

Contribution of Gopiballavpur's Radhagobind Temple for Promoting Peace to the Socio-Cultural Life of Odisha and West Bengal: A Historical Review

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Abstract: *The cultures of both indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of Odisha and West Bengal have been greatly influenced by the religious visitation of Gopiballavpur's Radha Gobinda temple since its inception. A peaceful nonviolent religious mission for welfare of the people has been started within various obstacles by its founders named Shyamananda and his disciple Rashikananada. The cruel people of its adjacent areas learned to live a gentle and peaceful life by becoming their disciple as baishnab. Thereafter the followers of the founders of this temple, the members of the Goswami family have been taken the responsibility of wellness of the people through the loving message of vaishnavism. In this context, the article attempts to reveal the spiritual impact of this temple on its followers which has been still prevailing for providing peace within numerous conflicts.*

Keywords: Gopiballavpur, Temple, obstacles, wellness, peace

I. INTRODUCTION

As a social organism, it is solely desirable for the man to achieve tranquility through the establishment of peace in the society. Etymologically both peace and conflict are reciprocal in nature as the absence of one is the result of the other, i.e. the absence of conflict results in peace and the absence of peace results in conflict. Non-violence can create the arena of positive peace in society. Religious principles are largely leading in this regard. The Radha Govinda Temple of Gopiballavpur continues to bear that effort even today.

Radhagobinda temple of Gopiballavpur, one of the best vaishnab pilgrimages in India, is situated almost in the border region of Jhargram and Mayurbhanj districts of two neighbouring states West Bengal and Odisha. The founders of this temple were the famous *baishnab* saints in the 17th century Shyamananda and his disciple Rashikananda. In those days the *baishnab* pilgrimage, Gopiballavpur, was familiar with many names such as Shripat Gopiballavpur, *thakurbari* and *gupta brindaban* throughout India. The society of this place was not in order when it emerged as *gupta brindaban*. It is known from Shri Shri Rashikmangal written in the mid-17th century that people living in the forest of Jhargram from Dhalbhum to Rohini and Rohini to Gopiballavpur were ill-minded even both the king and their subjects were all cruel killers. A few of them who were honest in nature engaged in many ill practices also. They used to engage themselves in inhuman activities in greed of little treasure. They did not hesitate to kill hundreds of Brahmans and Baishnabs. They used to go to the homes of the prostitutes after eating meat and drinking liquor, with the things which they found after plundering the saints. When they saw Baishnavas, they would drive them out of the village thinking they were thieves. There is no difference in description of seeing the Jharkhand of Shree Chaitanya and Shyamananda. But the Vaishnav mission of Shyamananda was able to change this situation of the society a lot. It had become true by the principles of heartily welcome to all in the non-violence mission of vaishnavism spread by Shyamananda and Rashikananda making headquarter at Gopiballavpur where the Radha Gobinda Temple became the center pilgrimage of this mission. There were twelve branches of Shyamananda's followers who spread themselves to make it success in this frontier province (De, April, 2016, pp.48-49). The mission of *premdharma* of Vaishnavism greatly spread by the effort of Shyamananda

and Rashikananda among the lower caste Hindus, Muslims and even the Santal and Munda named tribals. By them a peaceful and stable lifestyle came back to the life of the frontier people of west Bengal as well as most of the people of Orissa. Later with the effort of the Goswami Mahantas of the Radha Gobinda Temple of Gopiballavpur such efforts have been prevailing even today.

Shri Krishna Kesabananda Deb Goswami, 16th descendant of Rashikananda is the chief *mohant* of this temple nowadays. Daily worship and offering of *annabhog* is done here like before. Several festivals like *snanyatra*, *raspujima*, *jhulan* and *danda mahotsab* are observed here (De, March, 2016, p.135). But the influence of the *mahantas* of this temple is not prevailing like before. The Zamindari and properties of the Mahantas have been abolished due to eviction of the Zamindai system. For this, the costs of worship and its related costs of the temple are still continuing by the donation of the followers (De, April, 2016, p.50). At present Gaudiya Math temples have been established at many places in Medinipur district. As a result, the influence of Shyamanandi Mohant Goswami has shrunk a lot. Nevertheless, the number of disciples of Shyamananda in Tamaluk, Nandigram, Sutahata and Contai is more than other Vaishnava communities (Das & Roy, 1998, p.165). In spite of this the Mohant Goswamis have continued the trend of establishing peace in the society by preventing human degradation, started by Shyamananda and Rashikananda, despite various adversities.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this paper are to show the effort of the saints, preachers as well as the worshippers and followers of this temple for creating a peaceful socio-cultural context among the people of West Bengal and Odisha since its establishment. To analyze how a peaceful harmonious socio-cultural bonding did create the temple overcoming the activities of various religious groups, greedy violent people and anarchy in the society through its peaceful religious ethos. To know how the place became one of the leading baishnab pilgrimage in India as a symbol of victory of peace over conflict.

III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The name Gopiballavpur is mentioned first in the Rashik Mangal written by Gopijan Ballava Das in 1655 C.E. According to this text, earlier it was familiar with the name of Kasipur or Kashpur which was a place of magnificent beauty on the bank of the Surabnarekha river adjacent to Nayabasan. Its adjacent village name is Nayabasan and the Tapoban of Chorchita village is near to it. This area was under the king of Mallabhum then. The then Mallabhum was included in the Utkal Kingdom (De, March, 2016, pp.11-12).

In the seventeenth century Shyamananda named a great baishnab sage being advised by Srijib Goswami of Vrindavan came to this place to preach vaishnavism. At first, he initiated Nabakishore Dhal, the king of Dhalbhumgarh at Ghatshila. Then he initiated Rashik Murari, son of Achyut Patnayek the then king (zaminder) of Rohini village. Rasik Murari was renamed as Rashikananda. After his father's death, due to their property, there was a discontent arose among the brothers of Rashikananda. His relatives and neighbours of the village did not like his closeness to Vaishnavism. For this, leaving all assets, hugging the image of house god on his chest, Rashikananda came to Kashipur with his wife. Hearing this, his religious teacher Shyamanada came to this place. Shyamananda became surprised after seeing the natural beauty of Kashipur. The river Subarnarekha was as like as the Yamuna of Brindavana. He named this beautiful place *gupta brindavan* as it was unknown for most of the people for so long. On request of Rashikmurari and his wife, Shyamananda named their *kuladebata* (family god) as Shri Gopiballav Roy and renamed Kashipur as Gopiballavpur. In this way analyzing the proof found in the Rashik Mangal, it can be said that in 1610 A.D Kashipur named as Gopiballavpur (De, March, 2016, pp.13-15).

First of all Shyamananda endeavors to establish a permanent propagation center of Vaishnavism at Gopiballavpur. But in doing this, he had to face tremendous obstacles. During this period this area was filled with the followers of *Shaib* (devotees of lord Shiba), *Shakta* (devotees of goddess Kali, Durga, Chandi etc.) religion and the alcohol-meat-eating violent people of the forest land. Besides, there were a number of worshippers of *marangburu*, *singbonga*, *baram*, *duarsini*, *kundrasini*, *satbhauni* etc., along with *shitala*, *manasa*, *mahadeb*, *rankini* named local deities. They became a serious impediment to the propagation of Baishnavism. But these hindrances were removed gradually by the efforts of Shyamananda's disciple Rashikananda. His graceful fair body, sweet speech and above all being a prince, his words

touched the heart of his subjects. Conflict turned into peaceful harmony and coexistence. The observant of the secret rites and practices of *tantrism* moved away from Gopiballavpur. Devotees with Kashinath Shiva, the founder of Kashipur moved to the neighbouring village of Kapasia. Gopeswarjiu Shiva stayed at Gopiballavpur after establishing loyal ties with Gopiballav. Rankini, the blood drinker goddess of Gopiballavpur, giving up blood drinking became a *baishnavi* (initiated to vaishnavism). She gladly accepted the holy non vegetarian *prasads* (leftovers) of Shri Gobinda. Baram, the village god of Gopiballavpur also stopped drinking blood and remained in his place. In most of the villages around Gopiballavpur, the practice of sacrifice was stopped. Only in Nayabasan, a neighbouring village of Gopiballavpur, did not stop the goat sacrifice for their goddess *Shitala*. Moreover, the people of the Ramayat community (the followers of lord Rama) who stayed here for a long time, finding no difference between Rama and Krishna, mingled with the *baishnabs*. After that Shyamananda and Rashikananda set up a baishnab pilgrimage at Gopiballavpur and establish Radhagobinda temple (De, 2021, pp.32-33) Based on this temple, a new field of propagation of Vaishnavism and its expansion was started. From the last phase of the 16th century to the first half of the 17th century there were three religious preachers of Vaishnavism who preached Vaishnavism in Bengal and Odisha. They were Narottam Thakur of North Bengal, Shrinibas Acharya of Rarh or West Bengal (Bankura, Bishnupur) and Shyamananda of North- West frontier Bengal and Odisha (Das and Roy, 1998, p.160). Perhaps Shyamananda was younger than Hridoy Chaitanya. His father was Shrikrishna Mandal and mother was Durika. Shyamananda came to Kalna to take bath in Ganga and was initiated by Hridoy Chaitanya who was Gurudas Pandit's disciple and granddaughter-in-law. Before initiation his name was Dukhia. After initiation he was named Shyamananda. Later he went to Brindabana and became the disciple of Jib Goswami (Chakraborty, 2007, pp.103-104). On the advice of Sriji Goswami, Shyamananda engaged himself in propagating the new Vaishnavism in Bengal and Utkal from 1590 C.E to till his death, i.e. 1630 C.E. It became easier for Shyamananda to preach Vaishnavism in the said areas as a man of Midnapur and Odisha by birth, sadgop by caste and familiar with the local language and culture. His main collaborator in this work was Shril Rashikananda.

From 1810 C.E to 1830 C.E Both Shyamananda and Rasikananda jointly propagated Vaishnavism with great zeal. The majority of the Vaishnava community in Midnapore district belongs to the Shyamanandi community. The Shyamanandi Vaishnava community is divided into twelve branches. In them 11 branches are found in Midnapur (Das and Roy, 1998, pp. 160-164). Notable disciples of the Shyamananda were Pathan ruler Sher Khan and Damodar Yogi. Being supported by Sher Khan both Shyamananda and Rashikananda arranged and completed big baishnab *mohotsabs* (festivals) at Barokola, Neihati, Gopiballavpur, Shyamsundarpur, Gobindpur and Dharendra village. The festival of Alamganj was supported by a local Muslim ruler known as Harbola. Many Vaishnavas joined in the great *Ras* festival held at Gopiballavpur. Disciples of Adwaitya Acharya, disciples of Dwadash Gopal, Hridoy Chaityanaya, Manohar Das of Bankura's Sonamukhi also joined in this festival. From this it is understood that Shyamananda had close relations with the Baishnabs like followers of Adwaita and Nityananda. Hundreds of people were initiated in the Vaishnava festival held in the villages of Medinipur. There were no shortages of money for all these festivals. Local Hindu and Muslim landlords were supporters of Shyamananda and Rashikananda. Achyut, king of Royni, Landlord of Ghatshila, Bhimdhan, Bhuian of Gobindapur and Rajyadhar Roy, landlord of Bagri became the disciples of Shyamananda (Chakraborty, 2007, pp.104-105).

Uddanda Roy, the cruel Bhuian Zaminder of Nrisingpur Paragana in Baleswar, who created unrest in his area by killing 700 saints earlier, was initiated by Shyamananda. Shyamananda died in 1630 C.E. Rasikananda became the *Gadishwar* (chief of the headquarters) Goswami of that temple and the Goswami lineage began. Many zaminders and landlords from Orissa and Midnapur came to Gopiballavpur and became the disciples of the Goswamis. Baidyanath Bhanj, the king of Mayurbhanj, came to Gopiballavpur and showed his veneration to Vaishnavism. And that is how the way of Utkal opened for the preaching of Vaishnava religion. After initiating Ahmadi Beg, the Mughal subedar, into Vaishnavism Rashikananda preached Vaishnavism in Odisha fearlessly. This Goswami family received many properties in many places like Puri, Brindabana etc. in the name of god. Rashikananda initiated the king of Puri too. (De, March 2016, pp.62-63) Rashikananda also initiated the king of Patashpur named Gajapati, the king of Panchet named Harinarayan, the king of Moyna named Chandrabhanu and two oppressive *bhuians* of Dharendra named Bhim and Shrikar. Rashikananda had given twenty wild elephants as a gift to the *Subeder* of Bengal Bhanjan Adhikari, disciple of Shyamananda preached Vaishnavism in the villages of Contai and Keshiari of Midnapur. Gokul Das, disciple of

Rashikananda preached Vaishnavism among the tribes of Keonjhar. Another disciple Gobinda Das also played an active role in preaching Vaishnavism in Bhanjabhum (Chakraborty, 2007, p.105).

Rashikanada died in 1652. After his death, the people of this lineage came to be known as the people of Goswami lineage of Gopiballavpur. This family follows the rule of the rights of the eldest son. It means after father's death the eldest son becomes the *gadiswar* (chief of the Head quarter) and the rest sons obtain some portions of *debottaor* (received land in the name of god) land as *babugoswami* (De, March 2016, pp.62-64).

The Goswamis spread Vaishnavism's ideals of non-violence and brotherhood by building a number of monasteries and temples centered on the Radha Govinda temple at Gopiballabpur in various parts of the country. Besides Kesiari, Thuria, Dharenda, Haur, Tamluk, Nandigram, Sutahata, Mayna, Narajole, Debra, Bhagwanpur, Patashpur, Narayangarh of Midnapur District there are more than 300 monastery-temple of this *mahanta goswami* class are found in more than 20 districts of Uttar Pradesh. Balishahi Kunja monastery of Puri, Khirchora Gopinath Temple of Remuna and Gopinath Temple of Brindabana have been bearing the great achievement of Shyamananda and Rashikananda (De, April 2016, pp.49-50). A branch of Sripat Gopiballavpur's Goswami has set up a separate temple at Shyamsunderpur Tagore's house in Singbhum district of Bihar. They are the religious teachers of the local *shamanandi baishnabs*. Most of the Radha Gobind temples of small or big kings or land lords of Medinipur are guided by the Goswamis of Gopiballavpur. Besides Mahaprabhu's Temple of Basudeb Ghose in Tamluk, Kalachand's temple of Ramgarh' king in Jhargram, Madan Mohan temple of Narajole and many more Radha Gobinda and Gouranga temples were conducted by the appointed persons of the Goswami of Gopiballavpur. A list of Baishnab temples of Midnapur District have been mentioned by Devid Mc Cutchion in his book *Late Medieval Temples of Bengal*. According to Police Station there are 5 temples in Bhagwanpur, 1 in Binpur, 15 in Chandrakona, 1 in Contai, 26 in Dashpur, 3 in Dantan, 8 in Debra, 1 in Dihibaliharpur, 11 in Egra, 10 in Ghatal, 6 in Garbeta, 5 in Gopiballavpur, 6 in Keshpur, 2 in Mahishadal, 14 in Midnapur city, 1 in Moyna, 2 in Patashpur, 3 in Sabang, 3 in Pingla and 1 in Shalboni. Out of this list there are many more Vaishnava temples in Medinipur district. The role of these temples in spreading the Vaishnava concept is undeniable. The Shamanadi Vaishnava *gurus* were most influential for setting up these temples (Das and Roy, 1998, pp.163-164).

Shyamananda and Rashikanada were the angels to the frontier lower class back-ward people of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa mainly because of their preaching of *gourbani* (the glory of lord Chaitanya). They put forward some principles to be observed in daily life for all the people which are essential in every aspect of their life. These are 1. Don't be jealous 2. Do not drink alcohol 3. Do not associate with an illegitimate wife 4. Do not tell a lie 5. Do not steal 6. Do not eat non-vegetarian food 7. Eliminate untouchability 8. Avoid Slander gossip 9. Refuse superstitions 10. Distribute messages of *Gour* to all people of race and religion 11. Do not discriminate between high and low caste people 12. Tender equal rights in chanting of the name of lord Krishna, 13. Do not interfere in the right of initiation or discipleship and 14. Give everyone the right to participate in *mahotsab* and festivals etc. In a word the object of observing the said practices in the daily life of the human beings was to lead the people in the path of pure devotion. With these ideas in mind, Rashikananda, sometimes with his religious teacher Shyamananda, came forward in a collective or individual way in social reform or religious movement (Mandal, 2015, p.62).

The *mohantas* of Gopiballavpur not only made a peaceful society through the holy principles of the Vaishnab religion but they played a great role on acculturation in the society also by engaging themselves in the different activities in the society. After the establishment of Vaishnava pilgrimage site at Gopiballavpur in 1630, the southern part of Jhargram district began to be filled with many non-tribes (De, April 2016, p.50). Before establishment of this temple this area was filled with non-Aryan culture. Non-violent Vaishnavism spread through the relentless efforts of Shyamananda, Rashikananda and later Goswamis of the Radha Gobinda temple at Gopivallabhpur to such an extent that it had immense impact on the tribes of the area as well. Santal and Munda named tribes were greatly influenced by Vaishnavism in this way that in time of placing dead bodies on their shoulders they used to utter *horibol* sound. Besides, they observe their annual *shraddh* ceremony on the bank of Subarnarekha River. In this time they utter *thakur barir Ganga sinan* and *horibol* and thereafter they give gifts to the mahanta of *thakurbari* (De, March 2016, P.53). Besides, the Mohantas used to participate in the different cultural activities with the common people also. Fighting of Bulbuli named birds at the fair of Poush Sankranti in Gopiballavpur is a sign of the diverse culture of this area. This game has been showing here for hundreds of years. Earlier it is heard that the king of Mayurbhanj used to participate in it with his

followers. There used to be a fight between Mohanta Goswami and the king of Mayurbhanj. Currently there is a *Sai* based fight. The ceremony is held at *Durgamandap* adjacent to Radhagobinda temple at Gopiballavpur. Even today, Mohant Maharaja being present at the ceremony rewards the winners. It is a symbolic struggle of the primitive groups over rights for food (De, March 2016, p.100).

Although *Dandamahatsab* is the Vaishnava community's own festival, it has become a mass festival at the initiative of Gadiswar Mohantas of Gopiballavpur. There is a religious story for the starting of this *mahotsab*. Krishna Das, a poor man from Dharendra village near Kalaikunda, took the name Shyamananda after initiation to Hriday Chaitanya in Kalna. Fake news went to Hriday Chaitanya that Shyamananda has changed his initiation *guru* and has taken a new *tilak* with initiation to Jiva Goswami. According to the rules of Vaishnavism, changing the *guru* is an unforgivable crime. But Hriday Chaitanya failed to prove his allegation in the baishnab assembly of Vrindavana. As a result, the Vaishnava community of Vrindavan punished him by giving some conditions that he had to feed thousands of devotees after chanting the uninterrupted *harinam* for 24 *prahor* (72 hours as 1 *prahar* = 3 hours). Thereafter he will be able to get free from his sin. Shyamananda himself undertook the punishment that Vaishnava society inflicted on his *guru*. By begging he made an arrangement of *sankirtan* for 72 hours and fed thousands of Vaishnavas. The festival (*mahotsab*) arranged for observance of the punishment (*danda*) is familiar with the name of *dando mahotsab* (De, March 2016, p.109-110). In Gopiballavpur, at the temple yard of GobindaJiu, this festival is observed by the local people of Baishnav religion every year in the month of Jaistha (May – June). On this occasion, a fair is organized on a nearby land of 18 to 20 *bigha*. Generally, people from Vaishnav religion of Medinipur, Bankura, Howrah and Hooghly of West Bengal and Mayurbhanj, Baleshwar of Orissa, Singbhum and Manbhum of Bihar assemble here in this occasion for seeking *punya* (bless) (Das & Roy, 1998, pp.318-320).

The Supernatural activities of Shyamananda, Rashikananda and the Mohantas of Goswami family made such great efforts in the society that they became the incarnation of the Hindu gods to their followers. There are a great many legends about them. The presence of such legends in the society proves that how Rashikananda and Shyamananda the founders of Radha Krishna Temple of Gopiballavpur took place in the heart of the people. Both Shyamananda and Rashikananda were famous singers, artists and flute players. Both possessed so unparalleled beauty that they easily adopted people. Singing in the *reneti* or *ranihati* tune of Shyamananda and *mandarin* tune of Rashikananda earned mass popularity among the people. They used to involve themselves in *Kirtan* with the different musical instruments such as *Karatal*, *mridanga* etc. Participating in acting in the drama named *krishnalila* held at the house of Chandrasekhar Acharya in Nabadwip Chaitanya Dev became the main source and inspiration of stage play, drama and acting. Thereafter this trend was continued by Shyamananda and Rashikananda. Rashikananda organized *rasnriya* following the *raslila* described in the 29th – 33rd chapter of Bhagwata on the occasion of *maharas mahotsav* in the evening of the full moon day in Gopiballavpur. Nine boys participated in it. Among nine participants one was dressed as Krishna and the rest eight were dressed as his *sakhi* (girlfriend). Apart from this *banabihar lila* has been described in 5th *lahari* of the southern section of Rashik Mangal. Thinking of the scene of returning home in *brajadham* after *banabihar* of lord Krishna with his girlfriends, Rashikananda followed it along with the boys. Rashikananda dressed some young boys and came back home from the forest with them by dancing and singing. During this time *tulsirasomoy* group followed them with *nam sankirtan*. Hundreds of villagers throng along the roadside to see this beautiful view. It is easily understood that it was the former pattern of today's mass drama. These two devotees were entitled as the emancipators of the downtrodden people to all classes of people of the society by the policies of preaching *premdharma* through which they showed their liberal mentality by establishing stability, non-violence and the message of peace in the society, by the activities like *nam sankirtan* (chanting the name of lord Krishna) *path* (reading of holy books), *parikrama* (wandering with the name of lord Krishna), meeting, conference, changing the name of place or person, rescuing the image of god or establishing it and above all by arranging *mahotsab* in various places, they tried to establish communal harmony and Keep intact of mass communication (Mandal, 2015, p.65).

Besides, the Radha Gobinda Temple of Gopiballavpur as headquarters for preaching Vaishnavism has made a great contribution to the society, culture and economy of the people of west Bengal and Odisha since its establishment to till date. Even in the last decade of the nineteenth century, there were 1 lakh Shyamanandi Vaishnavas in Medinipur. The Kayasthas of Medinipur and Baleshwar districts converted to Vaishnavism. Although Shyamananda was not a Brahmin, he used to hold *upbeet* (sacred thread). The Vaishnavas gained *baishnabottor* land by becoming gurus. W. W. Hunter

mentions 272 *baishnobattor* lands in his account. According to the *baishnobattor* system many barren lands became suitable for cultivation. Brahmin culture extended to tribal oriented areas. Shyamananda has been described as the rescuer of the tribes in *Sri Sri Shyamananda Charitam* written by Rashikananda. With the spread of Vaishnavism, the coexistence of different communities of Medinipur becomes noticeable (Chakraborty, 2007, p.105).

At Sripat Gopiballavpur, through the efforts of the Goswami, arrangements were made to establish order in the Shyamanandi Vaishnava society and to give a higher position after the Brahmins in the social sphere of the statutory and domestic Vaishnavas. In the purification ceremonies - such as *shraddha-shanti* (final purification ceremony after death of any one for peace) and in the eighth *prahor* (one *prahar* = 3 hours), twenty four *prahor*, etc., in the chanting of *hari's* (lord Krishna) name, special honors are given to the Vaisnavas than the Brahmins. In expectation of gaining this respect in the social sphere, many lower class people identified their caste as baishnab in the census (Das and Roy, 1998, p.167). Bhumij, Mal (Mallakhatriya) and the Kurmis who were originally from lower caste, after initiation into Vaishnavism got prestigious place in the society. The Kurmis started a movement for getting Khatriya status under the influence of the Goswamis of Gopiballavpur. Many of them after receiving high education became landlords. A group of households who were recognized as *jat baishnabs* after the recommendation of Ashutosh Mukherjee Commission on the memorandum submitted by Pandit Biswambharananda Dev Goswami of Gopiballavpur got high caste ranking just after the local Brahmins in the society. The *nabasakhs* like Teli, Mahishya, Sadgope, Gope and other lower caste people like Bagdi, Bouri who became financially strong in the society and able to place themselves in the post of king or Zaminder, started setting up the vaishnavite temples beside other temples. With this, they wanted to get higher status and honour in the society. Through two major rituals like *nam sankirtana* and *mahotsabs* the Baishnabs came to both the higher and lower caste people so close that the barrier of caste system and untouchability slighted largely in the society. The *danda mahotsab* of Gopiballavpur is one of its great examples (Mandal, 2001, pp.223-226).

The Baishnabs of Mayurbhanj come to attend the great DandaMahotsab of Gopiballavpur. The Baishnab *guru* (religious teacher) of Medinipur, Shyamananda and his disciples spread Vaishnavism in Mayurbhanj in the medieval age. All the family members of Baidyanath Bhanja, the mighty king of independent Mayubhanj State, initiated in Vaisnavism by Shyamananda. Maharaja Baidyanath Bhanja constructed Rasik Roy Temple for the worship of Lord Krishna. Since then the Mohanta Goswami family of Gopiballavpur was honoured by the members of the Bhanja Kings as *guru*. In case of marriage, *sraddh*, investiture, worship and festivals, the members of the Kings family invite them and obey their direction. The Bhanjas made Haripur as a great center of Vaishnavism. A number of tribal who were socially deprived and tortured by the upper castes were initiated Baishnavism during this period (Das, 2020, p.11). In the second half of the twenty Century, it has been seen at Dharampur Village of Jhargram as well as a number of villages situated both sides of the river Subarnarekha that there were a group of Kirtanias who used to round the village chanting *nam sankirtan* on the month of Falgun, Chaitra and Baisakh from 8p.m to 9 p.m in everyday night. Special *kirtan* used to hold on the last day of the Baisakh. Mahanta Goswamis of Gopiballavpur was the *Guru* (religious teacher) of all. Before marriage both bride and groom take chants from him. This ritual is called as 'gurukarna' (Rana, 2018, p.18).

IV. CONCLUSION

It is clear from the above discussion that the effort for tendering emancipation from racial hatred, saving weaker from the oppression of the strong people, leaving greediness live in nonviolence through *prem dharma* which had been started by Srichaitanya from Nawadwip of West Bengal became more prominent with the effort of Shyamananda, Rashikananda and the Goswamis of Gopiballavpur. Centering Radha Gobinda Temple as their Headquarter they saved common people from the ill practice of the *Saib* and *Shaktas*, plundering of the oppressive landlords. Besides, through preaching Baishnavism and making disciples both the upper and lower class people they made Gopiballavpur and its adjacent area specially the places of Jhargram, West and East Midnapur Districts of West Bengal and Baleshwar, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts of Odisha more peaceful. Besides, through propagation of Nonviolent *premdharma* of Baishnavism the Goswamis of Radha Gobinda Temple have been playing a great role on the cultural synthesis among the various castes and tribes. Being present in the various festivals and encouraging the participants they not only make an inalienable relation with the common people but presenting specific novelty on dance, song and drama they created an arena of social tranquility and cultural fraternity among the masses also. In this way Shripat

Gopiballavpur has become one of the great Vaishnav pilgrimages in India as a symbol of the propagation of peace and nonviolence.

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