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Sahitya Akademi

meet the author

Binapani Mohanty





**B**inapani Mohanty is an eminent literary figure of Odisha. Winner of Orissa Sahitya Academy Award (1968) for her collection of short stories entitled *Kasturi Mruga O Sabuja Aranya* and Sahitya Akademi Award (1990) for her collection of short stories entitled *Pata Dei*, Binapani Mohanty has carved out a niche for herself in the field of Odia fiction writing. Though branded by some as a feminist writer, her literary talent transcends any such limitation. She is a story writer par excellence. Her stories as well as novels portray characters from different strata of society which include males, females and children. Her stories, in particular, narrate the joys and sorrows, sufferings and celebrations, achievements and failures, vices and virtues of common men and women as well as men and women of lower and higher middle class.

Binapani Mohanty was born in the year 1936 in Berhampur as her father Chaturbhuj Mohanty, a government servant, and her mother, Kumudini Mohanty used to live there. But, her village is situated in Chandol in the district of Kendrapara (then undivided Cuttack), and her childhood memories are connected with Chandol. She passed matriculation in 1953, B.A. with Honours in Economics in 1957 and M.A. in Economics in 1959. Like many great fiction writers, Binapani also began her literary career as a poet and has composed nearly 200 poems

which were published in different Odia literary magazines. Her first poem "Tandrahata" was published in *Prajatantra* in 1955. Her collection of poems is entitled as *Asibara Bela* (1998).

Binapani Mohanty embarked upon her professional life as a Lecturer in Economics in 1960 and served in different colleges as Lecturer and Reader and finally retired from S.B. Women's College in the year 1992. She never thought of leading a conjugal life and has remained single till date. Throughout her life she concentrated only on two things – teaching students in colleges and writing short-stories and novels.

Binapani Mohanty's literary career as a story-teller began with the publication of "Gotie Ratira Kahani" in 1960 in *Prajatantra*. Since then she never looked back. She went on writing stories after stories and turned out to be a prolific writer writing thirty collections of short stories in Odia. The best among her stories are "Pata Dei", "Khela Ghara", "Naiku Rasta", "Bastraharana", "Andhakarara Chhai", "Barsa Barsa Bharata Barsa", "Michhi Michhika", "Kasturi Mruga O Sabuja Aranya" etc. If you ask her which short story of hers she would rate the best, she would reply humbly, "All my stories are my children. I can't distinguish one from the other. Each one is important for me."

"Pata Dei" which is the title story of the collection of short stories that won Sahitya Akademi award for Binapani Mohanty was inspired by a rural girl named Pata, teased and taunted by her friends in a bus in which the writer herself was a co-traveller. The sorrowful state of the young girl, who was weeping silently, touched Binapani to such an extent that she authored one of the finest Odia short stories. This story was published first in *Jhankara*, a reputed Odia literary magazine and was subsequently translated into English by Jayanta Mahapatra, eminent Indian English poet, and was published with the title "Lata" in *Femina* in 1986. In 1987, its Hindi dramatization was telecast in Doordarshan's 'Kashmakas'

programme winning accolades and appreciation from all parts of India. "Pata Dei" has also found its place as a representative Odia short story in collection of short stories written in English in the prestigious English magazine *The State of Life*. Bengali translation of *Pata Dei* entitled as *Chitrita Andhakar* won for the translator Bharati Nandi, the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize.

Many short stories of Binapani Mohanty have been translated into different languages such as English, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Bengali, Urdu, Telugu and Russian. A film was made on her story "Andhakarara Chhai" and has been highly appreciated by the audience.

Though Binapani is remembered today as a great Odia story writer she has also contributed substantially to Odia literature by penning three novels: *Sitara Sonita*, *Manaswini*, *Kunti*, *Kuntala*, *Shakuntala* and an one-act play entitled *Kranti*. To utilise her leisure hours in the best possible manner she has done some translation works as well. She has translated two Russian folk-tales from English to Odia and an English book entitled *Premchand* by R. Mitra to Odia. She has also translated Mati Nandi's *Sada*

*Kham* from Bengali to Odia.

About herself and her talent as a writer, Binapani observes, "Writing comes spontaneously from the heart from one's experience, from search for truth and by empathizing with characters and grappling with incidents". She has also made significant observation on literature and litterateurs: "The smell of dust is the same everywhere. Literature inculcates human values in the sons of the soil." She further said, "Many an intelligent litterateur has realized that friendship and not enmity is the first step to literature."

To add laurel to her feathers, Binapani works as the President of Lekhika Sansad, a state level organization for women, inspiring young and budding women writers of Odisha. She attended as a delegate and presented a paper in All India Women Writers' Conference held in Nainital and in the same year she represented Odisha in the valedictory session of International Women's Year under the Chairmanship of Late Indira Gandhi in New Delhi. She also represented Odia literature in the East Zonal Woman Writers' Meet held at Gangtok, Sikkim on 2nd and 3rd July 1992, under the auspices of Sahitya Akademi. She also participated in a National Seminar in 2009 in Kolkata, organized by Sahitya

*Receiving "Sahitya Bharati Samman" from Padmabhushan Ramakant Rath in presence of Manorama Mohapatra*





Receiving "Shrabani Sahitya Parisad Puraskar" in 1972  
from Dr Harekrushna Mahatab

Akademi for Centenary celebration of Late Ashapura Devi and presented a paper entitled "Ashapura in the Perspective of Indian Literature".

At the moment, at the ripe old age of 78, battered by time, age and injury, Binapani Mohanty still has an indomitable will to read and write and inspire the young writers through her writings.

She has many literary awards to her credit among which the major ones are Sunday Prajatantra Award For Poetry (1956), Jhankar for poetry (1961), Orissa Sahitya Academy Award for the short story collection entitled *Kasturi Mruga O Sabuja Aranya* (1968), Jibanranga Award for short story (1973), Challapatha Award for short story (1973), Jhankar Award for short story by Prajatantra Prachar Samiti (1974), Dharitri Award for short story (1980), Sahakar Award for short story (1985), Nilasaila Award for short story (1987), Sucharita Award for short story (1988), Sahitya Akademi Award (1990), Sudhanya Award for short story (1992), Gokarnica Award (1999), Visuba Puraskar (2000), Sahitya Bharati Puraskar (2002), Gruhini Samaj Puraskar (2002), Bharat Chandra Sahitya Smruti Samman of Sambalpur University (2002), Pratham Reba Roy Samman (2004), Kadambini Samman (2009) and Uttar Orissa Sahitya Samman (2010).

### Bibliography

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*Andhakarara Chhai*. Cuttack: Sathi Mahal, 1967  
*Tatinira Trushna*. Cuttack: Orissa Book Store, 1972  
*Sayanhara Swara*. Cuttack: Sathi Mahal, 1974  
*Kalantara*. Cuttack, Banka Bazar: Books & Books, 1977  
*Arohan*. Cuttack-2: Sathi Mahal, 1978  
*Madhyantar*. Cuttack-2: Friends Publisher, 1979  
*Bastraharana*. Cuttack-2: Books & Books, 1980  
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*Khelana*. Cuttack-2: Friends Publisher, 1983  
*Drushyantara*. Cuttack-2: Books & Books, 1984  
*Charitra Hasuchhi*. Bhubaneswar-7: New Era Publication, 1986  
*Pata Dei*. Cuttack-2: Bidyapuri, 1987  
*Trutiya Pada*. Cuttack-2: Friends Publishers, 1989



*Reading of story by Binapani Mohanty on the occasion of Children & Youth Stories Recital, organized by National Book Trust in December 2007*

*Banhibalaya.* Cuttack-2: Nabayuga Granthalaya, 1990

*Janmatara.* Cuttack-2: New Student Store, 1991

*Asru Anala.* Cuttack-2: Grantha Mandira, 1992

*Sakunira Chhaka.* Cuttack-12: Orissa Book Store, 1992

*Ekaki Parasara.* Cuttack-12: Arya Prakasani, 1994

*Abhinetri.* Cuttack-12: Arya Prakasani, 1997

*Khela Chalichhi.* Cuttack-2: Grantha Mandira, 1998

*Pacheri Sepata Nai.* Bhubaneswar: Lark Books, 1999

*Padma Ghunchi Ghunchi Jauchi.* Bhubaneswar: Paschima, 2000

*Barsha Barsha Bharata Barsha.* Bhubaneswar: Lark Books, 2004

*Jhia Bohu Meli Kale* (For Adult Education). Cuttack: Friends Publishers, 1989

*Apahaneha Akash.* Bhubaneswar: Paschima, 2007

*Naiku Rasta.* Cuttack: Dileyaduta Prakashani, 2010

#### Novel :

*Sitara Sonita.* Bhubaneswar: Paschima, 1999

*Manaswini.* Bhubaneswar: Kadambini, 2002

*Kunti, Kuntala, Sakuntala.* Cuttack: Friends Publishers, 1989

#### Collection of Poems :

*Asibara Bela.* Bhubaneswar: Paschima Publication, 1998

#### Collection of One Act Plays :

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*Premchand.* New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1980

*Sundari Bhasilisa.* Russia: Raduga Publishers, 1983

*Sada Kham.* New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1984

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*The Agony of Fire*, tr. Chandramani N. Swami, Paschima, Bhubaneswar,

2002

*Musk Deer & Green Forest*, tr. Dr Ajit Mukherjee, Writers' Workshop, Calcutta, 1999

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*Pata Dei*, tr. Dr Ashok Mohanty, Sahitya Akademi, 2005

#### Binapani Mohanty's Works Translated into Hindi :

*Tapaswini*. Tr. Dr Bijay Ku. Mohanty. New Delhi: Pavan Publication, 2003

*Manthan Aur Aanya Kahaniyen*. Tr. Sidharth Mansingh Mohapatra. Cuttack: Sabnam, 2003

*Kunti, Kuntala, Sakuntala*. Tr. Dr Sankarlal Purohit. Cuttack: Sabnam, 2003

*Pata Dei*. Tr. Dipti Prakash. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2003

*Binapani Mohanty: Nirbachita Galpa* (Pratham bhag). Cuttack: Sabnam, 2004

#### Binapani Mohanty's Works Translated into Other Languages :

*Kunti, Kuntala, Shakuntala* (in Urdu). Tr. Ram Pandit, Bombay

Chitrita Andhakar. Tr. Bharati Nandi. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2006  
*Binapani Kathalu* (in Telugu). Tr. U. Anuradha. Andhra, Vijayawada

#### A Chronology

- 1936 Born at Berhampur
- 1953 Passed Matriculation
- 1955 First poem published
- 1957 Passed B.A.
- 1959 Passed M.A. in Economics
- 1960 Professional career started as a Lecturer
- 1960 Literary career as a story-teller began
- 1968 Won Orissa Sahitya Academy Award
- 1976 Attended All India Women Writers' Conference as a delegate
- 1987 Hindi Dramatization of her story was telecast in Doordarshan
- 1990 Won Sahitya Akademi Award
- 1992 Represented Odia literature in the East Zonal Women Writers' Meet at Gangtok
- 1992 Retired from S.B. Women's College

*Manoj Das felicitating Binapani Mohanty on the occasion of Daimond Jubilee celebration of All India Radio, Cuttack*

