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Maa Rama Devi's 'Jibana Pathe': A Socio-Political & Cultural Document towards Voicing Passive Resistance

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Abstract:

Smt. Rama Devi Chaudhury is remembered among Indians (in general) and Odias (in particular) as 'Maa' (Mother) for her philanthropic activity towards the poor, the needy, and the miserable. This work will deal with Jibana Pathe (1984), autobiography of Rama Devi, which has emerged as a piece de resistance since it has been penned. The paper will discuss how an individual's legacy and leadership can motivate people to pursue their goals, provide vision to face contemporary challenges, and help construct a better

Society and a powerful personality in addition, it will also shed light on other aspects such as 'Maa Rama Devi as a writer' and her active participation in society building, protection of women's rights and promotion of their education, gender equity, economic empowerment, love and compassion towards untouchables (asprushyata), health care. This interdisciplinary work will adapt an auto/biographical method as well as a qualitative and empirical research method.

Key Words: *Maa Rama Devi, Autobiographical narrative, Jibana Pathe, Legacy and leadership, Contemporary Challenges, Society building, and Modern Odisha.*

1. Introduction:

Rama Devi Choudhury is a revered name among Indians (in general) and *Odias* (in particular) as 'Maa' (mother) for touching upon the lives of many living a life of deprivation and motivating them to fight for the nation's freedom. Her life entrenched in a nationalistic spirit incorporated a resolute spirit has made her the prototype for an ideal woman and a guiding light for modern Odisha. She was a trailblazing forerunner and remained instrumental in shaping the nationalistic spirit of our province. Her involvement in the liberation movement and sustenance towards women's education and leadership through reflexive resistance transformed the socio, politico and cultural topography of the state. Among many women freedom fighters in India, she



exemplifies women's pride and dignity in defying hindrances such as social rigidity and political-social instability. In addition to her socio-political endeavours, Maa Rama Devi championed the cause of social upliftment for all strata of people, working towards improving health care amenities, spreading the idea of education, gender equality, economic empowerment, and overall welfare of the women of Odisha.

2. An Overview of Rama Devi's Life:

Maa Rama Devi Choudhury born on 3rd Dec 1899 at Satyabhamapur, Cuttack was nurtured in a society discerned by unyielding social edifices and political uncertainty. Her family included her father Gopalaballava Das, the then deputy magistrate, mother Basanta Manjari, parental uncle Madhusudan Das and cousin sisters (Ms Das)¹ Shailabala Das and (Ms Hajra)² Sudhanshubala Das. (3). Rama Devi got wedded to Gopabandhu Choudhury at the age of fifteen in Kherasa, Jagatsinghpur which was a part of undivided Cuttack at that time. (22) There emanated a turning point in her life subsequently her marriage. In her autobiography *Jibana Pathe*, she never disremember to comment about her mother, maternal uncle, aunt and grandmother who have been a great cause of stimulation to her and helped her to procure abilities like tolerance, patience, remaining robust in challenging periods, bravery, and benevolence. (16) She was a strong believer in this dictum that 'Janani Janmabhūmischa Swargadapi Gariyasi'³ Hence, one can effortlessly spotlight that Maa Rama Devi was exceedingly affectionate of her mother and continually visualized to find a prodigious reason to expense her life for the motherland. Like 'the Childhood shows the man, as morning Shows the Day',⁴ from her juvenile, she was well-responsive to national happenings due to her ancestral milieu.

From her childhood, she was influenced by her father, mother, Parental Uncle Madhusudan Das, Shri Aurobindo, Jai Prakash Narayan, Vinoba Bhave, Annie Besant, Swami Vivekananda and Ramdas Maharaj (66). She was chanting (Hari nama) given by Maharaj ji for the peace of her mind in the tough times (69). After getting married to Shri Gopabanadhu Choudhury in 1921, her life had utterly been rehabilitated. She had the idea that life would not be so easy for her to survive. Coming from a highborn family and living with a stringent and conformist mother-in-law was not even smooth for her. But, she has succeeded in her life so sound and exasperated to live up to other's anticipations without losing her self-beliefs, ideologies and beliefs as a human being.

¹ Ms.Das- (Shailabala Das) Daughter of Madhusundan Das

² Ms Hajra- (Shudhanshubala Das) Daughter of Madhusudan Das and sister of Shailabala Das

³ "Janani Janmabhūmischa Swargadapi Gariyasi" - A Sanskrit shloka from the Hindu epic Ramayana which denotes our mother who gives us birth and our motherland where we do flourish permanently superior to heaven.

⁴ "The Childhood shows the man, as morning Shows the Day"- lines from John Milton's *Paradise Regained* (1671).



3. Objectives of the Study:

The study aims to deliberate how Rama Devi Choudhury's autobiography *Jibana Pathe* has left a legacy and leadership imprint that has motivated people to pursue their goals and provide an outlook that would help them face contemporary challenges, construct a better society and evolve as a powerful personality. An in-depth reading of the text reveals Rama Devi's vigorous involvement in the freedom movement, women's rights movement, women's education measures, gender equality, economic empowerment, love and compassion towards untouchables and her concern for health care amenities. The wisdom she imparted, the leadership she exhibited and the legacies she left behind have been a source of guiding light for generations and that is what this paper aims at establishing. The interdisciplinary study will exclusively deal with Rama Devi Choudhury's autobiography *Jibana Pathe* (1984)

4. Methodology of the Study:

The study which is interdisciplinary in nature will be primarily textual analysis and will incorporate autobiographical/biographical methodology. While scrutinizing the text critically, we will explore how Maa Rama Devi's autobiography *Jibana Pathe* divulges different aspects and occasions of her life. The paper will also focus on social, cultural and political aspects of the time and throw light on how at the crossroads of life Maa Rama Devi carved a niche for herself and became a beckoning light for other women of the times in particular and denizens of the nation in general.

This paper will adopt qualitative and empirical research and auto/biographical narrative as a method. It has used numerous empirical sources like "life narratives, oral stories, documents both official and personal, dairies, memorials, epistles, videos photos and techniques like triangulation of information and in-depth analysis of the sources." (quoted by Abrahao, 2008a)⁵ It is a methodological approach in which we need to examine the essential facets of a person's overall development. "Memory, identity and experience are pillars of reason in autobiographical subjectivity." (Jayaannapura 2017, 28)⁶ 'Memory' is an essential tool of the narrator and simultaneously it is important for the researcher as it will enable him or her to restructure the

⁵ Abrahao, M.H.M.B. Le receipt autobiographique-temps et dimensions de l'invention de soi. In E.C. Souza (Ed.), *Autobiographies, Ecrits de Soi et Formation* au Bresil. Collection Histoire de vie et formation- Dirigee par Gaston Pineau (125-146).Paris: L' Harmattan. 2008a.

⁶ Jayaannapura, A.V.S. "A Study of Autobiographical Approach and Understanding." *Scholdge International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Allied Studies*, vol.4, no. 04, 2017, pp 28-30. ISSN 2394-336x, DOI: 10.19805/journal.sijmas040401



elements of analysis. Specifically, in an autobiography, the author works both as 'the self' and 'more than the self'. S/he lives 'within and beyond' social space and historical time. In the act of relentless reinterpretation of the actualities of the past, it "weaves the threads of the narrative as shared memory" (quoted by Coasta 2001, 82)⁷ says (Abrahao 2012, 30)⁸.

In the in-depth analysis of the autobiography of Maa Rama Devi, *Jibana Pathe*, we can witness the above-mentioned elements of an autobiographical narrative and bring out how the narrative is based on memory deals with its 'subjective and objective' approaches of the auto-biographer and the narrator, reveals their 'authenticity' and discusses its 'accounting and self-reflections.

5. Critical Analysis of the Text '*Jibana Pathe*':

Jibana Pathe, autobiography of Maa Rama Devi was published by Grantha Mandir, Cuttack in 1984 and digitalized by Srujanika, the treasure trove of Odisha. Gopinatha Mohanty, the popular writer of Odisha has transcribed an outstanding foreword to the manuscript having the opportunity from Rama Devi's daughter Annapurna Maharana. If we critically evaluate the text, we will discover that text discusses Rama Devi Choudhury's life starting from her childhood, marriage and her socio-political immersion which ended up transporting a new revolution to the human mind and heart.

5.1 Autobiography as a Metaphor of Self:

Maa Rama in her autobiography *Jibana Pathe* emphasizes upon the relevance of reading autobiography and claims that life writings always fuel the human spirit with positivity and encourage people to remain resilient in the difficult situations of life. This text is a testament to the multifarious potentials of Rama Devi Choudhury. A scholar Sanghamitra Bhanja has mentioned that "She is scripted *Jiban Pathe* in considering the human independence of the mankind." (2020, p. 644)⁹

5.2 Quintessence of Patience and Tolerance:

Losing her father, father-in-law and maternal uncle within the gap of 20 days and not having a good relationship with Uncle Madhusudan Das pierced her silently. Furthermore, when her

⁷ Coasta, C.B.da. *Memorias Compartilhadas: os contadores de historia*. In C.B. da Coasta & N.A. Magalhaes (Eds.), *Contar historia, Fazer Historia- Historia, Culture e memoria* (pp. 73-84) Brasilia: Paralelo 15. 2001.

⁸ Abrahao, M.H.M.B. "Autobiographical Research: Memory, Time and Narratives in the First Person." *European Journal for Research on the Education and the Learning of Adults*, vol.3, no. 1, 2012, pp. 29-41.

⁹ Bhanja, Sanghamitra. "Maa Rama Devi the Great Woman of *Jeebanapathe*." *IJRAR*, vol. 7, no.2, April 2020,pp 644-647.



husband Gopa Babu left the Government job (42) and joined in national movements to serve common people, she extended a hand of support to him and continued to be strong by accommodating reality. She effortlessly discharged her assigned duties towards her in-law's family. At that time she became a mother of two children. She was a fanatical mother (54-56). Even she had taken care of her brother-in-law Nabakrushna Choudhury as her son. Many hindrances and economic constraints came but she did not drop her endurance. She maintained her calm, unruffled and persistent nature. Above all, she was a lady with a golden heart.

5.3 Embodiment of Family Values:

For Rama Devi, her maternal uncle, grandmother and her mother were constant sources of strength and inspiration for her. (16) In *Jibana Pathe* she writes that she has never seen a kind and warm-hearted person like her 'grandmother who was cooking for her servants'. (35) She has shared how her mother was telling them about Ramayana, Mahabharata and an illustrated book of Queen Victoria from her childhood till death in bed hours at night. To check the two daughters' creativity, the mother gave them assignments like writing stories in the morning that they listened to the previous night. Her mother never told her anything harsh as she was too patient and kind by nature. Rama Devi had a great admiration for her mother. She uttered many times in the text *Jibana Pathe* that these "qualities like calmness, tolerance and patience came from my mother." (36) That's why Dr James Emmanuel Kwegyir-Aggrey says 'If you educate a man you educate an individual, but when you educate a woman you educate a family.' The values that she acquired in childhood later inspired her to promote women's education. Maa never stepped back to appreciate anyone from whom she got assistance – may it be household management, family budget, or social-political crisis. Respectable behaviour, kindness, work ethics, familial and moral values, values of education, creativity and understanding responsibility towards family and countrymen are her virtues that one can imbibe.

5.4 Odia women and Service towards Nation:

In 1921, being influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, Rama Devi and her husband joined the Indian freedom movement. She joined the Indian National Congress and Non-cooperation Movement in the same year under the supervision of Gandhiji. She started wearing khadi, encouraged Odias to boycott foreign clothes (61), and actively participated in Salt March (Labna Satyagraha) at the state level. She and other activists like Kiranbala Sen, Maltidevi, Saraladevi, and Pranakrushna Padhiari visited places like Inchudi and Srijang. She used to visit different villages of Odisha to motivate women to take active part in the freedom movement. Her speeches inculcated the spirit of nationalism among women. She also inspired women to offer their ornaments, clothes, and money for the cause of the freedom movement. Rama Devi accompanied by Malati Devi and Annapurna



Devi contributed to Tilak's 'Swaraj' fund by forfeiting their jewellery on the call of Gandhiji to assist the National Freedom Struggle. She was the forerunner in the state to go against the social taboos like untouchability and superstition. Health care and cleanliness awareness, and work opportunities for deprived people of Odisha are the key factors she relentlessly worked towards.

5.5 Contribution towards Indian Independence Movements:

The year 1921 was the turning point in the life of Rama Devi when she joined her husband Gopabandhu Choudhury in the Khadi Movement and became the steadfast disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. She came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi when he visited Odisha to be present at the 'Women's Sammilani'¹⁰ at the market complex of Binodbihari in Cuttack. Under the leadership of Maa Rama Devi in 1928, an ashram known as 'Alakashrama'¹¹ was set up on the bank of the river Alaka to look after the diseased-prone people. She distributed medicines among the deprived by cutting across the class stringency among young girls.

In 1930, at the Lahore Session, the Congress resolute towards the launch of mass civil disobedience and to energise people to combat for complete independence of India. Public meetings were structured to discern the Pledge of Independence under the leadership of Rama Devi, Gopabandhu Choudhury, and Acharya Harihar Das. As a consequence, Rama Devi, Acharya Harihar Das, Lingaraj Mishra, Krupasindhu Hota and Bholanath Saha were arrested by the police. Gandhiji decided to inaugurate the Civil Disobedience Movement by violating the Salt Law at Dandi, which gave utmost interest to the Congress leaders of Odisha. Since time immemorial the long sea coast of Odisha was able to yield fine salt but the British experts had clogged its production. Gandhiji decided to break it and it was a great opportunity for the people of Odisha to rebuild their traditional right to manufacture salt in the long coastal tract. Places like Inchudi in Balasore and Kujanga in Jagatsinghpur were chosen by the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee to disrupt the salt law. Twenty-one volunteers walked from 'Swaraj Ashram' of Cuttack on foot to Inchudi with Acharya Harihara, Gopabandhu Chaudhuri, Rama Devi, Malati Devi and many other activists. But Gopa Babu, Atal Bihari Acharya, and Rama Devi were arrested by police at Cuttack. Despite the threat, many volunteers and Satyagrahis spread the movement to various parts of Odisha like Balasore, Basta, Bhadrak, Kujanga, Ashtanga, and the Chilka.

In an educational organization at Jajpur, Kendrapara, Patamundai, Mayurbhanj, and Dharmasala, most of the apprentices gave up their studies and partook in the freedom movement. Despite

¹⁰ 'Women's Sammilani' means a conference of women in which Rama Devi first time got chance to listen Mahatma Gandhi. In the year 1921 it got placed at Binodbihari, Cuttack.

¹¹ Alakashrama- A hermitage set up by Maa Rama Devi on the river bank of Alaka. It is known as the Sabaramati Ashram of Odisha.



being contrived by the police, under the leadership of Rama Devi, a batch of young girls belonging to the student community rushed into the Civil Disobedience Movement and prohibited British goods, wine, and opium shops. These instances proved Rama Devi Choudhury as an organiser, a great speaker, a remorseless campaigner and an inspirer of ordinary men and women.

5.6 Epitome of Undaunting Spirit: Rama Devi:

Maa Rama Devi got arrested several times (in 1921, 1930, 1936, 1942) with her co-workers. The other women activists such as Sarala Devi, and Malati Choudhury were also sent to jail. Rama Devi Chaudhuri appeared in the 1931 Karachi session of the Indian National Congress and appealed to Dr Rajendra Prasad to hold the next session at Odisha. After being released from the Hazaribagh jail in 1932, she got involved in 'Harijan Welfare'. She formed 'Ashprushyata Nibarana Samiti'¹² under the guidance of Gandhiji for the abolishment of the practice of untouchability. 'Ashprusyata Nibarana Samiti' was later renamed as 'Harijan Seva Sangha'. She was fully associated with the Odisha visits of Gandhiji, Kasturaba, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru in the years 1932 and 1934. She started an Ashram at Bari with the supervision of Gandhiji and titled it as 'Seva Ghara'. Rama Devi along with her entire family were arrested and sent to jail during the Quit India Movement of 1942. With her dedication and sacrifice, she was appreciated by Gandhiji and assigned to work as a representative of Kastruraba Trust in the Odisha region just after the death of Kasturaba Gandhi.

5.7 Maa Rama Devi as a 'Karma Yogi':

The term 'Karma Yogi'¹³ has been taken from the *Bhagavad Gita*. It refers to a person who selflessly acts for the betterment of others. The person does not claim credit for performing any act and s/he should be free from lust, greed, anger, and egoism. We can visualise the aforementioned qualities in Maa Rama Devi for her selfless sacrifice to humankind and can proudly call her a 'karma yogi'. She did not take a break even after our country got its independence in 1947. She dedicated her entire life to the service of the landless and poor people of Odisha. By coming under the influence of Vinobha Bhave, the pioneer of the Movement, Rama Devi added a new experience to her social activities and took part in the 'Bhoodan' and 'Gramdan'¹⁴ movements. Escorted by Gopabandhu Choudhuri and Vinobaji, Rama Devi took up a foot – March (Padajatra) at Khandasahi in Cuttack district in the year 1952.

¹² Ashprushyata Nibarana Samiti'- it's a committee established by Gandhiji for the prevention of Untouchability

¹³ Karma Yogi means for the sake of duty or performing duty. Maa Rama Devi was a karma yogi as she was duty bound. The concept has come from the Bhagvad Gita

¹⁴ Bhoodan and Gramdam movement- It was started by Vinohba Bhave in 1951 in which people were donating land and villages to landless.



All of them travelled about 4000 km on foot across the state to proliferate the message of giving land and wealth to the landless. It took around four months and twenty-two days to be completed which is known as the historic 'Bhoodan Yatra' to date. (112) Rama Devi addressed 'harijanas'¹⁵ (untouchables) and landless poor as her son and daughters. To meet and encourage them she organised many meetings at different places in Odisha. Then the gifts of lands came flowing in. She went on foot from village to village and collected land for the poor. She even got an entire village and once or twice a whole district which were distributed among the landless. She chose 'Bari ashram' at Cuttack as a place of her work. Moreover, she urged people to take care of the 'Harijans' as human beings. She was in their huts and colonies, washed their clothes and swept their floors and streets. She even taught their children and looked after them.

'Utkal Khadi Ashram' and a 'Teachers' Training Institute' were established by Maa Rama Devi in Ramchandrapur alongwith 'Tribal Welfare Centre' at Dumburugeda in the year 1950. She worked during the famine of 1951. Maa Rama Devi even paraded barefoot across Odisha and adjacent states of Odisha to spread Gandhian ideology. She too led her hands towards Indian soldiers who had been affected by the 1962 Indo-China war. She worked hard to root out communalism that often flickered off pressures among the Hindus and Muslims in Odisha. She tried her level best to reunite them. Following the footsteps and ideals of Utkalamani Gopabandhu Das, both Rama Devi and Malati Devi visited the flood-affected people of Cuttack, Balasore, Ganjam, and Puri, and played a prominent role in supplying relief to the famine-affected areas like Rayagada in Koraput.

5.8 Pioneering Children and Women's Education:

Maa Rama Devi was very fond of small children as they were the future of the nation. She loved to visit educational institutions and inspired students through her speeches. Women's education, emancipation and empowerment were the utmost priority to her. She established a primary school named 'Shishu Vihar'¹⁶ and a cancer hospital at Cuttack. In recognition of her services, she was awarded the 'Jamnalal Bajaj Award' on 4th November 1981 and the 'Doctor of Philosophy' (Honoris causa) by Utkal University on 16th April 1984. Ramadevi Women's University at Bhubaneshwar is named in her sweet memory for her tireless contribution to the field of women's education. It is the only women's university in the region and a preferred destination for female students across the country. The school 'Shishu Vihar' started by her at Cuttack is now renamed as 'Ramadevi Shishu Vihar'. Rama Devi died on July 22, 1985, in Cuttack.

¹⁵ Harijans- Untouchables

¹⁶ Shishu Vihar- A primary school which was established by Maa Rama Devi. It is currently known as 'RamaDevi Shishu Vihar.'



6. Legacy and Contemporary Relevance:

The definition of legacy is something that is passed on. It can take many forms according to one's core values, ethics, faith and beliefs. For some people, it can be associated with monetary matters. But this paper will discuss Maa Rama Devi's legacy as her work ethic and highlight the core values of her personality. The core values of her life like simplicity, patience, tolerance, kindness, love, appreciation, acknowledgement and admiration, socio-political and cultural responsibility, service, and selfless sacrifice can inspire someone to build up a strong personality, provide vision to face contemporary trials and help in constructing a harmonious society.

Rama Devi's autobiography *Jibana Pathe* is the principal source of this research paper. To make people understand the contemporary relevance of the text and Rama Devi's legacies such as her affectionate nature, love and kindness towards people, simplicity, service, social responsibility and sacrifice, the paper will present a brief discussion below based on the aforementioned points. Through discussing these points, the study will justify its title and present how she voices her passive resistance in opposition to the Government and colonial situation as she never adopted any path of violence and always refused to obey imposed laws.

6.1 Affection, Love, Kindness and Simplicity:

Rama Devi dedicated her life to the needy and the poor people of the state. She was very affectionate, kind, and lovable like a mother whom people of Odisha call 'Maa' (Mother). At the time of the abolishment of the Untouchability (Asprushyata Nibarana), she declared all the 'harijanas' (untouchables) as her sons and daughters. She was a mother figure and a God-sent human being who always worked for the betterment of society. Love and kindness were another two great strategies of her work. She was unable to see the sufferings of millions of destitute. She was leading a very simple life by rejecting all British products, classy clothes ornaments, etc. She was not only wearing the simple 'Khadi' and partaking in the 'Charkha movement' somewhat from her mind itself she was practicing simplicity as one of the greatest policies of her life.

6.2 Women Empowerment, Social Service & Social Responsibility:

Rama Devi Choudhury was well aware of the happenings of the country events and developed a national consciousness in her mind from her childhood. Her family members were fully devoted to the cause of women's development. When she got married to Gopabandhu Choudhry at the age of fifteen, she learnt to uphold the balance between the conservative and superstitious mentality of her mother-in-law and the attitude of broadness and liberalization which she had inherited from her parental family. She sacrificed all those facilities that she was availing once at



home. Even more, she well managed her in-laws family at the time of their economic hardship. She had never stepped back from sacrificing her comfort, food, clothes, ornaments and above all lands for the wellbeing of the people. Until her death, she worked a lamp and tried to eradicate the darkness of society.

Rama Devi served the poor, untouchables and drought and the flood affected the people of Odisha. Due to her untiring efforts, the establishment of a cancer detection centre was possible at Cuttack. She advocated meetings for young women on their sanitation and nursing in 1932. She encouraged women to become ideal mothers, homemakers and bread earners of the family. For the Harijan welfare, she started 'padayatra'¹⁷ which added a new chapter to her social activities. Being influenced by Gandhiji, She visited village to village to solve the problems of the needy. With the support of the 'harijanas', Rama Devi along with her husband Gopabandhu returned to Bari and opened up an ashram there to serve the untouchables. They both worked there with utmost commitment. Ramadevi extended her helping hands to the people in distress in times of natural calamities and was a true healer who always opened her arms for all and saved people like a goddess epitomizing love, compassion, and kindness.

Rama Devi was imparting knowledge on agriculture to people. Among these entire programmes, beekeeping, spinning, and maintaining cleanliness were taught to the folks with the involvement of Rama Devi herself. Because she already had the idea that without economic enrichment, social development can never be imagined. She was making people learn how to assist the flood or drought-affected people with food. To make it more operative, she confirmed her participation for the people. Furthermore, she provided some schemes with the help of food for work, construction of canals or tanks conversion of uncultivated land to cultivable land, and supply of proper seeds to the farmers. She committed herself to the progress of basic education to men and women to eliminate illiteracy from society which stood as a major obstacle on the path of progress.

Rama Devi started building up schools and did not collapse when she could not get any monetary support from outside. She always worked for the people selflessly. She also prioritized slum cleanliness programmes by her 'Sevashram'¹⁸ members' and addressed sanitation problems too. By establishing and staying in Alaka Ashram which was situated in the river bank of Alaka, she preached the message of Gandhi and inspired the villagers to join in the freedom movements. She had taken care of underprivileged people and distributed medicines to them. Later she succeeded in removing social taboos like superstitions from the minds of people. For her social work and tireless service to mankind, she was awarded a doctoral degree from Utkal University.

¹⁷ Padayatras- Journeys by foot to interact more closely with people of different areas.

¹⁸ Sevashram- Service home



Rama Devi accepted every event of life gracefully with peace of mind, perseverance, patience, dedication, devotion, and discipline. Her legacies such as simplicity, kindness, love and affection, service, social responsibility, and sacrifice made her a role model to many. She taught people how to remain truthful to them. To adopt simplicity, practice kindness and love, offer service, sacrifice whole life for the wellbeing of people and take responsibility are timeless practices in manner.

Conclusion:

Maa Rama Devi firmly stands as an epitome of dedication, resilience and empowerment. She was deeply involved in the liberation movement and poised as a great woman leader of India. It will be incomplete if India's historical and political documents do not remember the name of Maa Rama Devi and acknowledge her selfless sacrifices. Undoubtedly, she is a world-shattering leader. Her patience, tolerance, discipline, and willingness to serve the countrymen model her as a guiding light to modern Odisha. Her life, leadership and legacies continue to serve as a lasting inspiration for future generations, showcasing resilience in the face of challenges and dedication to social and political causes. Her autobiography, *Jibana Pathe* provides the reader with an outlook to understand the contemporary relevance of the text upon which one can build up a strong personality and pursue their goals, develop a vision to face day-to-day battles and help to create a harmonious society. Thus, we can witness how Rama Devi has voiced passive resistance against the prevailing situation and the British Government by not involving in violence and refusing to obey the imposed laws.

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^{i i} Ms.Das- (Shailabala Das) Daughter of Madhusundan Das

ⁱ Ms Hajra- (Shudhanshubala Das) Daughter of Madhusudan Das and sister of Shailabala Das

ⁱ “Janani Janmabhumischa Swargadapi Gariyasi “- A Sanskrit shloka from the Hindu epic Ramayana which denotes our mother who gives us birth and our motherland where we do flourish permanently superior to heaven.

ⁱ “The Childhood shows the man, as morning Shows the Day”- The line is coming from John Milton’s *Paradise Regained* (1671).

ⁱ ‘Women’s Sammilani’ means a conference of women in which Rama Devi first time got chance to listen Mahatma Gandhi. In the year 1921 it got placed at Binodbihari, Cuttack.

ⁱ Alakashrama- A hermitage set up by Maa Rama Devi on the river bank of Alaka. It is known as the Sabaramati Ashram of Odisha.

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ⁱ Harijans- Untouchables

ⁱ Shishu Vihar- A primary school which was established by Maa Rama Devi. It is currently known as ‘RamaDevi Shishu Vihar.’

ⁱ Padayatras- Journeys by foot to interact more closely with people of different areas.

ⁱ Sevashram- Service home