



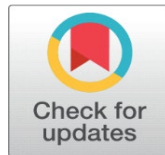
## BHIMA BHOI: VOICE OF THE VOICELESS AND POET OF THE VOID

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### ABSTRACT

Mystic poet-philosopher and greatest of disciples of Mahima Swami, Bhima Bhoi (c. 1850-1895) holds a truly remarkable position in the socio-religious history of Odisha and India. Coming as he did into a marginalized tribal background, his literary voice is the spiritual voice of the Mahima Dharma, which was a radical religion that opposed caste hierarchy and ritual orthodoxy and social alienation. By his deeply spiritual and socially committed poetry Bhima Bhoi appealed to Sunya Brahma, the unmarked Absolute, not only as metaphysical fact, but also as ethical necessity. This paper discusses how Bhima Bhoi has become the voice of the voiceless, the poet of cosmic nothingness and ethical cravings, and a seer whose words give life to justice and dignity movements.

**Keywords:** Dalit-Adivasi Spirituality, Sunya Brahma, Subaltern Mysticism, Mahima Dharma, Bhima Bhoi

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the strongest voices of subaltern religiosity in 19th-century India was the mystic poet, reformer and spiritual visionary Bhima Bhoi (c. 1850-1895) who went on to become an important voice of the Orissa renaissance in western Odisha. A tribal, a member of the Kondh community, Bhima Bhoi was born a socially stigmatized, economically excluded person at a time of devastating social upheavals, which were coupled with feudal exploitation, caste oppression, and colonial encroachment. Within this unquiet stage he was made the chief disciple and poet-prophet of Mahima Dharma. This nonconformist religious group condemned idolatry, caste system, and Brahmanical liturgy replacing it with egalitarian and formless religious views based on monotheistic spirituality based on the Absolute Nothingness Sunya Brahma. The texts of Bhima Bhoi written in Kosli-Odia and passed on through orally and performatively, were not only used as devotional songs but as an exploration of self and a radical criticism of socio-religious status quo. His most well-

known verse: *Mo jeevana pachhe narke padithau, jagata uddhara heu* ("As I live, condemned forever in hell, should the world be uplifted") can be understood only in the framework of a theology guided by compassion, ethical urgency, and salvation of all. In contrast to mainstream spiritual texts that usually champion the liberation of the self, the poetic vision of Bhima Bhoi is focused on the plight of oppressed people and the need to fulfil their suffering in an ethical way: through the spiritual enlightenment and an ethical manner of living.

This article attempts to discuss Bhima Bhoi as the voice of the voiceless, as a prophet who spoke up on behalf of Dalits, Adivasis and the oppressed, as well as the poet of the nothingness, whose metaphysical love of Sunya Brahma coincided with a radically inclusive vision of spiritual and social change. Focusing on his life and philosophy, as well as his literary output, this paper outlines Bhima Bhoi as the herald of the tradition of subaltern mysticism, the significance of which is not confined to regional and historical parameters.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- 1) **Ash, Minati (2021)** in *Cultural Afterlives of Bhima Bhoi* (Kalinga Cultural Research Centre) Follows the way Bhima Bhoi legacy can be found to stimulate community revival and morality discourse in present-day Odisha. Ash looks at these performances, rituals and educational projects around Bhima, locally, which are engaging with his poetry, to show its long-term moral force. She argues that the vision of Bhima Bhoi is more alive when it comes to resistance, self-respect, and spiritual agency of historically muted groups and how His absence has a reverberation within social praxis.
- 2) **Banerjee-Dube, Ishita (2015)** in *Religion, Politics, and Histories of the Margins* examines the contribution of Bhima Bhoi within historical development of Mahima Dharma as a subaltern religious community. She underlines the fact that the socio-political marginalization of Dalits and tribals in the colonial and feudal societies on the one hand and the poetry of Bhima on the other hand intersected. The display of Bhima invoking divine emptiness (Sunya) according to her was also a moral position against the caste, exploitation and priestly power, which was part of the spiritual resistance mechanism based on reality and word of mouth.
- 3) **Barik, Ramachandra (2017)** in *Mahima Dharma and the Politics of Religious Reform in Colonial Odisha* (Manohar Publishers) discusses how the religious reform discourse of Odisha changed under the teachings of Bhima Bhoi. Barik focuses on the relationship between Bhima and landless peasant and forgotten tribes and explains how he used poetry as the instrument of activism in his poems; which gave birth to a religious community on non-hierarchical grounds. Literary voice of Bhima thus turned out to be spiritual-political weapon, which questioned the authority of the state and the Brahmanical domination.
- 4) **Behera, Jagannath (2007)** in *Vernacular Mysticism and Dalit Voice* understands the poetry of Bhima Bhoi as an attack on metaphysical abstraction in classical Vedanta. According to Behera, Sunya suffered by Bhima is not theoretical but existential-an outcome of spiritual state rooted in pain of many. He suggests that the emptiness shown by Bhima Bhoi is a place of a class healing, moral bravery and struggle against orderly inequality, and it is a new course in adoration mysticism.
- 5) **Behera, Prafulla Kumar (2013)** in *Continuity and Change in Mahima Dharma* assesses the subsequent and post-independence existence of Bhima Bhoi in his state of Odisha. He goes into how Bhima songs are sung today in rural meetings and his moral teachings are shared only in verbal messages perpetuating a living tradition. According to Behera, Bhima Bhoi offers a kind of cultural bridge connecting the ancient tribal-spiritual knowledge with the modern ideas of equality and dignity which are cherished by people today.
- 6) **Das, Chittaranjan (2009)** in *Bhima Bhoi: A Visionary of Mahima Dharma* deals with the spiritual life of Bhima Bhoi and the one who happened to be the greatest disciple of Mahima Swami. Das explains how blindness, poverty, and tribal origins of Bhima turned into the font of poetic force, which created the theology of suffering and solidarity. His hymns are interpreted as vehicle of spiritual democracy touching the excluded and ignored. Das puts Bhima as a poet-prophet who during the times when he invoked the voice of God, Sunya, he was screaming out and out against social injustice and corruption of rituals.
- 7) **Dash, S.N. (2005)** in "The Bhima Bhoi of Odisha: Mystic and Reformer" presents profound theology of Bhima Bhoi on the concept of Sunya Brahma and its comparison with Sunyata of Buddhism and Brahman of Vedantic theology. Dash stresses the transcendent, social potency of the mystical poetry of Bhima Bhoi, a poet who redefined devotion in ludicrously inclusive terms.

- 8) **Kar, Bijayananda (1994)** in *The Religious Philosophy of Mahima Dharma* (Orissa State Archives) traces the theological origin of Mahima Dharma and discusses the role of Bhima Bhoi in defining the doctrinal nature of Mahima Dharma. Kar translates Bhima Sunya Brahma as non-dual non-idolatrous divine force that can be reached by every being with devotion and proper behavior. His work concentrates on the process of internalization of the divine outside of rituals, temples and intermediaries.
- 9) **Lenka, Niranjana (2010)** in *Sunya Tattva in Bhima Bhoi's Bhajans* resorts to the philosophical profundity of Sunya Brahma. According to Lenka, the vision Bhima Bhoi had was ontological as well as existential. His empty is nothing but fullness, the moral fulness out of which love, justice and truth are born. Lenka detects similarities of Buddhist and Bhakti metaphysics but highlights uniqueness of Bhima.
- 10) **Mallick, Rekha (2019)** in *Women in Bhima Bhoi's Poetry* concentrates on gender in the work of Bhima. Mallick reveals how Bhima Bhoi stretched his voice not only to the people who are socially excluded but also to women, in which he painted them as compassionate and spiritually strong. His poetic lines read more like an extreme inclusiveness that was not common at the time.
- 11) **Mohanty, Jatindra Kumar (2014)** in *Bhima Bhoi and the Transformative Power of Odia Poetry* (Vidyapuri) writes about the literature side of Bhima Bhoi Stuti Chintamani. He interprets the language spoken by Bhima as intensely poetic and all about vernacular rhythm that opens the way to the divine by expressing one's emotions. Mohanty claims that the poetry of Bhima Bhoi destabilized religious orthodoxy as well as traditional literary forms practiced by the elite. His poems gave birth to a new poetics of liberation that broke caste and literacy taboos that made Bhima an emblematic figure in Odia literary history.
- 12) **Mohanty, Prabodh Kumar (2021)** in *Bhima Bhoi: Life, Literature and Philosophy* (Paschima Odisha Sahitya Akademi) gives a detailed account of the life of Bhima Bhoi and also a critique on his philosophy. According to Mohanty, the thinking of Bhima is unique in Odisha, this school can be attributed to a vernacular theology. His perspective on how he sees the world is based on suffering and silence, but it tells everything about love, truth, and justice in the inequalitarian world.
- 13) **Mohapatra, Bijay Kumar (2006)** in *Mysticism and Modernity in Bhima Bhoi's Thought* viewing the character of Bhima with the idea of Sunya Brahma as religion thought to provoke a revolution. Mohapatra asserts that Bhima Bhoi transformed that mystic experience into an agent of moral conduct and social opposition. When it comes to his spiritual charity and moral abhorrence, this idea can be perfectly demonstrated by his statement, "let my soul be burnt in hell, so that the world can be saved." Mohapatra said that such philosophy of self-sacrifice identifies Bhima as a mystical and nonetheless a moral revolutionary.
- 14) **Nath, S. (1998)** published "Mahima Dharma: Plea for Proper Perception", in which they urge the movement to receive more academic interest in its historical and philosophical aspects. Nath claims the reasons why the Bhima Bhoi was classified as a religious teacher whose spiritual teachings should not just be classified as a devotional poetry but a revolutionary theology of liberation.
- 15) **Nath, Satrugana (2004)** in *Mahima Dharma: Eka Adhyayana* Summarizes the background information of Mahima Dharma and the roles of Bhima Bhoi in making known to people. He observes that the poetic voice of Bhima carried the movement to the households and minds of the rural Odisha. The pits of Bhima, blindness, humility and compassion enabled him to identify with the outcasts in a real way. Nath observes Bhima Bhai to be a saint, a social reformer and also one who challenged religious exploitation and social indifference as the poet-devotee.
- 16) **Nayak, P.M. (1985)** essay, "Bhima Bhoi: Poet Laureate of Mahima Religion", is included in the volume *West Orissa: A Study in Ethos*. Nayak gives a detailed account of the biography of Bhima Bhoi. He places him between the socio-religious backgrounds of the movement in western Odisha, that is, Mahima Dharma. He particularly stresses how Bhima Bhoi came out as a poetic and moral visionary who expressed the spiritual desires of the persecuted communities. Bringing forth the beauty of his lyrics as well as the morality of his wordings, Nayak brings before us a saint, a poet, but more importantly a prophet who speaks through the fringes of caste and the society. The piece forms the basis of the knowledge that Bhima Bhoi had an intersection between his literary works and the more mainstream trends of social reform and mystical devotion.
- 17) **Nayak, Ramesh Chandra (1998)** in *Saints of Odisha* profiles Bhima Bhoi among other mystic figures. Nayak focuses our attention on the fact that Bhima used a language that was not based on classical Sanskritic traditions,

and that his language penetrated the hearts of the poor in terms of simplicity of metaphors, familiarity of imagery, and primal intensity. He views Bhima Bhoi as a catalyst of change through whom spirituality became more democratic and emotionally touching.

- 18) Panda, R.N. (2008)** in *Subaltern Saints and Ethical Vernaculars* Locates Bhima Bhoi within the bigger tradition of saints-poets such as Kabir, Ravidas. He argues that the poetry of Bhima represents movements that are in two ways: a movement to the divine and the oppressed. Bhima is not empty of action in his Sunya; it is a hoarding of moral (fullness). His persona as a poet is a prophet and one serving, a denouncer of religious inflexibility as well as human iniquity. Panda found Bhima Bhoi a founder of moral vernacular modernity in India.
- 19) Pati, Biswamoy (1990)** explores Bhima Bhoi's role in "Resisting Domination: Peasants, Tribals and the National Movement in Orissa". Pati places the voice of Bhima Bhoi in the wider flow of anti-feudal and anti-caste activism in colonial Odisha. His discussion is useful in the comprehension of how the writings of Bhima Bhoi were interventions of the spiritual and political nature.
- 20) Pati, Madhusudan (2001)** in *Bhima Bhoi: Verses from the Void* (Oxford University Press) addresses the poetry of Bhima Bhoi as a metaphysical existential reflection and social commentary. It is highlighted in the study that the vision of Bhima of Sunya Brahma represents native metaphysics which goes beyond categories of classical Vedantic thought. Pati demonstrates that Bhima employs the language that is highly emotional, sometimes raw, but spiritual ecstasy and human suffering can also be revealed with its help. He sees Bhima Bhoi as a unique thinker-poet who successfully combined the mystical understanding with the radical appeal to social justice; thus, his voice was a philosopher voice and political voice in the colonial context.
- 21) Pattnaik, Dipti (2011)** in *The Voice of the Marginalized* draws a conclusion that the contribution of Bhima Bhoi is not only literary, not only religious, but also very political. Based on her analysis, the works by Bhima create an ethical archive of resistance, since there is a one-of-a-kind union of spirituality and social consciousness.
- 22) Rani, Raghunath (2018)** in *Contestation and Resistance: Social Reception of Mahima Dharma in Colonial Odisha* (Eastern India Historical Review) looks at how Bhima Bhoi was received by rural masses and zamindari high society. The author proposes that the verses of Bhima Bhoi served as a vehicle of reinterpretation of the spiritual experience and the identification in the ways that were not limited by Brahmanical hierarchies. Poetry also helped achieve a clear religious awareness that not only opposed the dominance of the upper castes, but also colonial ideas of the tribal religion being primitive.
- 23) Sahu, S.N. (2018)** in his article "Bhima Bhoi and His Religion of Compassion" (EPW) introduces Bhima Bhoi as the revolutionary poet; he was a voice of the oppressed. He points out that, underpinned with empathetic attitudes, the compositions of Bhima expressed the moral suffering of the oppressed and evoked a sense of Sunya Brahma, a divine vacuum that represented the truth, justice, and universal love. In fact, Sahu highlights that the poetic idiom of Bhima has its basis in folk language and experience which provides an all-inclusive means of liberation to the disadvantaged populations like the Dalits and the Adivasis of colonial Odisha. The ethical monotheism and plea to compassion of Bhima has transformed him into a pioneer of subaltern religiosity and vernacular mysticism.
- 24) Satpathy, Sumanyu (2011)** in "Translating the Subaltern: Bhima Bhoi and the Politics of Voice" explores the linguistic and literary overtones of the vernacular pieces of Bhima Bhoi. Satpathy puts in the forefront the struggle between orality and literacy, and the problems of transposing the cosmology and the moral power of Bhima Bhoi to modern terms of criticality.
- 25) Tripathy, Bansidhar (2002)** in *Caste, Religion and Protest* positions Bhima Bhoi as one of the religious reformers of India. He maintains that Bhima, because of his demand that nishkama bhakti (desireless devotion) and righteousness should be held was not in tune with ritualistic trends. His poetry turned out to be a means of protest and he made the people on the lower ladder of society feel religious pride.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to critically analyze the literary and philosophical work of Bhima Bhoi and that is how Bhima Bhoi has argued in the concept of Sunya Brahma is used to explain a unique vision of mystical devotion, ethical obligation, and metaphysics in the context of Mahima Dharma.

To consider Bhima Bhoi as a voice of revolt of sub alternate area, we need to examine how his poetry led as media of expression of the marginalized groups of people, particularly Dalits and Adivasis, and subverted socio-religious systems of oppression established in 19 th century Odisha.

To evaluate the modernity of teachings and works of Bhima Bhoi and his contribution to the modern-day dialogues with regards to the dynamics of caste liberation, spiritual equality, native epistemologies and environmental or moral awareness.

#### **4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1) How does Bhima Bhoi articulate the concept of Sunya Brahma (Void) in his poetry and philosophy?
  - What are the theological, ethical, and metaphysical implications of this concept?
- 2) In what ways does Bhima Bhoi serve as a voice for the voiceless, especially among the Dalits, Adivasis, and socially marginalized communities of Odisha?
  - How does his personal experience of suffering shape his vision of justice and compassion?
- 3) How does Bhima Bhoi challenge ritualism, caste hierarchy, and Brahmanical dominance through the lens of Mahima Dharma?
- 4) What are the key literary and stylistic features of Bhima Bhoi's poetry that make it accessible and powerful for common rural people?
  - How do oral traditions and local language contribute to the spread of his teachings?
- 5) How does Bhima Bhoi's work contribute to the formation of an indigenous, non-Brahmanical spiritual identity in Odisha?
- 6) What is the contemporary significance of Bhima Bhoi's poetry and thought in movements for social equality, religious reform, and cultural revival?

#### **5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is qualitative, cross disciplinary, interpretative and critical in examining the literary, philosophical as well as socio-cultural works of Bhima Bhoi. It is also to know how his vision of Sunya Brahma, his poetry and life manifest something peculiar as to how mysticism, normative morality and knowledge of subalternity come together in the context of Mahima Dharma.

##### **5.1. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research design is that of qualitative and interpretive type, and its central themes are the textual analysis of the works of Bhima Bhoi and the socio-religious backgrounds of his life as well as his thoughts. It uses literary criticism, historical studies and theology to discuss the role of Bhima Bhoi as a subaltern mystic and poet-reformer.

##### **5.2. SOURCES OF DATA**

###### **1) Primary Sources**

- The original poetry of Bhima Bhoi, especially Stuti Chintamani, Brahma Nirupana Gita and Adbhuta Chautisa (in extant print, transliterated or translated editions).
- Mahima Dharma keeps oral traditions and songs in the form of hymns and regional performances.

###### **2) Secondary Sources**

- Scholarly books, essays and journal articles on Mahima Dharma, Bhima Bhoi, and related topics in subaltern studies, Dalit literature and vernacular mysticism.
- Biographical works, including P.M. Nayak (1985), S.N. Dash (2005) and critical articles found in edited collections and periodicals, e.g. Economic and Political Weekly.



### 5.3. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

- Textual Analysis: Critical yet careful reading and analysis of the poetry of Bhima Bhoi to determine the repetition of themes, symbolism and theological concepts like Sunya Brahma.
- Contextual Analysis: By placing the works of Bhima Bhoi into the socio-political sphere of 19th century Odisha, including covering issues such as caste, colonialism, tribal marginalization.
- Agency of Bhima Bhoi: The mysticism of Bhima Bhoi in relation to other traditions of thought (e.g. Buddhist theory of nothingness, Bhakti poetry, Christian mysticism) in order to familiarize oneself with the wider philosophical meaning of Bhima Bhoi.
- Critical Discourse Analysis: An analysis of the ways Bhima Bhoi's language and metaphors can be used as an instrument of social exertion and spiritual defiance.

### 5.4. FIELD ENGAGEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Provided it is possible, the research can include the interviews with the followers of Mahima Dharma or involve interactions in Khaliapali or Sonapur to learn how the legacy of Bhima Bhoi is interpreted in the modern practice.

### 5.5. LIMITATIONS

The study admits that it is difficult to find original copies of manuscripts, regional dialects, and oral sources. The interpretive impositions of the Bhima Bhoi subtle poetic expressions may also be achieved through the translations.

## 6. LIFE AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Bhima Bhoi came to this world in an ethnic tribal community (Kondh, Khond) of the western region of Odisha, probable in the area of Redhakhol or Kandhamal. Having a socially deprived and poor background, since a tender age, he had to face a lot of suffering, including bereavement of his parents. Left with no way to access educated learning and even forced out of Brahmanical religious domains, Bhima Bhoi expressed an early and remarkable spiritual sensitivity, and a natural aptitude to poetic writing. He came in contact with Mahima Dharma, an out-of-line religious group started by Mahima Swami which transformed him. When it was started during the mid-19th century Bhima Bhoi fell under the direct control of Mahima Swami whose preachings focused on formless devotion (nirakara bhakti), moral discipline and ban of idolatry and hierarchy of ritual.

The life of Bhima Bhoi occurred at the time when there was feudal exploitation, British colonial expansion, and the caste disparities which were deep-rooted in the Garhjat (tributary states) states of Odisha. It is such degrading surroundings which defined his spiritual vision, and led him to his profound compassion with the plight of the masses. The life he endured himself of harsh labor, marginality and emotional pain was turned into significant spiritual awareness and literary production. And instead of rejecting the world he internalised its suffering, using it to create a collection of devotional poetry that is striking in its pathos and moral honesty.

By the means of his poems, Bhima Bhoi developed not only as a mystic-poet but also as a subaltern voice of struggle, expressing both dreams and sufferings of the voiceless people deprived of their needs by the established ruling order. His life path as a suppressed tribal youth to a saint and a literary personality mirrors a spiritual venture of compassion, struggle, and transcendence thus becoming one of the most influential figures in the socio-religious history of Odisha as well as beyond.

## 7. THE PHILOSOPHY OF SUNYAVADA

The essence of both the spiritual and philosophic vision of Bhima Bhoi is comprised in the doctrine of the Void (Bhagavata-Sunya), according to which Divine is the deform, and inexpressible, and transcendent. Based on radical metaphysics of Mahima Dharma, this idea of Sunya cannot be or is not just emptiness or nothingness, but is a dynamic, compassionate and omnipresent reality which rules and cares about the universe. Another important development in articulating Sunyavada is that of Bhima Bhoi which massively differs both orthodox form of Hindu theism, and that of

Buddhist Shunyata. Although the Buddhist term Shunyata commonly means ontological negation or a lack of intrinsic existence, Bhima Bhoi Sunya Brahma has a life and moral responsiveness, grace and caring about a suffering world, though without form and qualities.

In his theology of poetry, Sunya turns to be the high goal of bhakti (devotion) and moral activity. Bhima Bhoi did not represent Void as a metaphysical absolute but as a spiritual hideout of the poor, the deprived and the morally aware pursuer. His poems appeal to this non-descriptive god to reduce human sufferings, to pardon human faults and to restore the world to a state of moral virtue. This makes his spiritual sight transcendent and very humanitarian.

The Sunyavada of Bhima Bhoi is also full of a caustic critique against the idolatry, ritual and Brahmanical mediation. He disdained the dominion of caste-based priesthoods, temple-based worship and scriptural orthodoxy, pleading in its place a direct, unmediated, and egalitarian connection between the devotee and the Divine. According to his vision, spiritual realization did not demand the presence of a priest, idol, and structure and had to include internal cleanness, unadulterated devotion, and ethical self-control. This idealistic reinterpretation of God and piety was used as the theological warrant of social improvement, criticizing the religious defence of inequality and exclusion. In the Sunyavada of Bhima Bhoi, the metaphysical Void is a hymn to awakening, to the imperative of being humane, ethical and brotherly to all, a trait which has caused not just spiritualists, but social commentators to see it as a prophecy through the ages.

## 8. BHIMA BHOI AS THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

The poetical collection of Bhima Bhoi is a strong testimony of agony, perseverance, and religious hopes of the marginalized groups of the 19<sup>th</sup> -century Odia, specifically the Dalits and the Adivasis. Bhima Bhoi was a mystic who appeared in the margins of the caste and tribal world and as such he was not a writer of devotional poetry, he was the voice of a whole group of people shut out of ritual power, scriptural learning, and social respect. His works converted personal misery into the general call of emancipation, and his most well-known and ethically provocative line is: *Mo jeevana pachhe narke padithau, jagata uddhara heu*, which can be translated as: Let my living be condemned to hell, as long as we are able to save the world. This very loving address shows how deeply earnest was his moral purpose, how completely it was not a matter of his own salvation or of his spiritual superiority, but of the deliverance of a tormenting world. It was in this overturning of the spiritual hierarchy that Bhima Bhoi identifies himself with the self-sacrifice nature of the Saints such as Christ and the Bodhisattvas as he cast himself as a savior poet whose spiritual authority was based on compassion and social concern. And it is to note that his poems continually reiterate a number of points of critical importance: the suffering inherent by nature of the poor and the untouchables; the spiritual barrenness and moral senescence of ritualized Brahmanism; the need to cleanse and purify internally rather than to perform rituals; and the absolute unity amid all beings in the eyes of the Divine. In the case of Bhima Bhoi, the absence of form of the Absolute that of Sunya Brahma in the Mahima Dharma was not a remote object of metaphysical thought but was the moral power that responded to the appeal of the unjustly oppressed. His poems in Kosli-Odia were written and sung in general meetings, not to say designed to be readily understood by people beyond the pale of Sanskritic traditions, making poetry a praxis, prayers a protest. Through this, Bhima Bhoi made way to the story of being a religious poet: he was no longer someone isolated in the world facing no sufferings or hurts but someone who spoke the language of the world; someone who spoke the language of the people who had no name in history. His writings therefore amount to a various sort of subaltern mysticism associated with local idioms, emotionally evocative, and spiritually egalitarian wherein he explained a theology of dignity, justice, and universal love. In his transformation of the daily lives of loss into a divine vision of ethics, Bhima Bhoi became not only a spiritual leader but also a revolutionary poet, lending to one of the first and most lasting documents of revolt within India working-class circles.

## 9. LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS AND MYSTICAL EXPRESSION

Literary works of Bhima Bhoi testify a kind of distinct fusion of mystical vision, poetic simplicity and ethical intensity, which have been deliberately produced in Kosli-Odia, the vernacular language of western Odisha. Bhima Bhoi simply circumvented the Brahmanical monopoly on sacred speech and permitted rural illiterate people to explore profound spiritual realities by writing in a locally and popularly accessible idiom. His greatest works: *Stuti Chintamani*, *Brahma Nirupana Gita*, *Adbhuta Chautisa* are at once scriptures of devoutness and the works of philosophy. His most famous work is *Stuti Chintamani* which is a lyrical effusion of intense bhakti, lamentation and devotion to Sunya Brahma, the devoid, the formless Absolute. It also indicates an immense compassion towards human pain and finds a way to God

to salvage the whole humanity. Brahma Nirupana Gita is a way into metaphysical linguistic thoughts of reflections of the nature of the Void, into the paradoxes of being and being beyond. He also plays with conventional chhandas (metrical forms) in Adbhuta Chautisa and some other compositions to provide spiritual teachings which are easily memorized in form of a melody pattern in the main tradition. The poetic style of Bhima Bhoi is characterized by the straightforwardness of diction, repetitiveness of rhyme, symbolic imagery drawing on the emptiness, fire, darkness, water and silence to express the indescribable perception of divine fulfillment. His poems are written in the form of the dialogues between the self and the Divine and thus they are even more touching and full of ideas. Such conversational structure makes his poetry a lonely complaint and a communal prayer. In addition to this, the songs composed by Bhima Bhoi were not pure textual recitation to be recited more as an act of devotion, they were to be sung in gatherings, rituals and spiritual congregations with the whole group shouting loudly. Through this, his work was able to form a resistance theology which consisted of a spirituality built on mutual suffering, moral sincerity and democratic engagement. In the poetic voice of Bhima Bhoi, therefore, mysticism was democratized, and the greatest spiritual truth made intelligible, and available, to the lowest of the oppressed, and the radical philosophy of Mahima Dharma was given permanent poetic expression.

## 10. LEGACY AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

The legacy of Bhima Bhoi stretches much beyond the periphery of religious devotions and even in the contemporary context has become a very strong voice of subaltern rights, moral impulses as well as spiritual equality. Dalit intellectuals, the Adivasi movements and postcolonial theorists have re-appropriated his teaching with greater frequency increasingly as a source text of a theology of liberation that stress the values of dignity, justice and the moral agency of the poor and oppressed. His contribution to the culture is reflected in the efforts of the Odisha government and universities to create centers of study of Bhima Bhoi, literary festivals and popularize his philosophy in conversation. His works have recently been studied in relation to subaltern spirituality, ethics of care and indigenous knowledge systems within the contemporary scholarship, which has evolved to show interest in non-Western, non-Brahmanical strains of resistance. His vision is also attuned to world-wide and local human conflicts dealing with caste-related torture, religious discrimination and ecological destruction, and presents a non-violent and compassionate vision with spiritual inclusiveness and moral accountability. Bhima Bhoi remains a role model to the new generations of like-minded people who also aspire to add spiritual dimension to social change. He will always be remembered by his life, and his works as a guiding light to all who want to make the world a fairer, more understanding, more awakened place.

## 11. CONCLUSION

The figure of Bhima Bhoi looms large both in the cultural and spiritual history of Odisha not only as one and a mystic poet but as a seer whose writings transformed the meaning of devotion, moral conduct and defiance. His formulation of Sunya Brahma was not a mere theological abstraction; it was a philosophy of life having its basis in the mystical experience and a moral responsibility. Based on his poems, Bhima Bhoi formed a unique spiritual language in which ritualism and orthodoxy are shattered, with a loving vision of a formless, all-creating divinity, based on justice, humility, and universal love.

With writings like poetry, Bhima Bhoi expressed resistance as a subject of subalternity through the core of the individual and communal suffering. He grew up in a marginalists tribal community and was blind; therefore, his life experiences enabled him to address the experiences of the oppressed-in particular, the Dalits, Adivasis, and the rural poor of 19th century Odisha. His music turned into a strength to strike against the Brahman rule, exclusion by caste and religiosity governed by priests. By doing this, he was redefining what it meant to be a spiritual person, not as someone who attended various rites but as someone whom is pure of heart, who acts in a moral manner, and does not fear compassion.

The thought of Bhima Bhoi remains relevant in the current contexts. His teachings speak volumes in contemporary discourses in caste justice, spiritual democracy, environmental awareness, and indigenous ways of knowing. His passionate interest in the afflicting world good is exemplified excellently when he prayed to be punished to save others; that is a unique moral dedication and is not time or place specific.

To conclude, Bhima Bhoi is not only the history of his religious past, as Bhima Bhoi is the voice of those who are voiceless and he is a poet of the vacuum. It addresses the quality of life in its constant fight against equal rights and



treatment, dignity and moral clarity in a scattered world. His poetry abound with mysticism and revolutionary ethics are still a call of justice and having compassion towards the whole humanity.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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