life—such as nature, love, culture, labor, religion, and social unity. Through these songs, he popularized the Ol Chiki script and ushered in a new era for Santali literature. Raghunath Murmu's poetry book "Hor Serenj" was published in the Bengali script in 1936. Later, the book *Hor Sereng* was published in the Ol Chiki script in 1993. It contained with songs of different Dong, Langne, Dahar, Jatur etc. Besides these, it contains Bir Serenj³, Binti Serenj and Bhandan Song. At the very beginning of the book, there are hymn, meditation and healing songs.
2. **Lakchar Serej** – Pandit Raghunath Murmu composed these poems to foster a cultural awakening within the Santal community. It was published by ASECA, Rairangpur, in 1988 and printed at Dulai Printers in Jamshedpur. 'Lakchar Serenj' is a collection of forty-two short poems authored by Pandit Murmu.
3. **Baha Serenj** – In the Santali language, the word 'Baha' means 'flower'. The Baha festival is a major spring festival of the Santal community, dedicated to nature, new blossoms, and the renewal of life. The traditional songs sung during this festival are known as 'Baha Geet' or 'Baha Serenj'. This book was published by 'All Samiti', Rairangpur, in 1954.
4. **Adivasi Rak Andal** – Subsequently, a small book of poems titled "Adivasi Ra Andol" was published in the Bengali script in 1947. The book chronicles the courageous movements launched by tribal communities against the injustices, exploitation, and encroachment upon their forests and lands under British rule. This collection of poems gives expression to the heroism, sacrifice, self-respect, and yearning for freedom that characterized that struggle. These poems narrate the story of the tribal people's lives, their culture, their love for nature, and their indomitable struggle against injustice. . It deals with plight of indigenous people and attainment of relief from deplorable condition.
5. **Jharkhand Sangeet'** – Guru Gomke authored a small songbook titled 'Jharkhand Sangeet' in the Bengali script, which was subsequently published by the 'Ol Press'. He published this booklet with the aim of encouraging the Santal community—who were accustomed to using the Bengali script—to successfully learn the 'Ol Chiki' script. The 'Jharkhand Sangeet' booklet contains 12

songs. This clearly indicates that Guru Gomke possessed extensive knowledge of the Bengali language and script as well.

Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu has composed altogether five song books in Santali. Not only his song books, but also different style of songs are traceable in his plays. In drama contains many songs.

Discussion

Pandit Raghunath Murmu's contribution as a lyricist demonstrates the power of literature in cultural preservation. At a time when indigenous languages faced challenges, his songs helped create awareness about Santali identity and encouraged people to value their linguistic heritage. His lyrical works represent a combination of artistic creativity and social responsibility. Unlike literature created only for aesthetic pleasure, Murmu's songs carried a larger mission of community development. They connected traditional knowledge with modern awareness. The importance of Murmu's lyrics lies in their ability to preserve collective memory. They continue to inspire contemporary Santali writers, musicians, and cultural activists. According to the assessment of literary thoughts, songs of Pandit Raghunath Murmu can be classified into five categories. They are (i) Thought of Divinity (ii) Thought of Love (iii) Social Thought (iv) Literary Thought (v) Thought of Loneliness.

1. **Thought of divinity** – As per the belief of human beings, God is the creator. He is the saviour and also the life taker, God is present everywhere; on the land, in the sky and in wind. God's kindnesses, affection and greatness are revealed in the songs of Guru Gomke. Thus –

“Hahala ge jeget tola
Hahala ge jiwi tola
Nam do Chando nonkam daleya
Cheka te do jiwi marsal
Nehor Chando dale nemang me.”
...
joTo pala nam Do menam
joTo koge namdom nenel
nam do jotom badaya
‘menam geya’ baleng menma
Nenel kanam baleng rolma
Nehor Chando, nuyhar nemang me.”¹

Meaning- Wonderful world, wonderful life, how much your straight. How can bright my life I pray you God, please give me straight, everywhere have you, you can see over world, you know everything, I say that you have, you see everything, give me reminder,

As a lyricist, Raghunath Murmu composed songs that we pray to God to express our love, gratitude, and faith. Prayer helps us thank God for His blessings, ask for guidance and strength, and seek comfort during difficult times. It also brings peace to our hearts and helps us become kinder, wiser, and more hopeful in our daily lives.

“Chando bonga thumad bona

¹. Murmu, Pandit Raghunath. *Hor Serenj*. 2018, p. 5.

Manmi rebo Janam ena

Ma.nmi leka Taken bo rikaya”²

God bless us, we are born as human beings, and we stay human beings. Our greatest responsibility is to never lose our humanity.

2.Thought of Love: - His poetry and literary work often connect love with nature, community, cultural identity, and human relationships. In this sense, it can mean love for one’s people, language, land, and Santali culture. He presents love as a deep attachment to one’s people, motherland, language, traditions, and natural environment. His writings encourage people to respect their culture and remain united with their community. Nature also has an important place in his expression of love, as the hills, forests, rivers, and village life are closely connected with the lives of the Santhal people. Thus, Murmu’s thought of love reflects humanity, cultural pride, unity, and harmony with nature.

Such as- “negang na.pung sa.ri Chando bara ba.ri

Gating tuluj tokoy barabarig

Jiwi bugi ba.lij ga.ting e tinguna

Jiwi bugi balij ga.ting natang

Nijag jiwi dore ga.ting tire”³

Translate -God is equal Parent, but who is equal my husband. The husband stands in joy and sorrow. My life is in my husband’s hands. That means God is an equal parent to all of us, but no one is equal to my husband. My husband stands by me through both joy and sorrow. He supports me in every situation, and I trust him with my life. My husband is my strength, my companion, and an important part of my life.

3. Social Thought :

Not only the love of lovers is reflected in the songs of Guru Gomke but also the love for nation, love for society and love for own mother tongue are reflected. Guru Gomke has composed –

“Dare Gujug Kan Njelte

Miru Chene Rag Dada

Daya Haya Ge

Gujuk Kan Abowa

Jati Dhorom Dale

Chedah Babon Rag Dada

Abo Ona Njelte?”⁴

Translate- seeing the tree dying, O brother, parrot is crying piteously, The tree of our race and religion is dying, why are we not crying seeing that.

². Murmu, Pandit Raghunath. *Lakchar Serenj*. 1988, p. 7.

³. Murmu, Pandit Raghunath. *Hor Serenj*. 2018, p. 22.

⁴ Murmu, Pandit Raghunath. *Lakchar Serenj*. 1988, p. 13.

That means- When a parrot sees the tree dying, it cries with great sorrow because the tree is its home and shelter. It means a place or thing, that gives protection from bad weather or danger. In the same way, if the traditions, values, culture, and identity of our family or religion are disappearing, we should also feel that pain and care deeply about protecting them. Mankind has to come forward actively for the sake of protection of society and community. Not only in words, they have to be proved by their activities. Guru Gomke has given these messages through the songs

4.Literary Thought:

Not only mother tongue, a distinct and appropriate script is also essential for writing a language, because language, religion and script are the identity of a community. One who has no language, no script and no religion, he has no identity. These dictum of Guru Gomke is portrayed in his songs. Thus –

“Ol menag tama
rol menag tama
Dharam menag tama
amho menam
ol lem ad lere
rol em adle
dhoram em ad lere
am hom adog aa”⁵

Translate - You have your scripts, you have your mother tongue, you have your religion, that is why you are there, if you lose your letters, if you lose your mother tongue. If you lose your religion. Then, you will be lost forever. Then, you will be lost forever.

Meaning: As your written literature is alive, your language is alive, similarly your religion is alive, so your status is alive. But if your writing is lost, your language will be lost and if your religion is lost, you will also be lost. He pointed out that language is a means to bring unity among all. Language and literature bind a nation in the thread of unity. In this regard, the call of Pandit Murmu has been heartwarming.

“Al da barahi kana
abay tal dahay bana
masal hartey ar idi ban-a”⁶

translate- scripts is rope. We bind us together. it bright our life and future .

Means that “script” or writing is like a rope that connects and binds people together. It preserves our thoughts, culture, traditions, and values, helping future generations stay connected to their roots and creating a brighter future.

⁵ . Murmu, Pandit Raghunath. *Lakchar Serenj*. 1988, p. 1.

⁶ . Murmu, Pandit Raghunath. *Lakchar Serenj*. 1988, p. 9.

5.Thought of Cultural:

The lyrical works of Guru Gomke played an important role in strengthening cultural consciousness among Santali people. His songs supported the spread of literacy and encouraged younger generations to preserve their Cultural heritage.

“ Dhoram Reyag Handi
Nu Dono Nuy Ge
Athali Nu Do Menkhan
Bange Bugiya
Jiwi Re Holmo Re
Bis Leka Kami
Jokha Jani Ran Leka
Nu Gebo Nuy Ma|”⁷

Pandit Murmu’s reformist mindset is reflected in the book ‘Lakchar Serenj’. His primary objective was to provide a new direction to society and establish it on a new path. It is observed that ‘Handia’ (traditional rice beer) is used for worshipping deities during festivals, and there is a prevalent custom of consuming it as ‘bhogo’ (sacred offering) after the worship. However, as the consumption of Handia has evolved into a form of indulgence over time, it has begun to exert a detrimental impact on society, causing significant harm. Consequently, the call to restrict the use of Handia solely to religious contexts draws everyone's attention.

Major characteristics of his lyrical works include:

1. Pandit Raghunath Murmu was an important lyricist of modern Santali literature.
2. His songs played a significant role in promoting Santali cultural identity.
3. His lyrics combined traditional values with messages of social development.
4. His literary contribution extended beyond the creation of Ol Chiki.
5. His songs remain relevant as expressions of indigenous pride and cultural continuity.
6. Promotion of Santali language and Ol Chiki script.
7. Preservation of indigenous traditions and cultural values.
8. Encouragement of education and literacy.
9. Social reform and community awareness.
10. Use of simple, musical, and expressive language.

His songs often appeared in literary and dramatic works and became effective instruments for reaching rural communities.

Conclusion:

Pandit Raghunath Murmu, popularly known as Guru Gomke, was a visionary cultural leader whose contribution to Santali literature extends beyond language development. As a lyricist, he transformed songs into powerful tools of cultural preservation, education, and social awareness. His lyrical works

⁷. Murmu, Pandit Raghunath. *Lakchar Serenj*. 1988, p. 5.

reflect the spirit of the Santal community and represent the struggle for identity and recognition. Through his songs, Murmu created a lasting literary legacy that continues to influence generations. A deeper academic study of his lyrical contributions will further enrich the understanding of indigenous literature in India. Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu should be remembered not only as the creator of Ol Chiki script but also as an influential lyricist in Santali literature. Through his lyrical compositions, he combined literature, education, and cultural identity. His songs continue to inspire Santali society and remain an important part of its literary heritage.

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