



“Contribution of Haripada Dan - In the Field of Purulia’s Education”

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Abstract: In the nineteenth century, social reformers, patriotic and education thinkers were born in India. Haripada Dan is the name of such a famous social reformer of the Manbhum district (Purulia). Although he was born in an ordinary family, Purulia is still famous for his activities. A giant socialist, educationist and patriotic man like him is the pride of Purulia district. He took education to the grass-root level in Purulia at a time when the people of Purulia were very backward during the British rule. Haripada Dan’s name is remembered for women’s education, adult education and establishing library in Manbhum district (Purulia).

Keywords: Haripada dan, Education thinker, Manbhum district (Purulia), social activities.

I. Introduction:

The name of Purulia district was Manbhum district which was once a part of the state of Orissa and Bihar. Later the district was included in the state of Bihar and on November 1, 1956, a part of Manbhum district was included in West Bengal as Purulia. Needless to say, this district was first established through the language movement after independence.

The nineteenth century initiated an unforgettable chapter in the history of Bengal from various angles. Similarly, Haripada Dan is a glorious chapter in the history of Purulia District. Although Haripada Dan was not born here, his entire activities took place on the soil of Purulia. He was born on 9 December 1882 at Sonamukhi in Bankura District in a very ordinary family. He was ten years old when father Babulal Dan and mother Samtamayee devi moved to Purulia. At this time there was a huge opportunity of employment in Purulia. This is why many people from surrounding districts like Bankura, Medinipur, Burdwan come to Purulia. Babulal Dan started living near the present Purulia station. The ancestral home of Dan family is situated near Purulia railway station and migrant workers of that lived nearby these places. In memory of Haripada Babu this road named as Haripada Dan Road.

Unfortunately, in 1897, Haripada Dan’s father died. At just 15 years old, all the family responsibilities fell on him. He did choose the path of working life at a very young age to support his family. Although he could not cross the school line due to family responsibilities at an early age, he learned to read and write on his own. He could understand English very little. Haripada Dan’s bricks business was very popular at that time. Later his business started to grow. Haripada Dan lived a very ordinary life. He died on 16th July, 1938 due to physical illness. What he did for the immortal Purulia district will forever be remembered.

II. Rationale of the study:

Throughout the ages, there have been individuals those who have made a significant contribution to society and nation. Although there is no such chapter in the history of some individuals, their activities are undeniable. Haripada Dan is a man whose name is not on the pages of history, but his work is reflected in Purulia’s chest. The present study is very significant, because we will be able to know the contribution of Haripada Babu to the emergence of education in Purulia as a backward district.

III. Haripada dan’s philosophy of life:

Haripada dan was a very simple man. He also loves to live a normal life. His noble qualities are reflected on his social activities. Among the aspects that promoted his life ideals are the following –

- **Service to humanity:** Haripada Babu believes that God is the temple of humanity. He devotes his entire life in the service of humanity. He was respected by all people for his humane attitude. He always stood by the poor people and helped them financially. There are many cases where he donates generously to distressed families.
- **Patriotic:** He was as compassionate and patriotic as ever. At that time whole of India was plagued by British rule. At that time Swadeshi movement was formed in Purulia. But due to the repressive policy of the British, they could not run their

activities permanently in any places. He understood that freedom was needed to be saved from the British, so he handed over his own farm house at Telkal para to the leaders of the Swadeshi movement and took charge of their expenditure.

- **Social Work:** Haripada babu was deeply involved in social work all his life. He used to spend most of his income in social service. Both money and land have been donated equally for social work.
- **Cultural activities:** Cultural activities such as theatre performance, opera, folk songs were his favourite pastime. In 1928, Haripada babu arranged for the music show of Charan poet Mukunda das for common people of Purulia. At that time, Haripada babu was patron of a cultural institution in the Purulia town called PMI. Acting was always practiced here, Haripada Babu used to perform there with the local youth.

IV. Contribution in The Field of Purulia's Education:

In this time Purulia's Education was confined to only a handful aristocrats' families. The common man had an indifferent attitude towards education in Purulia during this time. In such situation, he had done a lot to make education universal. The initiatives taken by Haripada Babu to take the education system forward in Purulia district are as follows –

- **Adult Education:**

“Adult Education may be defined broadly as to include all instructions, formal or in formal imparted to adults. In India it has two aspects (i) education of those adults who never any schooling; (ii) continuation of education of adults”.

- S.N MUKHARJI

The term of 'adult education' is the education of grown-up men and women who could not get formal education in the early years of their lives. It has some other connotations such as adult literacy. The literacy which enables a person to function as a literate in his social and professional life. Basically, adult education mastery of 3 R's (reading, writing and arithmetic).

Hari pada Babu realized that social and economic freedom is not possible unless we achieve education. This is so because illiteracy is the root cause for all ignorance and superstitions. Progress and development in all aspects cannot be imagined without literacy in Purulia. He took an unimaginable initiative to bring education to every common people in Purulia. He also announced in all part of the then Manbhum district that special prizes would be awarded to all the students who could educate ten people per village in basic education.

Fancy thinking like this for eradicating illiteracy is really admirable, that is why Ramananda Chattopadhyay, the then 'Prabasi' editor of the famous Bengali newspaper, especially praised the initiative of Haripada Babu.

- **Women education:**

Women play significant role in the social, culture and economic life of every nation. Women education becomes very essential because mother is the first teacher of her child. A good mother is equal to hundred teachers. But that time huge gap between the men and women in our Purulia. Haripada Babu realised that education of girls is very essential for the elimination of gender inequality. So Haripada Babu was always striving for the girls to strengthen their position in the society through education.

There was no separate girls' school in the then Purulia. In 1930, with the initiative and cooperation of Haripada Babu, a girls' school named his mother shantamayee was built on the old Manbazar road in Purulia. It is well known as the renowned girls' school of the district. The establishment of this girl's school is considered as the best achievement of Haripada Babu's life.

- **Establishment of Library:**

The library is a centre place of the intellectual and linguistic world, where knowledge-seeking people expand the scope of their knowledge.

Although there was a library called Sahitya Mandir in Purulia at that time, it did not have a permanent home. Haripada Babu to perpetuate this library, he builds the then Purulia municipality with one bigha of land and a library house. This library is the seat of education and culture of whole Manbhum (Purulia). The library was later renamed Haripada Sahitya Mandir (1927).

V. Conclusion:

Haripada Babu's way of life especially influenced Purulia's developing. His contribution brought great changes in the Purulia Education. His main mantra was to enlighten the common people of backward Purulia district in the light of education. Needless to say, Haripada Babu was not educated in traditional education but was one of the architects of the Purulia education system. A great man like this can never die, he is still alive in the heart of every Purulia resident.

“If you plan for a year, plan a seed

If for ten years, plant a tree

If for a hundred years, teach the people”

- Kouan Tzu

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