

Description and Rationale

Title

Rare Odia Serials at the Utkal Sahitya Samaj

Project Description*

This is a proposal to digitize six regional Odia language serials from the early twentieth century, held by the Utkal Sahitya Samaj (USS) in Cuttack: *Baikuntha Bhikari*, *Puribasi*, *The Ratnakar*, *Utkal Barta*, *The Swadesha Lakshmi*, and *The Light*. These titles are not present in Worldcat, and we know of no other holdings. We have received written permission from the USS to digitize their entire archive, and have chosen these rare serial holdings as a pilot project.

The work will be conducted by staff from the Center for Translation and Digital Humanities at Ravenshaw University, under the direction of Urmishree Bedamatta. To support capacity building, and with an eye towards future collaborations in Odisha, we are requesting funds to purchase mobile digitization equipment for the Center as part of the project budget.

This pilot is part of a larger project led by Siddharth Satpathy (University of Hyderabad) and Miles Taylor (University of York) on the learned societies of colonial India. Broader project goals include creating a critical digital resource of these societies' publications, print holdings, and archival records.

Reasons for Consideration*

We propose to digitize six regional Odia language serials from the early twentieth century. In comparison to the more broadly circulated journals of the period, these minor serials are more given to local tastes and particular concerns, and will allow scholars to better delineate the character of the Odia language public sphere in the period.

These serials are part of the repository of the *Utkal Sahitya Samaj*, the most prominent learned society of Odisha in the period. These possess a rare archival value. Their digitization will help scholars to better study the varied nature of Odia print culture in the early twentieth century. There are no holdings listed for these titles in WorldCat, and to the best of our knowledge, they have not yet been used by scholars of Odia literary history.

Three of these serials were brought out from Jagannath Puri, the famous temple town and pilgrimage center in Odisha. *Baikuntha Bhikari*, a weekly in Odia, was brought out by the Orissa Printing Works. *Puribasi*, a bilingual weekly in English and Odia, was published by the Purushottam Printing and Publishing Company. *The Ratnakar*, another bilingual weekly, was published in aid of the charitable home for consumptives at Puri. Some are directly concerned with the promotion of Hinduism—*Baikuntha Bhikari*'s editor is interested in the “protection of cattle, temple and religious vocation [...] through the teaching of *dharma*.” Others are more concerned with the aspirations of the town of Puri at large—*Puribasi* wants the temple town to be made into the administrative capital of the province for a few months in a year. By and large, they will help a scholar to better understand Puri and its local urban culture in the period.

One of the serials was published from Calcutta and catered to the needs of the Odia diaspora in the city. *Utkal Barta*, a weekly newspaper in Odia, was printed and published by one Mani Lal Maharana at the Utkal Press, 8 St. James' Square, Calcutta. Bound volumes are available only for the years 1914, 1915. By a contemporary estimate, about one hundred thousand Odia migrant workers and entrepreneurs resided in Calcutta at the end of the nineteenth-century. No comprehensive work on this diaspora is yet available. The serial *Utkal Barta* will enable one to assess the taste and aspirations of this diaspora readership.

Published from the southern town of Berhampur in Odisha, *The Swadesha Lakshmi*, a monthly Odia journal, was concerned with “agricultural and cognate trades and industries.” It was brought out by Gunnaiah Sastri, a Telugu public intellectual who worked for the cause of the Odisha Unification movement. It was printed at the Shri Saraswati Press, Berhampur. Only one bound volume for the year 1906 is available. It is the subject matter of the periodical that draws our attention. Railways came late to Odisha in 1896. Trade and industrial fairs began to be organized around the same time. The journal will help scholars delineate local reflections on the provincial economy of the region.

The Light was a “monthly paper and criticism” of the American Baptist Mission at Balasore, a town in the northern parts of Odisha. It was edited and published by H. N. Sahu, the librarian of the Mission. It was published in both Bengali and Odia languages. For Bengali, one bound volume for 1934, and for Odia, three bound volumes for the years 1933, 35, 38 are available. Given its denominational character, the paper will of interest to historians of Christian missions in the region.

Authors

See Reasons for Consideration.

Publishers

See Reasons for Consideration.

Proposal Contributors

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Details and Sources

Resource Types*

- Serials

Regions*

- South Asia

Countries of Origin*

India

Major Languages

Odia, English, Bengali, Telugu

Source Format*

- Paper

Target Format

Digital

Identifiers

N/A

Links

N/A

Source and Holdings

Source for all titles: Utkal Sahitya Samaj

SL no	Name of the Newspaper	Frequency of publication	Year of Publication	Volume/Issue/Serial no	Pages	Language/s	Dimension
1.	Puribasi	Weekly	1914	Vol 1	137	Odia and English	45 cm x 27 cm
2.	-do-	-do-	1927	Vol 4	156	Odia and English	45 cm x 27 cm
3.	-do-	-do-	1929	Vol 7. no?	148	Odia	45 cm x 27 cm
4.	-do-	-do-	1930	Vol 7. no?	90	Odia	45 cm x 27 cm
5.	The Ratnakar	-do-	1915	Vol 1	228	Odia and English	33 cm x 21 cm
6.	-do-	-do-	1916	Not Clear (NC)	424	-do-	32 cm x 20.5 cm
7.	-do-	-do-	1919	-NC-	480	-do-	35 cm x 21 cm

8.	-do-	-do-	1920	-NC-	388	-do-	32 cm x 21 cm
9.	The Swadesa Laxmi	Monthly	1906	Vol 1, no. 8	64	Odia, English, Telugu	22.7 cm x 14.5 cm
10.	Utkal Barta	Weekly	1914	-NC-	184	Odia	45.2 cm x 26.5 cm
11.	-do-	Weekly	1915	-NC-	156	-do-	-do-
12.	Baikuntha Bhikari	-do-	1929	-NC-	152	Odia and English	44 cm x 27.5 cm
13.	-do-	-do-	1930	-NC-	140	-do-	46.5 cm x 27.5 cm
14.	-do-	-do-	1931	-NC-	136	-do-	44 cm x 27.5 cm
15.	-do-	-do-	1932	-NC-	64	-do-	34.5 cm x 21 cm
16.	-do-	-do-	1933	-NC-	64	-do-	34.5 cm x 21 cm
17.	-do-	-do-	1934	-NC-	94	-do-	39 cm x 25 cm
18.	-do-	-do-	1935	-NC-	72	-do-	-do-
19.	-do-	-do-	1936	-NC-	28	-do-	-do-
20.	-do-	-do-	1938	-NC-	56	-do-	-do-
21.	Light (Noor)	Monthly	1934	-NC-	20	Bengali	34 cm x 21 cm
22.	Light (Noor)	Monthly	1933	Vol.1, no.1-3	12	Odia	34 cm x 21 cm

23.	Light (Noor)	-do-	1935	Vol. 3, nos. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	36	Odia	34 cm x 21 cm
24.	Light (Noor)	-do-	1938	Vol. 6, nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8	20	Odia	34 cm x 21 cm

Source and Holdings Notes

No other holdings identified.

Physical Details

See attached table under Source and Holdings.

Existing Reformatted Materials

N/A

Intellectual Property Considerations

There is general agreement (and government support) that the cutoff date for copyright in Odisha is 1957. Nevertheless, for those volumes that are post-1925, the principal investigators will make a best effort attempt to locate publisher's heirs and secure their consent.