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## Role of print media in preserving culture with special reference to Birbhum district

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### Abstract

Birbhum is the land of rich cultural heritage. During the last period of Sultani rule when Sri Chaitanyadeb was born in Nabadip to protect the Hindu culture at the same time Nityananda is believed to have started the conflict between Hindus and Muslims and built the Hindu Samaj. Therefore, a new belief in the society was formed. Chaitanyadeb and Nityananda of Birbhum formed spiritual democracy. This resulted Hindus as well as non-Hindus, Jain or Muslim to believe in the faith. This period taught the Hindus to sacrifice. In Birbhum many people were influenced by Baishnab religion. In Nanur it gave rise to Dhijo Chandidas. In his words, he said above everything is man, no one above man. Everything should be thought for the benefit of mankind. After the end of Sri Chaitanyadeb there was a problem of mixed culture in Birbhum. It was called as "Neraneri" revolution. The Buddhist was basically called Neraneri. In ancient Indian geography there was no place like Birbhum. In the 55-60s in a Sanskrit book "Bhabishopuron" the word Birbhum was first found. The place was in the east India. In the book the word 'Narikando' or 'Rarhikandhe Birbhum' word was found. Birbhum's priority place was written as Bakreshwar. Birbhum's Lok Sangeet plays an important role. There is no Baishnabi in it. It has been derived from people to people in course of time with word of mouth. There is no identified composer for the Lok Sangeet. The predominant language in the district is Bengali classified by Dr. Grierson as western Bengali which differs from standard Bengali which has a broader pronunciation. The number of persons speaking in Birbhum is 575,500. Vaishnavism was popular in the district in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The Bagdis are a caste believed to have been the early inhabitants of the district. They gradually became Hindu and there is little doubt of their being non-Aryan and they are at the bottom. The history of newspapers in Birbhum is not ancient because it started in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. This flow of newspapers created a literature in Indian history. That time a village named Multi, from where Editor Indranarayan Chattopadhyay founded the newspaper 'Dharoni', a highly monthly Sahitya newspaper and its main highlight was the district of Birbhum of West Bengal.

**Keywords:** Bhum, Mog, Bagdi, Jadupetias, Neraneri, Sabujpatra

### Introduction

In the first and second century, Birbhum district was influenced by Buddhist culture over Hindu culture. The entry of Jain culture happened with the light of Tirthankar, Neminath, Parshanath and Mahabir's spiritual path. The Buddhist culture came with the rule of kings. Therefore, there is a huge difference that is observed between the two cultures.

To know the details of Birbhum's Buddhist culture, there are remains of ancient Buddhist culture statues and idols which stand still today in spite of storm, rain and political hurdles. The Buddhist culture that overlapped Hindu culture was 500 years old. It is important to put down that king Sasanka wanted to abolish the Buddha rule but not Buddhist culture. But the hereditary of Sur named 'Adishur', the king who wanted new inclination of Hindu Vedic culture. There was no Brahmin in Birbhum district. In the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century in this district Buddhist culture and literature was the main influence which is identified from the rule of pal. But the whole district was not influenced by one and only culture.

Once Buddhadeb was accepted as ninth Avatar by Brahmins and on the other Buddhist accepted Hindu Puran as their ideal and made religious stories with different god and goddess. Hindu Vishnu was transformed into Basudeb.

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During the period of Sri Gyan Atish Dipankar, Buddhist culture gave tremendous influence or rise of Hindu Tantra and Buddhist Tantra. This gave rise to god and goddesses and their stories like Barahi, Mariachi, and Bishalaksi.

Birbhum was 1000 years old in Buddhist culture. Here in Bara village was the main cultural centre of Buddhist. The Buddhists were divided into four categories- Sautantrik, Baivashik, Jogachari and Madhyamik. Among the four, two were mainly influenced by Birbhum's ancient Buddhist culture. There are remains of Buddhist king Nayapal in Siyan village and Hindu king Karnodeb in Paikar village. The both are marvelous side of history. There are writings of Chinese Hu Yen Sang.

From the remains of Birbhum's old Buddhist god and goddess idols prove that for long years at present Hindus and Muslims resided in this district. Sometimes Hindu and Buddhist and some other time Buddhist and Hindu ruled decades after decades. The rise and downfall of these cultures has its history, every long and highly described. At the end of 6<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of 7<sup>th</sup> century the king Sasanka was against the Buddhist kings and gave priority to Hindu culture.

Harshavardhan was a Buddhist king who was defeated by Sashanka to give a rise to Hindu culture. There was an existence of Hindu and Buddhist culture, was clear from the fact that the idols of gods and goddess itself were the proof. In Birbhum, Bishnu idols in the form of Buddha Basudeb were found. Buddha idols were found around 20 to 21 villages of Bara and Tir. In this district was the combination of Buddhist culture along with Hindu culture. The different idols that were worshipped were the incarnation of Buddhist culture. The idols today which are of Hindu and Buddhist culture are from Pal and Sen Period. In Paikar village the remains of pal period is Surya idol, similarly in Nandi village and Ghosh village are Ganesh and Shibani idol, in Kaleshar and Bakreshwar there are Hargouri combined idol and in village of Deuli is Sabitri idol, Mahadeb and Parbati idols. These idols are the incarnation of Sen Period. The most striking description that is this ancient idols of Bara village have been presently transformed as Hindu god and goddess in the book "Birbhumi Biboron" by late Harekrishna.

At present there is no existence of Buddhist culture people in the district of Birbhum. Even Jain origin "Sarak" has no existence. But once they were the prime existent people in the soil of Birbhum and sought the history of the past.

In the first half of seventh century, at this period the entire Rar Bangla was under Buddhist sanskriti. Shil Bhadra was the son of this place, a Bengali who was at that time the teacher of Nalanda. The period was Harshavardhan's rule. His Sabha poet Banbhata mentioned in Harshacharita that he was one and only king of Panchabharat. Panchabharat means five- Kanauj, Punjab, Utkal, Darbhanga and Bangadesh. At this time period, Hindu king Sashankadeb had deep impact in Mritika Nagar.

The fact is that not only in Birbhum but in the soil of India Gautam Buddha's Buddhist culture was not permanent. But this culture had influenced people of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Tibet and even reached China. It crossed the boundary of Sankul Ocean to Singhal and Shyam- Comboj, long back in 2000 years ago.

It can be presumed that nearly 1000 years ago the followers of Hindu and Buddhist religion made the idols of different god and goddess which have been found in different places

of Birbhum district. Dr. Dinesh Chandra in his book "Brihotbange" wrote, Birbhum districts wall sculpture depicts Ajanta's sculptural similarity. And this sculpture has writings engraved in words of Buddhist culture which is thousand years old. At present, in Birbhum district the different idols of Buddhist god and goddess which are almost extinct. Most of the Buddha idols of Bara village were mostly damaged or stolen and transferred to different place for a bad motive. What has gone is gone but whatever remains are there, there is no urge to preserve it. Even the idols which are worshipped like Bishakhalaxmi, Buddheshorshib, and Oromba etc have no security, which is very needful. If possible then the idols will gain some importance. In Deb village near Bhadrapur a Buddha idol was discovered nearly in 1930 Bengali year 1337. Even today near Shibpur- Durgapur road in Aara village in Birbhum, which was earlier known as 'Rara', a Buddha is worshipped there. The idol is made of black stone. In it, it is engraved five Buddha idols. These five idols are imagined as Amitabh, Padmapani, Bairachan, Samantabhadra and Amogh- Siddhi. (majumdar, n.d.)

### Origin of Birbhum's History and Culture

Long back the word 'Bhum' was not found but the word 'Mallar' was found in the history of Birbhum books, which is commonly known as Mallarbhum Bankura. In the history till middle period side by side with Mallarpur, Shikharbhum, Dhalobhum, Barahobhum, Manbhum, Singhobhum, Birbhum existed. Lastly, Gopabhum was added in the list. The Bhum was named according to tribe and it was recognized as the first tribe belonging to the soil of that place. The places like Birnagar, Birpur, Birsinghopur, Birkicha, and Birhata which are ancient but still at present exist with the proof in the west of Birbhum. Maheshwar Mishra mentioned in one of his edition of 'Kul -Panjika' that there is a place Birbhumi named Kamkoti where the rivers Ganga and Ajoy are in the east. Kamkoti is now Kamta district. It is situated near Coochbehar is believed by many analysts. But according to Maheshwar Mitra's description this Birbhum is Kamkot. In the past "Kam" was a tribal community. They were called Kamta, Kamrup. It is believed that this community lived in this place. The religious god of Kam tribe was Aakha or wife of Kamdeb "Rati" was goddess of Kamrup. Therefore, from Assam Sanskriti and religious belief once influenced Birbhum. In Birbhum Hetampur area Panchal name and Kaleshar area is dedicated to the names of fish.

In 1858 Bengali year 1265 Birbhum was spread over Jharkhand's Deoghar to Medinipur's Tumluk. The entire area was covered by dense forest. In ancient period the place was religiously believed to be of Vedic Sanskriti. Afterwards, in history period the first phase was Buddhist, Jain, Nath, Mauja, Sunga, Gupta, and Hindu tribe ruled. Many Buddha and Jain idols still now are worshipped in the villages of Birbhum. Examples are Sasti, Shitala, Kalika, Chandi, Narayan, Manasa, are still worshipped today. Maldanga, Mallarpur, Muluti, Malpara etc inhabitants have grown with Mallatribe Sanskriti. The "Mog" tribe has been the main reason behind the name "Magaya" of Birbhum. The above tribes are familiarly known as "Bok" tribe or "Bagdi" in some places.

From 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century Birbhum was under the rule of Pal king. In the kingdom of Pal, Dharma Pal was Buddhist, after that Naipaldeb was influenced by Shib and Baishnab. In this

period, Naipaldeb in the reign of Rampaldeb his one and only friend Nripati Surath of Birbhum started Basanti Durga Puja and then Durga Puja.

After many years during the last period of Sultani rule when Sri Chaitanyadeb was born in Nabadip to protect the Hindu culture at the same time Nityananda is believed to have started the conflict between Hindus and Muslims and built the Hindu Samaj. Therefore, a new belief in the society was formed. Chaitanyadeb and Nityananda of Birbhum formed spiritual democracy. This resulted Hindus as well as non-Hindus, Jain or Muslim to believe in the faith. This period taught the Hindus to sacrifice. In Birbhum many people were influenced by Baishnab religion. In Nanur it gave rise to Dhijo Chandidas. In his words, he said above everything is man, no one above man.

Everything should be thought for the benefit of mankind. After the end of Sri Chaitanyadeb there was a problem of mixed culture in Birbhum. It was called as "Neraneri" revolution. The Buddhist was basically called Neraneri. There was different religion followed by different gurus. Swami Satyananda bought the ideas of Ramkrishna. The lawyer of Supreme Court of Kolkata of Raipur's Srikantho Singh and Pratap Narayan Singh gave place to Maharishi Debendranath Thakur in Bhubandanga to establish ashram. In 1891 Bengali 1298 Upasana Mandir was established in Santiniketan. After it was built the nearby Brahmins of Bolpur every Wednesday visited Mandir for Upasana. The religion of Birbhum is characterized by human belief in the religion. This place is characterized by all religions and therefore it is a highly religious place. (mukhopadhyay, n.d.)

#### **Representation of Birbhum's Culture in form of Song**

The followers of Nityananda of Birbhum started the influence of Kirtan song. The different places like Payer, Mangaldihi, Muluk, Paharpur, etc have still now presumed the culture of the song. The singers of Kirtan of Moinadal still now have brought alive the rhythm of the songs. Ujjal Mitra Thakur of the village runs a newspaper named "Sangkirtan". (CHAKROBORTY)

Birbhum's Lok Sangeet plays an important role. There is no Baishnabi in it. It has been derived from people to people in course of time with word of mouth. There is no identified composer for the Lok Sangeet. There are many Lok Sangeet singers who are still alive and compose songs. Dr. Ashutosh Bhattacharya with his qqqq extreme effort increased the influence of Lok Sangeet in the public. Birbhum is famous for Baul Sangeet. It is worldwide famous. There is extreme cultural attitude in the people of Birbhum. There is Pijas devoted to Dharmaraj, Manasa, etc. Indra in this district. Religious development does not change the people's attitude. The people of Birbhum are inculcated with Baishnav culture. Birbhum is characterized by Bhadu Sangeet. It has special significance. After farmers finish their field work or harvest at the end of Bhadro (one of Bengali month in the calendar) a group of Bhadu singers toil around villages. This song is sung by hardworking people. (majumdar g. , n.d.)

#### **Birbhum's Language and Idols Worshipped**

The predominant language in the district is Bengali classified by Dr. Grierson as western Bengali which differs from standard Bengali which has a broader pronunciation. The number of persons speaking in Birbhum is 575,500. Santhali is spoken by the Santhals settled in the district. The

number of persons speaking in 1901 was 47,455. The 'Kora' language is spoken by the Koras who is believed to have come from Singhbhum and now found on the borders of the Santhal Parganas. This dialect belongs to the Munda family and is pure Mundari. Hindus are the majority inhabitants of Birbhum.

Vaishnavism was popular in the district in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. when Jayadeva composed the great Vaishnaveti lyric known as Gita Govinda. Jayadeva was born at Kenduli. A fair is held every year in Kenduli to memorize Jayadeva. Every year 50,000 to 60,000 persons assemble round his tomb and the Vaishnavas sing the love of Krishna and Radhika. Chandidas was another Vaishnava poet who was a native of this district, he was a vernacular poet of Bengal, and he flourished in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. He was a native of Nannur, a village 24 miles to the east of Suri. He was a worshipper of Chandi, Durga or Sakti but was converted to Vaishnavism. Such as Bagdis, Bauris, Haris, Doms, Mals and Machis. They lost their tribal character and absorbed in Hinduism. The low class people still beliefs the worship of Manasa and Dharmaraj.

Dharmaraj or Dharma Thakur is worshipped by villagers of the district as one of their special village gods (Gram Devata). There is Dharma Thakur in every village. Examples are Suganpur, Sija Kudang, Malbera, Bela and Sarbanandpur where shrines are visited by number of persons suffering from rheumatism.

It is enshrined in temples in few places or placed under a tree like a shapeless stone with vermilion. Even animal sacrifices are made like hogs, fowls and ducks are sacrificed. Offerings to god are given in the form of rice, flowers, milk and Pachwai. The worship happens in the months of Baisakh, Jaistha and Asarh on the day of full moon and in some places on the last day of Bhadra.

#### **Different Caste of Birbhum District**

The Bagdis are a caste believed to have been the early inhabitants of the district. They gradually became Hindu and there is little doubt of their being non-Aryan and they are at the bottom. Their main occupation is cultivation, boating, fishing, and labor. The sub castes in Birbhum are Khetri, Kusmetia, Tentulia, Trayodas and Noda.

The Santals have migrated towards the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Santal villages border on those in the Santali Parganas and are situated in the west of the east Indian railway lying between the hills of the Santali Parganas, which approach the Birbhum border on one side and alluvial soil of the plains on the other. Many Santals are believed to have migrated to Barind or Dinajpur, Rajshahi and Bogra or else to Murshidabad from northern portion of the district.

The Jadupetias are found only in this district. They are found in Manbhum and Santali Parganas who occupies between Hinduism and Muhammadanism. They are said to be the descendants of a Muhammadan fakir by low caste Hindu woman. They worship Kali, Manasadevi and other deities of Hindu religion but also believe in Allah. They offer sacrifices to Kali in the form of animals by severing the head from the body. Married women follow the ritual of putting vermilion on their head. At Suri there is Muhammadan association which is known by the name of 'Anjuman Mazukare Islamia' which is established for the social and educational advancement of the Muhammadan community. There is a Brahma Samaj building known as the 'Santiniketan' in Bhubandanga near Bolpur with whom the

great Brahma leader Debendranath Tagore was associated. A Brahma school is also maintained. There is a semi-literary society called Bandhab Samiti in the village of Fatehpur in Rampurhat sub-division where the members have formed a co-operative credit society. There is a Brahma Samaj of Suri and Nalhati dealing with religious matters in the district. People of the district Birbhum are mostly culturally active in the form of Jattras which is a theatrical entertainment performed in the open air, there is Baithaki songs i.e. performed in the Baithak or general sitting room and dancing. It is accompanied by both vocal and instrumental music. The Hindus are very fond of Harisankirtan which means singing and dancing in the name of Hari (God). It continues for several days and nights. (malley, 1910)

#### **Acknowledged Singers of Birbhum District**

Birbhum is characterized by Bolan and Pachali, Dharmathakur and Dharmaraj Puja, Miger, Raat and Ambaguchi, Mangalchandi and emersion of goddess Manasa. Birbhum's ultimate heritage is Panchami Puja, Bhadu and Bhajo, Dek Sankranti, Muth Sankranti Naban, Etu Sankranti, Poush Sankranti, Shitala Sasti, Makar Sankranti and fairs. Habugaan, Poter Gaan, Bahurupi and Baul are the song of fakir is spread in the air of Birbhum. (das, n.d.)

Birbhum is famous for Baul Sangeet. Joydeb, Chandidas, Rabindranath, Nabanidhar, Purnoodas, Lakhandas, Chakra, Radharani, they are one family. Biswanath Promukh of Bolpur is famous for this song. Rabindranath heard the song of Nabanidas in Poush Mela, Santiniketan and was impressed. The famous Baul singer Jagat and his two sons are called 'Baul Samrat' namely Purnodas and Lakhandas. The poets like Kumudkinkar, Ashanandan Chattaraj, Gouri Shankar Maharaj, Barun Ghosh, and Subhash Kabiraj published books on Baul Sangeet. Dr. Rebat Mohan Sarkar and Dr. Aditya Mukhopadhyay wrote books on Birbhum and Baul Sangeet.

Birbhum is also famous for Kabi Sangeet. They are called Charan poet, before they were called Kabiyaal or Kabiwala. They are also known as 'Lok Kabi'. (das, birbhum, n.d.)

The famous among the Kabiwala were Lalu Nandalal, Barun Nibasi Balihari Ray and his son Radhacharan, Nitai Das, Raicharan Ray, Ramananda Chakroborty, Chiru Thakur (Shristi Dhar Thakur) from Kakutia, Rajaram Ganak from Bashshanka, Chakorjugi from Purandarpur, Banoyari Chakroborty and Bishnuchandra from Chattaraj, Mangaldihi, Kailash Ghatak and his son Chandikali Ghatak from Mallikpur, Ramai Thakur from Raipur, Gadadhar Pal from Muramath etc are well known poets or poet-Sangeet. In Birbhum Manasamangal song is also well known by Bishnupal. He did not get much fame because his book is not yet published.

#### **Some Unknown Facts of Birbhum District**

There was huge fight between Santali leaders and British near the bank of Siddheswari River. The fight was between guns and bows and arrows. But the ultimate victory was won by English over Santali. The English bought the Santali and hanged them near Suri Kenduya station. After 50 years of Indian independence there is huge gap in establishing memorandum for the Santali in the area. During the work of railway track there was fight between the English and Santali in the Basholi river bank. They tortured Santali after bringing them to their place. To keep up the prestige the

Santali started revolution and afterwards the farmers joined them. The king of Tehampur helped the English by sending elephants.

In ancient Indian geography there was no place like Birbhum. In the 55-60s in a Sanskrit book "Bhabishopuron" the word Birbhum was first found. The place was in the east India. In the book the word 'Narikando' or 'Rarhikandhe Birbhum' word was found. Birbhum's priority place was written as Bakreshwar. In 'Kulpanjika' Birbhum was named as 'Kamkoti'. Once a Jain religion famous Guru Mahabir came to this place and the two places were called 'Bajjobhumi' and 'Surnobhumi'. The place has influence of Manasa Puja; the religious Buddha Jain relationship existed. At present, there is no place like Birbhum in Kamkoti but there is no mistake that the previous name was Birbhum.

In this place, were born Raja Sashanka, Mughal Dharmapal, Nityananda Mahaprabhu, Bir Bhadra (son of Nityananda), Bamakhapa, Khaki Baba, Aghori Baba, Kangal Khapa, Dewan Nandakumar, Joydeb, Chandidas, Santali leader-Sidhu Kanu and Mangla Majhi with Srikumar Bandopadhyay, Tarashankar, Shailojananda, Falguni Mukhopadhyay, Satkori Mukhopadhyay etc renowned intellectuals. The spiritual involvement in this place Birbhum. The worship of Baishnab is through Nanur, the place of Chandidas. The birth place of Nityananda is Birchandrapur, Keduli for Joydeb. (misra, 2006)

Sir Ashley Eden previously was Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and afterwards joined as Deputy Commissioner of Santali district. He was very strict at his principles and administration. But after few days the landlords tortured the Santali community and forcefully detained them from their land. This happened in the middle of 1871(1278) when most of the sandals in a group left for Dumka. But most of the inhabitants lived in Murarai and Maheswar area. Sir George Campbell investigated regarding the matter of land acquisition cases and its collection of tax and revenue and deeply looked into it. In 1872 (1379) the counting of population of Santals, the community became furious. There was no way other than to make them understand. (mitra, n.d.)

Mallabhum is a place historically famous. It was heard that the famous Sri Madan Mohan of Kolkata Bagbajar origin. After attacking Birbhumi, in the pride of joy some Mallaraj took the authority of this place. There is a village named Ronara in district of Bankura, there is another establishment of Madan Mohan. From the inscription of writings it is clear that Raja Bir Singh 976-1077, nearly 2500 years ago a temple was dedicated. (maharaj kumar, n.d.)

Due to proper administration and particular political reasons Birbhum area was changed quite a few times. After English administration in 1765(1172) the present east Bengal's south-west part and most part of Deoghar (Santali area), Jamtara and south-east was part of Birbhum. After permanent settlement, in the year 1793(1200), Murshidabad's 250 villages came under Birbhum district. In 1799 (1206), Panchakot Jhalda also combined with Birbhum district. When separate Santali district was formed in 1855 (1262) there was a decrease in the boundary of Birbhum district. In 1872 (1279) there is still the boundary of Birbhum district till west of Ramgarh mountains. In the same year Rampurhat, Nalhati, Palsa area gets combined into Murshidabad. Again in 1879(1286) these regions again gets shifted to Birbhum. After addition and subtraction, Birbhum district at present stands on 14 police stations-

Suri, Mohammadbajar, Rajnagar, Dubrajpur, Khairashol, Saithia, Rampurhat, Murarai, Nalhati, Maureshar, Labhpur, Nanur, Illambajar and Bolpur.

In the period of Pal, there were existence of Buddhist culture and idols were found in Bara, Bhadrapur, and Akalipur. In Debipur which is situated in Illambajar an idol was found which is close to Buddhist idol. Jain Titthankara's idol were worshipped as Hindu god and goddess. This is the path when Dharma god was worshipped. Nath was also worshipped which is a mountain close to Nalhati. (das, 1985)

### **The Background of Important Newspapers of Birbhum District**

Jagdish Gupta was a renowned newspaper writer who was attached to famous newspapers like Kallol, Kalikolom, and Bijoli. Gouri Har Mitra was engaged with Prabashi, Bharati, Birbhumi newspapers. Birbhumi newspaper started in 1899/1306 and it was last published in 1906/1313. The fund for the newspaper was supplied by Kinnahar Zamindar Sauresh Chandra Sarkar. Kulda Prasad and Shibratan contacted Nilratan Mukhopadhyay, also Hetampur's Prince Mahima Niranjana Chakroborty, Luvpur Zamindar and dramatist Nirmal Shib Bandopadhyay who lead a helping hand to the newspapers. (sinha, n.d.)

The history of newspapers in Birbhum is not ancient because it started in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. This flow of newspapers created a literature in Indian history. That time a village named Multi, from where Editor Indranarayan Chattopadhyay founded the newspaper 'Dharoni', a highly monthly Sahitya newspaper and its main highlight was the district of Birbhum of West Bengal. The district's first Sahitya newspaper was published from Kinnahar in 1896/1203. The name of the newspaper was 'Satsango'. The editor was Satkori Mukhopadhyay. It was the unique newspaper from Birbhum district. He former published the paper from Berhampur, Khagra. Aftermath, he joined Kinnahar's Sauresh Chandra Sarkar and this newspaper with high esteem was published for five years. Nilratan Mukhopadhyay started publishing 'Birbhumi' from Keernahar which was a well maintained newspaper at that time. But it could not hold on the stability of the newspaper. 'Nabaparjay' and 'Naboprakash' started but also stopped.

In 1878/1285 Dakhinarnanjan Mukhopadhyay started the ever first newspaper 'Dibakar' which was a weekly. It was published from Kolkata Press but it was also closed down. In the next 20 to 22 years no newspapers seemed to be published. The second newspaper named 'Birbhum Bani' was published by Suri's Jadunath Ray and Nagendranath Choudhury. But the newspaper did not last long.

Debendranath was a different person who came to survey Suri, the district headquarter and thought of starting a newspaper. He also managed a press in Kolkata and in 1903/1310 the famous newspaper 'Birbhum Barta' came into being. It was an outstanding effort and lasted long. It was published till 1971/1378. The size of the newspaper was 14×18 inch. It was a big size newspaper. Afterwards he established 'Batta' press. The newspaper brought a huge financial gain to him. The 'Barta' press is situated at present in Nayaprajonmo newspaper building. After the death of Debendranath the newspaper went on publishing for twenty seven years regularly. That time the editor was Surya Chakroborty and Milan Bandopadhyay. In 1904/1311 Raganranjan Sengupta started a newspaper named 'Birbhum

Hitoishi' which was published from Suri. This newspaper was the first political awakening in the district. In 1918/1325 Murlimohan Choudhury started publishing 'Birbhum Bani' from Suri, a weekly newspaper. It was district's second long live newspaper. The newspaper basically highlighted business and political affairs. The editor of the newspaper was Surya Kanta Roychoudhury. Afterwards he went to Santiniketan and joined Kabiguru. He sold the newspaper to Suri's Nabogopal Das. The newspaper was run by him. After his death his son Panchanan Das became the editor. When he became old the press with newspaper was brought by Satya Narayan Bandopadhyay of Labhpur. He was most of the time out of town to Kolkata for his work, so he did not take the monitoring work of the newspaper. His lawyer Hemchandra Mukhopadhyay took the charge of editorship. After Hemchandra expired, Satyanarayan himself did the newspaper monitoring work. His brother Nityanarayan Bandopadhyay brought out 'Birbhum Kotha' from his brother's Bani press. What happened was that Satyanarayan could not give time to the newspaper 'Birbhum Bani' and he forcefully closed down the newspaper in the 60s. He sold out the press to Chandrabhaga editor Ramanath Singho.

In 1919/1326 'Birbhum Bashi', a weekly newspaper was published from Rampurhat. The editorship was managed by Nilratan Mukhopadhyay who was a teacher. But the newspaper was closed down because he went to join a school in Kinnahar. A second newspaper was published in 1926/1333 from Rampurhat named 'Rar Dipika' whose editor was Tarashundar Mukhopadhyay. The newspaper also ran for a short period. Basically all the newspapers ran for limited period. The close down of the newspapers were due to lack of infrastructure. In 1926/1333 a weekly newspaper was launched from Dubrajpur. The editor of the newspaper 'Pallymangal' was Ashini Kumar Bandopadhyay. The paper gained popularity due to local residents of the district. The newspaper was published for 5 to 6 years. But as usual, the newspaper was closed down due to various reasons. During the British reign local newspapers were looked down by British officials. Therefore, the newspapers did not gain much due to this prime reason.

To get government advertisements and court's order the editors of the newspapers had to either take British officials concern but none of them bothered it. So the editors did not get government's helping hand. For the ego problem the newspapers had to depend on fund of their own by the readers. In 1942/1349 some people of Dubrajpur joined Independence movement. The cultural aspect of Dubrajpur got high acclaim. Most probably in 1947/1354 Sushil Kumar Banerjee started 'Gramer Kotha' named weekly newspaper. It was running successfully but closed down due to various reasons. A regular weekly newspaper started from Bolpur named 'Dehosastab', the founding editor was Narayan Chandra Bandopadhyay. The district's Birbhum long live and long lasting regularly published newspaper was Bolpur's 'Pallyshree' which is unique. This newspaper started publication after Independence. It started in its own press Kacharipatti. The editor was Raipur's Singho family's Siddheswar Singho. It was published from Sriniketan Road, Bolpur. Siddheswar's son Sri Taraprasanna Singho looked after it.

Two newspapers from Suri that is 'Seba' and the other 'Mayurakhi' brought huge storm and its owner was changed many times. The two newspapers have in –bound history.

The late journalist Surya Chakroborty before his death gave information regarding the two newspapers – in 1948/1355 Mihirlal Chattopadhyay started ‘Satyagrahi’ from Suri. He thought of starting a weekly newspaper but due to lack of press in Suri he was unable to. At that time, Mahatma Gandhi came to Rampurhat. During that time, Mihirlal Chattopadhyay alongwith Satyen Chattopadhyay with Congress men went to meet Gandhiji. That day evening news came that Mohammad Ali Jinnah died. Mahatma Gandhi was very heartbroke. At that time, Mihirlal alongwith Satyen Chattopadhyay gifted Gandhiji a twenty two thousand flower bouquet. He immediately returned back the gift and ordered to start a congress newspaper from Birbhum with that money. He also ordered to establish a press. Sri Chakroborty gave information that, with that money Satyen Chattopadhyay started ‘Satyagrahi’ which was a press. From this press the newspaper called ‘Mayurakhi’ was published. The founding editor was Mihirlal Chattopadhyay. Firstly, the newspaper was Congress newspaper but Mihirlal left Congress and joined Praja Socialist Party. It became P.S.P. newspaper. Afterwards, when Mihirlal retired from politics, the main editor behind this newspaper was renowned Homeopathy doctor Ashutosh Mukhopadhyay. Due to his various reasons, P.S.P. party Bimal Bishnu became editor of the newspaper. After his death, his brother Parimal Bishnu became the editor.

When ideals changed of ‘Mayurakhi’ newspaper there was a need of local newspaper by the National Congress Party for a newly free India. The then Prime Minister of the country was Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh. The then Birbhum’s Congress leader Gopi Kabilash Sengupta to form public opinion for Birbhum District was trying to start a newspaper for Congress party. And he was successful. In 1950-51/1358 a weekly newspaper ‘Seba’ started publication. Gopika Bilash was most of the time engaged in work in Kolkata as he was nominated for West Bengal Congress Committee chief, the responsibility of editorship was given to Ashini Mukhopadhyay of Suri. After him the responsibility was taken over by Manmath Nath Bandopadhyay. He was transformed to the owner of the newspaper. After him, his brother Kali Kumar Bandopadhyay became the next editor. At present, the newspaper’s editor is his son Sadhan Kumar Banerjee. (majumdar, n.d.)

A newspaper named ‘Chikitshak’ which was a monthly paper was published by Dr. Srinitananda Singho. He himself was the editor of the newspaper. (chakroborty, n.d.)

The newspaper by Nilratan Mukhopadhyay ‘Birbhumi’ newspaper was a 32 page and every month the cost of the newspaper was rupees 50. It was published for 5 years. This paper started in 1896/1203 when he went to Kinnahar. After few days only it started publication. (chakroborty, BIRBHUM BIBORON 2ND EDITION, n.d.)

Bengali newspaper published from Serampore Mission in 1818/1225 was ‘Bengal Gazetti’, Digdarshan (monthly), Samachar Darpan (weekly). There were many ups and downs in the history of newspaper of Birbhum. Nirmal Shib Bandopadhyay from Luvpur published ‘Purnima’ newspaper, whose co-editor was Tara Shankar Bandopadhyay. The newspaper ‘Birbhumi’ was brought to Suri by Kuldaranjan Mullick. The ‘Sopan’ newspaper was published from Suri by Shibratan Mitra. The newspaper content was based on literature. Half or full page contained literature. This continued till 40s-50s even in 60s. Complete literature newspapers like Bikhari, Rangamatir Desh, and Bhorer

Pakhi, could not make the fullest. When in 70s literature newspaper publication started in Birbhum. The old newspapers are no more alive. Only ‘Birbhumi’, that too with its name only which started its publication in 1899/1306. Apart from this, Manoshlok, Brahmani, Pratidandi, Saswati, Runner, Birbhum Prantik, Kalponik, Kasturi, Anol, Rhitij, Rangabhumi, Dhushor Pandulipi, Kopai, Godhuli, Jonaki Mon, Kheya, Didibhai, Pahareswar, Urmi, Aparajita, Nabodiganta, Samikhon, Prayas, Unmochon, Anubhumi, Prahari, Rarbani, Manosh Pratima etc all were published in 70s from Birbhum and all were eminent literature newspapers. In 80s and 90s few renowned newspapers were published like Korus Kanto, Akshar, Kusheshor, Harmash, Rhitiz, Annayudh, Chaka, Cycus, Krondoshi, A-Kal-Chirokal, Sarathi, Swatantra, Koilakuti, Bichitra, Parnika Purnobasu, Sahoj, Ghorsawar, Chetona Attonad etc all of which are to be mentioned.

The most important is that the 70s and 80s newspapers stopped its publication either or do not publish regularly. But in spite of all hurdles and struggles many newspapers are striving for its existence. ‘Birbhumi’ still struggles for its existence. ‘Swapnonir’ by Anadi Bandopadhyay is published from Joydeb. The newspaper which is published from Kotasur village that is weekly ‘Didibhai’ is still regularly published. The newspapers first editor Santu Sengupta took the responsibility of young generation writing. From Didibhai publication, Madhukori monthly, Didibhai, Sudarshan and new harvest was published. From Dubrajpur ‘Chandidas’ was published by Kumud Kinkar which was a weekly and regular in 1917/1324. ‘Pallyshree’ 1397 in Bolpur at present is interested in news publication. ‘Birbhum Hitoishi’ started its career in 1979/1386. ‘Bolpur Barta’ was basically literature based. We come to hear about Kabiguru, Bhalobasa, and Drishtantar from Bolpur Santiniketan.

‘Illambajar Barta’ 1976/1383 sometimes brings out publication from one press or the other. From Suri, we are quite familiar with Mayurakhi, Seba, Panchapit, Tirthabhumi, newspapers; there are also weekly, daily ‘Chandrabhaga’ and daily ‘Dinanta’. ‘Dhushormati’ is directly related to Marxist political newspaper but it is clear about its views and ideas. But Seba, Mitranjali, Bijoy Batta, Birbhumer Dak, Kalo Megh, Pithobhumi, Chirkut, Kusheshor, Birbhumer Jhor, Birbhum Tarango, Kuthor, Panchayater Chithi, Ajoy, Birlok, Sonar Fashal, is very rare. Birbhum’s ‘Agnishikha’ 1971/1378 was Rampurhat’s weekly. ‘Barnishikha’ was again published from Rampurhat in 1985/1392. These two newspapers have stopped publication, now ‘Adhikar’ and ‘Kanchidesh’ is running. Presently, Suri’s well mentioned newspaper is one of Suri’s ‘Nayaprajonmo’. It got published in 1991. At this year the other newspapers were Rar, which is literature based newspapers. (mukhopadhyay, n.d.)

### History behind ‘Sabujpatra’

Sri Promoth Choudhury became the editor of Visva Bharati newspaper. On 7<sup>th</sup> August the day when Rabindranath Tagore died. He introduced the monthly newspaper ‘Sabujpatra’ in 1321 on the birth day of Rabindranath Tagore. He was of the idea of new concepts and it gained its merit as a newspaper. Promoth Choudhury was a writer. After reading his writings by Rabindranath Tagore he was assigned the responsibility of editor of ‘Sabujpatra’.

Rabindranath promised him that his writings would be published in all the editions of Sabujpatra. As usual there were many opponents regarding the publication of the paper. Tagore gave freedom to him for publication and selection of articles. Tagore himself filled up with poems, stories in the newspaper. It gained momentum to the people for the writings which were dedicated by Tagore. Tagore's mind was filled up with both new and old thoughts. Today what we call culture is combination of art. This art is reflected in Tagore's Santiniketan where he is no more but his ideas still flourish through the Kala and Sangeet Bhavan. Not only this, the establishment of Mandir by Rabindranath Tagore is the incarnation of beauty and this place has got beauty. This culture is life of human identity. Those who followed the ideal of Rabindranath Tagore wrote articles on the newspapers like Sri Atul Gupta, Dhujoti Mukhopadhyay, Kiranshankar Ray, and Suniti Chattopadhyay. These writers were the inspiration for new young generation readers and writers. The newspaper comes out from Visva Bharati, Santiniketan. The ideal of Visva Bharati follows as, even these days we strive for peace and world peace too. If there is no world peace there will be no generation of world culture. And this world culture will bring world peace- Words of Editor.

### Conclusion

We are aware of what is spiritualism. Though they are true but still it is surprising. Religion does not mean a particular place, particular time or particular words which can be combined into culture. In Brahmo Samaj there is this ideal. It does not mean that when we believe in God, we close our eyes and meditate God within us. But as we go out we remain enemy with the enemies. This is not religion. We do not see around people as friends else we treat them as enemies. Is this called the devotion to god? This is called mesmerism. The word religion is heavy concrete word. We realize and feel god through the environment around us. We do not say tree only because green plants have life. Flower is not only flower, dust is not dust, there is deeper significance. In sky, clouds, wind and water we feel the presence of god. And they are lively, they talk to us. We have to understand their significance. So there is no need to call god through specific ceremonies or pujas. Everywhere he is, in within the mind and body. When we think positive, this is the only way to feel god. We can see god everywhere in every place. The universe will be ours if we forgive everyone then only we will see the peace. We will realize harmony in the earth planet. [17 Shraavan, 1310] (choudhury, 1942 shraavan)

In 1974 newspapers like 'Mahesh' and 'Seba' got published from Suri. First it was edited by Sudhir Nath Mukhopadhyay and in the end it was edited by Gopika Bilash Sengupta. Afterwards Ashini Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Manmath Kumar Bandopadhyay, Kalikumar Bandopadhyay and Sadhan Kumar Bandopadhyay. In 1951 'Jharna' was published from Suri. It was edited by Anupam Thakur and Haroprasad Da. In 1953 the newspaper 'Prochay' was published from Suri and it was edited by Tapbijoy Ghosh and Sukumar Biswas. In the same year was published 'Janpath' from Rampurhat, edited by Amol Mukhopadhyay. In 1958 from Nanur/Bora was published 'Alo', it was a Sahitya Patrika. Another newspaper was published from Suri named 'Masher Khabor' a Sahitya newspaper which was edited by Radha Damodar Mitra. In 1964 'Ektara' got published from Suri

which was edited by Debi Singh. In 1965 'Padasanchar' got published from Rampurhat which was edited by Bireshwar Singh. In 1967, 'Awaaz' was published from Suri and 'Ayom' from Rampurhat. The editor of Awaaz was Broj Saha. The editor of Ayom was Sankarlal. In the same year, 'Sishumela' named Sahitya Patrika got published from Siyan and it was edited by Kaji Samsujoha (Sri Samarendra).

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