



सत्यमेव जयते

Hon'ble Governor of Andhra Pradesh

Sri Biswa Bhusan Harichandan

participates as Chief Guest at

the memorial function of Adikabi Sarala Das

organized by Aadikabi Sarala Das Sanskrutika Parishadat

6.30 PM on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2020

at Samadhi Pith, Munigosain Math, Tentulipada, Tritol, Jagatsinghpur, Odisha

Guests on the dais, friends from media, Ladies and Gentlemen. Good evening to you all.

It gives me immense pleasure to be here amongst you all on the occasion of 'Shradha Utsab of Adikabi Sarala Das', the Father of Odia Language and Literature.

The 'Shradha Utsab of Adikabi Sarala Das' is being celebrated every year on the Magasaptami Day every year at his Samadhi Pitha, since past hundreds of years and is attended by thousands of lovers of Odia language and literature.

Adikabi Sarala Das was one of the great scholars of Odia literature whose work formed a perennial source of information for succeeding generations. He was the first scholar who wrote his works in Odia in the 15th century AD. His early name was Siddheswar Parida, later he was known as Sarala Das by the boon of goddess Sarala. Adikabi Sarala Das had no systematic early education, and what he achieved through self-education was attributed to the grace of Sarala, goddess of devotion and inspiration. Though his early name was Siddheswara Parida, he came to be known as Sarala Dasa, or 'by the boon of Sarala'.

There are several indications in the epic Mahabharata written by him that he served as a soldier in the army of the Gajapati King of Odisha.

Sarala Das spent his last time at Tentuliapada with Munigoswain Math, which marks as the traditional spot, where he composed his works.

Apart from the three books for which he is best known - Mahabharata, Vilanka Ramayana and Chandi Purana. Adikabi Sarala Das also wrote the book Laxmi Narayana Vachanika.

The Adi Parva Mahabharata opens with a long invocation addressed to the Lord Jagannatha of Puri, from which it is known that Sarala Das started writing his Mahabharata in the reign of Kapileswar, otherwise known as Kapilendra, the famous Gajapati king of Odisha (AD 1435–67).

He tells us that Maharaja Kapilesvara with innumerable offerings and many a salute was serving this great deity and hereby destroying the sins of the Kali age.

Though Sarala Das followed the main outline of the Sanskrit Mahabharata in writing the Odia Mahabharata, it is often said that he added to it, the stories of his own creation and various other matters known to him. In the final form Adikabi Sarala Das's Mahabharata is a new creation analogous to Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa based on the Ramayana.

The Chandi Purana was based on the well-known story of Durga killing Mahishasura given in Sanskrit literature but here also the poet chose to deviate from the original at several points. His earliest work, Vilanka Ramayana, was a story of the fight between Rama and Shahasrasira Ravana.

The verse of Sarala Das is simple, forceful and musical, without any artificiality. Applying colloquial words for his poetical purpose, his writing was free from Sanskritisation. His work can be seen as adapting the popular

oral conventions of earlier Odia folk songs which were used in folk dances such as the Ghoda-nacha, Dandanacha and Sakhinacha.

One metrical peculiarity of these songs is that both the lines of a verse do not contain an equal number of letters though the last letters of both the lines produce the same sound. All Sarala Dasa's works were composed with this metrical peculiarity, and so the metre used by him can be regarded as a direct descendant of that used in the folk songs.

By the fifteenth century the Odia language had assumed its modern form and had become ripe for literary compositions.

Sarala Das was motivated by a strong religious zeal to compose religious books in a language intelligible to all and to make them available to the general public in Odisha.

Adikabi Sarala Das often said that he composed his poems for the benefit of "human beings."

Adikabi Sarala Das's immense contribution to Odia literature during the 15th century helped Odia language to survive and prosper.

I appreciate the efforts of Dr. Pravakar Swain, President and office bearers of Adikabi Sarala Das Sanskrutika Parishad, for organizing this event and thank the organisers for giving me the opportunity to attend this programme.

Jai Hind