

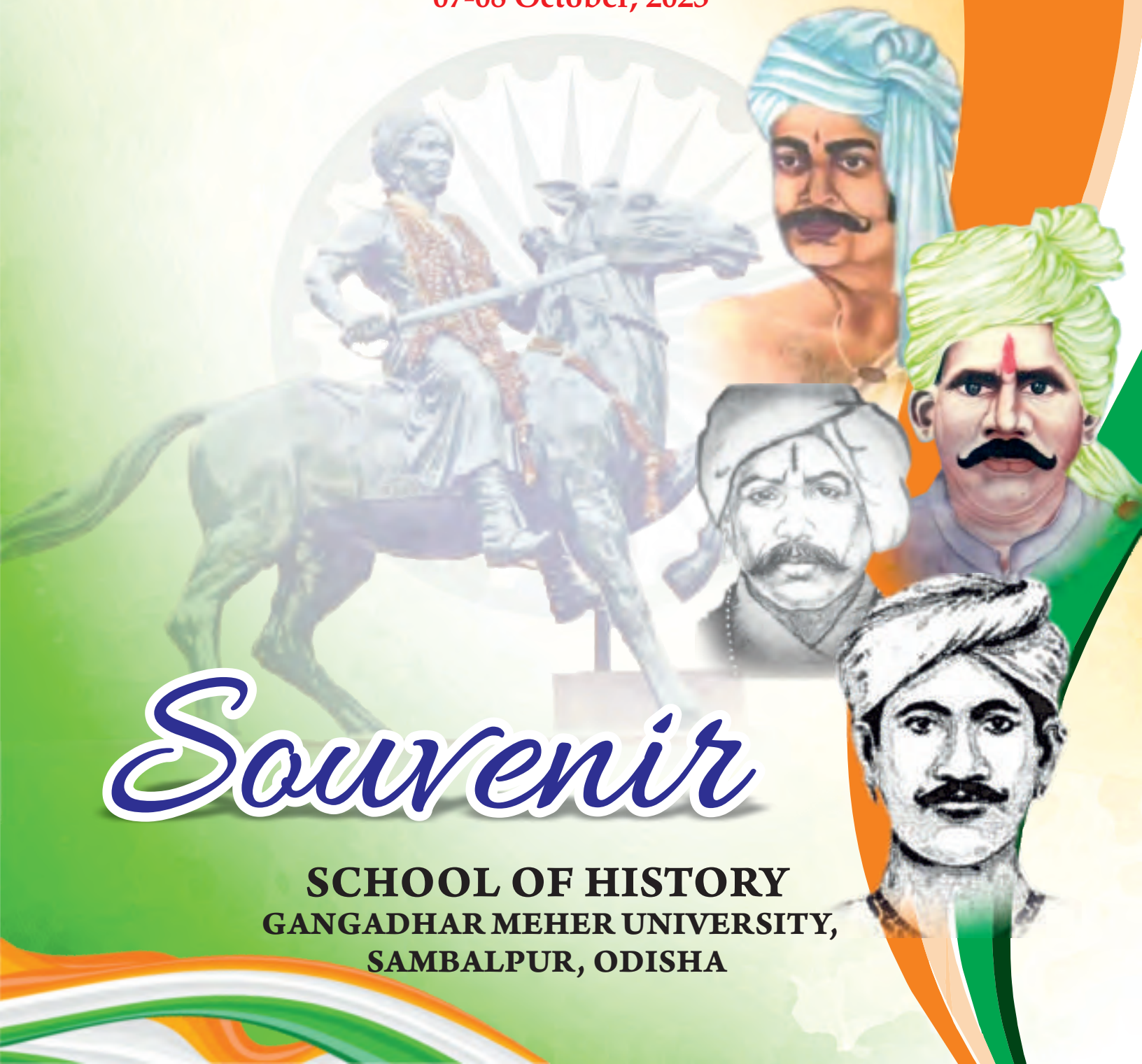


National Seminar on
**EXPLORING UNSUNG CHAPTERS
OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE OF ODISHA**

07-08 October, 2023

Souvenir

**SCHOOL OF HISTORY
GANGADHAR MEHER UNIVERSITY,
SAMBALPUR, ODISHA**





**National Seminar
on
EXPLORING UNSUNG CHAPTERS OF
FREEDOM STRUGGLE OF ODISHA**

Souvenir

**SCHOOL OF HISTORY
GANGADHAR MEHER UNIVERSITY,
SAMBALPUR, ODISHA**

**EDITOR
DR. ATULA KUMAR PRADHAN**

Head, School of History

&

Convenor of the Seminar



Prof. Ganeshi Lal
Governor, Odisha

ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଣେଶୀ ଲାଲ
ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା



RAJBAVAN
BHUBANESWAR - 751008

ରାଜଭବନ
ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର - ୭୫୧୦୦୮

September 16, 2023

Message

I am glad to know that School of History of Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur is organizing an ICHR sponsored National Seminar on **EXPLORING UNSUNG CHAPTERS OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE OF ODISHA** on October 7-8, 2023. A Souvenir is also being brought out to mark the occasion.

Odisha has a significant contribution to country's freedom struggle. However, there were a number of incidents of resistance and rebellion at different places led by valiant fighters including several tribal leaders and also there were many unknown of little known freedom fighters who are yet to come to limelight. The theme of this national seminar promises to be both interesting and exciting. I am confident that the seminar would be informative and enlightening on many ways about their heroics, sacrifices and contributions. The national seminar by the School of History in this Amrit Kaal is indeed a fitting tribute to our unsung freedom fighters.

I wish the Seminar and publication all success.

Ganeshi Lal
(Ganeshi Lal)



Shri Aswini Ku. Patra

MINISTER OF STATE
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BHUBANESWAR

Date**12.09.2023**.....

Message

I am really delighted to know that School of History of Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur is organising the ICHR sponsored National Seminar of **EXPLORING UNSUNG CHAPTERS OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE OF ODISHA** at School of History, Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur from 7th to 8th October 2023.

Odisha has a prominent place in the history of India's struggle for independence. There brave heroes fought bravely against oppression by the British Raj, sacrificing their lives and liberty to bring independence for their countryman. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, the Satyagraha movement in Odisha was also led by women & many other freedom fighters in different areas. Their contributions in political, legal and literary fields shall be remembered for all time to time.

I convey my best wished for success of the Seminar.

(Aswini Kumar Patra)



ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେର ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ

GANGADHAR MEHER UNIVERSITY

Amruta Vihar, Sambalpur, Odisha-768004



Prof. N. Nagaraju
Vice-Chancellor


Message

I am glad School of History, Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur is organizing a National Seminar on "Exploring Unsung Chapters of freedom struggle of Odisha" on 7th & 8th October 2023.

This ICHR sponsored seminar should provide an opportunity to deliberate on various areas of freedom movement in Odisha not attended by earlier scholars.

Hope this seminal will contribute to the knowledge of unsung fighter of freedom movement in Odisha.

Best wishes for its success.


(Prof. N. Nagaraju)

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ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେର ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ

GANGADHAR MEHER UNIVERSITY

Amruta Vihar, Sambalpur, Odisha-768004



Prof. Susanta Ku. Das
Chairman, PG Council

Date: 25.9.2023

Message

It gives me immense pleasure that School of History of Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur is hosting the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) sponsored National Seminar on **EXPLORING UNSUNG CHAPTERS OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE OF ODISHA** from 07th to 08th October 2023..

I hope that this ICHR seminar would provide an opportunity deliberate on various untouched areas of freedom movement in Odisha. I extend my good wishes to the School of History, G.M. University for this seminar.

Susanta Kumar Das
(Prof. Susanta Ku. Das)



ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେର ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ

GANGADHAR MEHER UNIVERSITY

Amruta Vihar, Sambalpur, Odisha-768004



**Registrar
Gangadhar Meher
University,
Sambalpur**

Message

It is heartening to know that School of History of Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur is hosting the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) sponsored National Seminar on **EXPLORING UNSUNG CHAPTERS OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE OF ODISHA** from 07th to 08th October 2023.

The theme chosen by the organizer of the seminar is appropriate and undoubtedly generates a lot of interest among the participants. I hope that this ICHR seminar would provide an opportunity to deliberate on various untouched areas of freedom movement in Odisha.

Look forward to a successful seminar.

**Smt. Jugaleswari Dash
REGISTRAR
G. M. University, Sambalpur**

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ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେର ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ

GANGADHAR MEHER UNIVERSITY

Amruta Vihar,
Sambalpur – 768004
Odisha




Dr. Uma Charan Pati
Deputy Registrar

Message

I am very delighted to know that the School of History of Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur is hosting the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) sponsored National Seminar on **“EXPLORING UNSUNG CHAPTERS OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE OF ODISHA”** during 07-08 October, 2023.

The delegates will exchange their views and ideas and come out with meaningful suggestions for furtherance of productive activities in the state. I hope that this ICHR seminar would provide an opportunity to deliberate on various untouched areas of freedom movement in the State of Odisha.

I wish the seminar a huge success.



Dr. Uma Charan Pati
Deputy Registrar
G.M. University, Sambalpur



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Aruna Asaf Ali: The Indomitable Spirit of India's Freedom Struggle

Prof. Patit Paban Mishra,
Former Professor Sambalpur University,
& Northern University of Malaysia

Introduction

Aruna Asaf Ali, a name etched in the annals of Indian history, stands as a symbol of courage, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the cause of India's independence. Her life journey is a remarkable testament to the power of an individual's spirit to catalyze change and inspire others. Born on July 16, 1909, Aruna Asaf Ali emerged as a prominent figure in the Indian freedom struggle, playing a pivotal role in various movements and leaving an indelible mark on the country's history.

Early Life and Background:

Aruna Ganguly, later known as Aruna Asaf Ali, was born in Kalka, Punjab, into a middle-class family. Her upbringing was marked by a blend of traditional values and a progressive outlook. Aruna's father was a prominent educationist and believed in providing his daughters with an excellent education—an unconventional perspective in those times. This early exposure to progressive ideas played a significant role in shaping Aruna's personality and outlook.

Involvement in the Freedom Movement:

Aruna's entry into the freedom movement was marked by the Non-Cooperation Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in the 1920s. The movement aimed to peacefully resist British rule and boycott British institutions. Aruna's youthful enthusiasm and deep sense of nationalism led her to actively participate in this movement, which was a precursor to her more active involvement in subsequent struggles.

- **Non-Cooperation Movement:** During the Non-Cooperation Movement, Aruna, then a student, enthusiastically took part in processions, protests, and acts of civil disobedience. This was her first taste of the power of collective action and the impact of unity in the pursuit of a common cause.

- **Salt Satyagraha:** The Salt Satyagraha, a landmark movement against the British salt tax, witnessed Aruna's emergence as a vocal leader. She played a significant role in organizing protests and addressing gatherings. Her speeches reflected her fiery spirit and her unflinching determination to challenge British oppression.

- **Quit India Movement:** The Quit India Movement 1942 was a turning point in India's fight for freedom. Aruna Asaf Ali's leadership during this movement showcased her ability to rally the masses even in the face of severe state repression. As the movement gained momentum, the British authorities clamped down on dissent, leading many leaders to be arrested. In the absence of top leadership, Aruna's charisma and fearlessness kept the movement alive.

Role in the Quit India Movement:

- **Leadership and Initiatives:** Aruna Asaf Ali's role in the Quit India Movement was marked by her exceptional leadership skills. She organized protests, strikes, and marches, providing a sense of direction to

the movement. Her ability to connect with people from all walks of life, regardless of their social or economic backgrounds, made her a unifying figure in the struggle.

- **Underground Activities:** As the movement progressed and leaders were incarcerated, Aruna embraced a more covert role, working underground to maintain the momentum. She used her connections to spread information, coordinate activities, and inspire acts of civil disobedience. Her ability to operate in the shadows showcased her dedication and resourcefulness.

Post-Independence Contributions:

- **Political Engagement:** After India gained independence in 1947, Aruna Asaf Ali transitioned into active politics. She joined the Indian National Congress and continued to champion the cause of the marginalized and oppressed. Her political career was marked by her commitment to Gandhian principles and her efforts to promote social justice and inclusivity.

- **Social and Women's Issues:** Aruna recognized that the struggle for freedom was intertwined with the fight against social inequalities and gender discrimination. She dedicated herself to uplifting women and advocating for their rights. Her involvement in women's organizations and her efforts to address issues such as dowry and female education showcased her broader vision for a just and equal society. She was a renowned publisher and associated with the newspaper Patriot. Aruna encouraged the young writers and the present author was fortunate to have the preface written by her in the book on communist revolution in Laos.

Legacy and Recognition:

Aruna Asaf Ali's legacy is one of resilience, fearlessness, and dedication. Her contributions to India's freedom struggle remain an inspiration for generations to come. She received numerous accolades for her tireless efforts, including the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, posthumously in 1997. The Aruna Asaf Ali Memorial Trust was established to continue her work in areas she held dear.

Conclusion:

Aruna Asaf Ali's life journey exemplifies the transformative power of an individual's determination and spirit. Her unwavering commitment to India's freedom struggle, her leadership during crucial movements and her post-independence contributions to social justice and women's empowerment stand as a beacon of hope and inspiration. Aruna's story reminds us that change is possible even in the face of adversity, and that one person's actions can have a profound impact on the course of history. As we reflect on her life and legacy, we are reminded of the indomitable spirit that fuels the quest for a just and equitable society.

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Mitrabhanu Sai The unfateful Prince and an Unsung Hero

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Abstract:-

[Had the claim of his father to the gudee of Sambalpur been recognised by the colonial administration, he after the death of his father, would have inherited the kingdom. But he was born unfateful, destined to suffer long till his death. This is the story of Mitrabhanu Sai, the son of Veer Surendra Sai, who sacrificed his life for the cause of his father and motherland. But despite his active participation in the Sambalpur rebellion of 1857-62, which was an integral part of the All - India Revolution of 1857-1858, this unfateful prince has remained an unsung hero in the history of freedom struggle in Odisha. Responding to the clarion call given by his father to make Sambalpur free from the British yoke, this young cub of a great lion joined the fray with his paternal uncles. Forgetting about his personal comfort, the love of his newly wedded wife princess Krishnapriya, Mitrabhanu emerged as a great leader of this rebellion. Even after grant of pardon he could not live peacefully for the rest of his life. Due to official machination he was arrested and imprisoned for 13 years in the fort of Asirgarh in M.P. Even after being released from the prison, for the next 30 years he could not enter Sambalpur and lived in exile in the feudatory state Bonai, with his wife Krishnapriya the princess of that state in a village called Indrapur, granted by his brother-in-law for maintenance. Such was the pitiable plight of this unfateful, prince Mitrabhanu Sai an unsung hero of Odisha. This paper therefore is an earnest attempt to vocalise the silences pertaining to the life and achievements of this unsung hero.]

Mitrabhanu Sai was born in 1839 to Surendra Sai and Suvarna Kumari, the daughter of the Zamindar of Hathibari in the BiramitrapurTehshil of the present Sundargarh district, belonging to Co-lateral family of ParamaraSikhara ruling house of Gangpur (Sundargarh). He was one year old when his father Surendra Sai was arrested and sent toHazaribag Jail on charges of revolting against Narayan Singh, the puppet king of Sambalpur and attacking the fort of Dariyar Singh alias Durjaya Singh the Zamindar of Rampur and a principal supporter of Narayan Singh. In the absence of his father from 1840 to 1857, he was brought up and trained in a revolutionary tradition by mother Suvarna and aunt Anjana, who because of trouble and turmoil in the family chose to remain spinster. In the absence of Surendra Sai, Mitrabhanu was married to Krishrapriya the daughter of Raja Chandrasekhara Chandra Dev and sister of crown prince Tikait Dayanidhi Indra Deo of Bonai.

After his historic release from the Hazaribagh Jail, when Surendra Sai started a fresh rebellion, neither mother Suvarna Kumari nor newly wedded young wife Krishnapriya could keep Mitrabhanu at home and sent him to the battle field to share the hazards with his father and uncles in the hills and dales of jungles. Krishnapriya stayed with her mother-in-law Suvarna and other ladies of family, suffering the pangs of separation.

Mitrabhanu at the direction of his father was posted at Jharghaty pass to assist his uncle Udant Sai, the commander in chief of this post. The troop posted under the command of Udant Sai and Mitrabhanu had to prevent re-inforcement from Ranchi-Hazaribag to Sambalpur. This hill pass located at a distance of 12 miles north of Sambalpur was strategic, from the point of defence. It was also nearer to Khinda the village of Surendra Sai through the pass of Maula-Bhanja hill range, where from they could monitor the needs of the family members staying at village. Till 1861, Mitrabhanu was active with his uncle Udant Sai in rebellious activities and was living at the hills bordering Bamra state and Sambalpur district with some other rebels prominent among whom were Krupasindhu, Kartik and Bhootunu Gaunatia. From the letter of Raja Braja Sundar Dev of Bamra (1832-1869) who was earlier suspected of helping Surendra Sai, it is learnt that he was once imprisoned by these rebels and was set free by intervention of Surendra Sai.⁽²⁾ H.B. Impey assumed charges as the deputy commissioner of Sambalpur in April 1861. He engaged some Gauntias to collect informations about Udant and Mitrabhanu. However this spy was arrested by Udant and Mitrabhanu, but set free with a caution that he should not dare to come there again in future.⁽³⁾

Major Impey in order to induce Surendra Sai to surrender tried to show some liberality to Mitrabhanu, lest it might influence Surendra Sai and his brothers to surrender. He was of the impression that if anything wrong had been committed by Mitrabhanu that was due to filial duty.⁽⁴⁾

R.N. Shore the commissioner of Cuttack appreciated the views of Impey and in his letter to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal recommended for granting pardon and guarantee of life to Surendra Sai, Udant and Mitrabhanu.⁽⁵⁾ But the Lt. Governor after due consideration of the proposal of Impey recommended to offer free pardon to all rebels except Surendra, Udant and Mitrabhanu.⁽⁶⁾ But exclusion of these above three names failed to produce desired results. Hence major Impey issued a second proclamation on 11th October 1861, in which free pardon was offered to Mitrabhanu and a guarantee of life to Surendra and Udanta Sai, provided they would Surrender on or before 20th Nov. 1861.

The mission of Impey bore fruit when Mitrabhanu surrendered on 7th January 1862. He was assured of two Lakhraj villages which were enjoyed by him before rebellion. The chain of surrenders that followed, finally induced Surendra Sai to meet Impey on 16th May 1862, making up his mind to surrender with a number of staunch followers except Kamal Singh who bluntly refused and Kunjal Singh who was then seriously ailing.⁽⁷⁾

Major Impey had recommended for grant of pension at the rate of Rs.1000.00 per annum to Mitrabhanu for Khorak Poshak or maintenance. That is the way Mitrabhanu returned back to Khinda to spend the rest part of life with his wife Krushnapriya, the princess of Bonai.

But the stars of Mitrabhanu were not ready to see restoration of peace and prosperity to his life. Bad days started pushing into his life after the death of Major Impey. In the meantime Sambalpur was transferred to central province on 30th April 1862, following its formation on 2nd Nov. 1861.

J.N. Berill the newly appointed Superintendent of police was not ready to digest the conciliatory measures adopted towards the rebels. He suspected the complicity of Surendra Sai and his family members with the rebels like Kamal Singh, Kunjal Singh and Salikram Bariha whose depredation had made the

colonial administration restless. Various rumors circulating in the name of Surendra Sai instigating the Zamindars for a mass rising and murdering all the Europeans in the district also strengthened the suspicions of Berril. Major Impey too breathed his last at Sambalpur in Dec. 1863.

The death of Major Impey marked a drastic change in the British policy towards the rebels, who had surrendered. Major Cumberlege who took over as the successor of Impey on 19th Jan., 1864 as Dy. Commissioner of Sambalpur was determined to make a reversal of the policy of Impey. In the meantime a local weaver named Dayanidhi Meher had appeared in the scene as informer of Berill. He went spreading a number of fabricated stories regarding collusion of Surendra Sai with hard core rebels who were still active and were headache for the administration. Two forged palm leaf letters alleged to have been written by Surendra Sai to the Raja Ramachandra Deo of Jeypur, Koraput to assist him in restoring the gudee of Sambalpur to Mitrabhanu and another letter written to Kamal Singh to meet him on PausaPurnima.⁽⁸⁾ were placed before Berill to initiate legal measures against surendrasai and his family members.

Dayanidhi Meher further reported that Mitrabhanu was busy in contacting the neighboring Rajas for help. He had been to the Raja of Saranggarh (Now in Chhatisgarh) who contributed Rs.1500. The spies also reported that Mitrabhanu Sai had again secretly left for Chhotanagpur to secure help from the Zamindar belonging to the family of his sister's husband and the father-in-law house of Udanta Sai.⁽⁹⁾

Another allegation made against Mitrabhanu was that a police party under the Head Constable Lateef Khan were denied food at Khinda and a servant of Mitrabhanu said that he did not care for the police.⁽¹⁰⁾

After gathering the above evidences the chief commissioner hinted to take legal action against Surendra Sai, and others.⁽¹¹⁾ Lt Col. J.G. Balmain the commissioner of Chhatisgarh division of central province was so much so enthusiastic about the arrest of the rebel leaders that he personally came down to Sambalpur to supervise the execution of his plan. It was decided to apprehend all the person simultaneously by launching surprise and secret operation. The plan was kept secret and the police personnels were not intimidated about this operation well in advance, lest it might be leaked to the rebels, which might force them to take to the hills and start revolution afresh.

The execution of the operation was delayed as Mitrabhanu who had been to Chhotanagpur to some relative's place had not returned. Cumberlege was not ready to spare Mitrabhanu whom he considered as "an active and enterprising man". Mitrabhanu reached Sambalpur on 22nd January 1864 at 4 P.M. and proceeded with family to Dhama-Bargaon to spend the night with his father and to leave for Khinda within a day or two. On 23rd January at half past 10 P.M. Cumberlege with a few trusted sepoy and Inspector Mohan Singh marched stealthily along the bed of river Mahanadi and arrested both the father and son. On 26th Jan. 1864 altogether 12 prisoners including Mitrabhanu and Surendra Sai were deported to Raipur escorted by 20 sowars and 20 foot police commanded by Lt. Rideout.⁽¹²⁾

Col. J.G. Balmain sentenced Mitrabhanu to seven years imprisonment on charges of concealing the existence of a design to wage war against the Queen under section 123 of I.P.C. This order however was

reversed by the Judicial Commissioner. But he was detained along with his father and others under regulation 111 of 1818 and was kept in confinement in Asirgarh hill fort. Mitrabhanu was staying in a cell close to the hospital of the fort Mitrabhanu was released with his uncle Dhuuva Sai in Nove. 1976 and both were escorted by a chief constable of police to Sambalpur via Raipur. They were kept in honourable confinement in Sambalpur till 1st Jan. 1877 and were set free on the occasion of Her Majesty Queen Victoria assuming the title of Empress of India. Mitrabhanu was received by his brother -in-law the younger brother of Raja Dayanidhi Indradev of Bonai.⁽¹³⁾

The Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur told the brother of the Raja of Bonai that Mitrabhanu should stay at Bonai and his coming back to the paternal village of Khinda, located in the directly administered district of Sambalpur shall be considered there.

Dayanidhi Indradev who succeeded his father Chandra Sekhar Chandradev on 12th Sept. 1876 was managing the state of Bonai due to the illness and insanity of his father for a long period as the Dewan of the state. He was close to the British administrators for assisting Colonel Dalton during Keonjhar Bhuyan rebellion of 1868. On 1st August 1868 he had captured 25 Bhuyan Sardars who had escaped from Keonjhar in to Bonai. For his help to the govt he was rewarded with the title of Raj Bahadur and a Khelat.⁽¹⁴⁾

Taking advantage of his cordial relation with the colonial administration Raja Dayanidhi Indradev made a complain on 30th April 1877, that he furnished a security bond for the good conduct of Mitrabhanu and that his staying at Bonai was not a condition of his release. He further stated that it is against the religious custom and tradition for a daughter in law of the Chauhan family to stay in her father's kingdom. Hence he requested that Mitrabhanu be allowed by the Government to return to his family at Khinda.

The deputy commissioner of Sambalpur forwarded this petition with adverse recommendation to the chief commissioner of Chhatisgarh. The chief commissioner commented that if Mitrabhanu wished so, better he should call his family to Bonai to stay with him.⁽¹⁵⁾ The reply of the commissioner was forwarded by the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur to the commissioner of Chhotanagpur, as the state of Bonai and Gangpur were under Chhotanagpur.

Having failed in his effort, Raja Dayanidhi Indradev granted a village named Indrapur⁽¹⁴⁾ on the Bonai - Barkote Road (Now part of the Banrapala Ranchi, N.H.-23, at a distance of 66 K.M. from Rourkela and 6K.M. from Bonaigarh) for the maintenance of his family. Krishrapriya was also not feeling honorific to stay in her parental home at Bonaigarh. Hence a house was built for them at Indrapur. The revenue collected from the tenants of the village was to go to Mitrabhanu for the maintenance of his family. Mitrabhanu stayed in this village of Indrapur from 1877 to 1907 for long 30 years.

Surendra Sai breathed his last on 28th Feb. 1884 at the age of 75 and was cremated in the premises of the fort. Though this news was immediately communicated on the sameday by the commandant of Asirgarh Fort to the chief Commissioner, Central proinve.⁽¹⁶⁾ the chief commissioner intimated the government of India 24 days later.⁽¹⁷⁾ This news reached Mitrabhanu nearly one month after the death of this great hero. Mitrabhanu in consultation with the Royal priest of Bonai performed the funeral rite at

Bonai in a befitting manner. A life-size human figure symbolising the body of Surendra Sai was made of kusa grass and after being paraded in the street of Bonai was cremated on the sand bed of river Brahmani with logs of Sandal wood. The ashes collected from the funeral pyre in a pot was immersed at Vedavyas Ghat of Rourkela, the confluence of river Sankha with Koel where from river Brahmani originates.⁽¹⁸⁾

In 1889, Krishnapriya Devi the wife of Mitrabhanu made a representation in which she stated that for last 14 years she had been making representation for allowing her husband to return back to Khinda, but these are rejected and sent back for want of court fee stamps. She prayed that her husband has grown up in age and his eyesight was becoming weak. Hence in view of his noble birth and good conduct he should be permitted to stay with his family members at Khinda.

The Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur forwarded this representation with favorable remarks to the commissioner of Chhatisgarh.⁽¹⁹⁾ who rejected this representation. From 1891 to 1903 as many as 5 representation were sent by Krishnapriya, Mitrabhanu and Raja Dayanidhi of Bonai. requesting the return of Mitrabhanu to Khinda which were all rejected.⁽²⁰⁾

The year 1905 was a landmark in the history of creation of the separate province of Odisha. As the first step in this direction, Sambalpur was transferred to Odisha division of Bengal province in 1905 which instilled fresh hope to Krishnapriya Devi. She submitted another representation to the Govt. and Andrew Fraser the Lt. Governor recommended her case favourably and the Govt. of India allowed Mitrabhanu to return to Khinda.⁽²¹⁾

Mitrabhanu returned to Khinda in 1907 and his brother-in-law Raja Dayanidhi Deo who was very much affectionate to his sister and brother-in-law allowed them to enjoy the revenue of village Indrapur ever after their return to Khinda. That very year Mitrabhanu was invited to village Rampella on the occasion of Ganesh Puja. This was the village of Lokanath Panda the village headman or Gountia who was his co-prisoner in Asirgarh. Swapneswar Dash the father of I.A.S. Anniruddha Dash who was then a teacher in village Rampella has given an eye witness account of his visit in page 106 of his Odia book "Chawhan Veera Surendra Sai." He states that he had the opportunity to see Mitrabhanu Sai playing on Mridanga to celebrate puja. He writes that-

"That year the Ganesh Puja festival of Rampella was over crowded like the car festival of Puri, for seeing that sixty eight year old Mridanga player, who had youth like vigour, straight and handsome body, six feet in height, strong arms like sal branches and shining long eyes like those of the young lion. In him one could well visualise the living image of the chawhan hero Surendra Sai."⁽²²⁾

Mitrabhanu did not have any child from Krishnapriya in 1877 he went for a second marriage with one Manbhanga from Kadamba family of Rajpur. Upon her failure to bear a child, he went for a 3rd marriage with Bedamati who too failed Mitrabhanu breathed his last in October 1926 at the age of 87, quite unsung and unheeded.

Foot Notes:-

1. Sahu. N.K. Veer Surendra Sai, P.-79
2. Letter dated 8th Dec., 1857 written to BrahmanadaDas Asst. to Superintendent of Tributary Mahal, quated Ibid P.-191
3. Letter No.-93, dated- 23rd May 1861 from Impey to E.T. Trevers Commissioner of Cuttack.
4. Sahu N.K. Oput, P.-208
5. Letter dated- 8th June 1861 from Major Impey to R.N. Sore Commissioner of Cuttack and the letter No.-259, dated- 7th Sept. 1861 from R.N. Shore to the Govt. of Bengal.
6. Letter No.2098 a dated- 7th August from E-H Lucington Secretary to Govt. of Bengal to R.N. Sore the Commissioner of Cuttack.
7. Sahu N.K. Op cit, P.-222
8. For details about these letter see Sahu N.K. Op cit, PP.-270-272
9. Letter No.-268, dated-1st Feb. 1864 from the Commissioner of Chhatisgarh to the Secretary to the chief Commissioner of central province.
10. Sahu N.K. op cit P.-254
11. Letter of the Chief Commissioner dated.- 22nd Jan. 1864, to Govt. of India.
12. Das Aniruddha, in his life of Surendra Sai Cuttack 1963 provides a descriptive roll of these prisoners in P.-189
13. This arrangement was made in fulfilment of the condition laid down by the Chief Commissioner of central province vide letter no.-4386 dated- 22nd Nov. 1876 from J.W. Neill the officiating Secretary to Chief Commissioner to Commissioner of Chhatisgarh.
14. Odisha District Gazetters- Sundargarh-Gopabandhu Academy of Administration, Page-48-49.
15. Letter No.-1729, dated- 4th May 1877 from Commissioner of Chhatisgarh to Deputy Commission of Sambalpur.
16. Letter No.- 3/134, dated- 28th Feb. 1884 from the commandant of Asirgarh to the Chief Commissioner of central province.
17. Letter No.-1433/67, dt- 24th March 1884 from Asst. Secretary to Chief Comissioner of C.P. and Secretary to Govt. of India.
18. This information is gathered from the family of the Royal priest of Bonai by the auther of this article, who served in Bonai college from 1994 to 2006.
19. Letter No.-951, dated- 25th Feb. 1889 from the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur to the Commissioner of Chhatisgarh.
20. For details about these 5 petitions please see Sahu. U.K. op. citP.-86-87
21. Letter dated 12th January 1907 from the Secretary Govt. of Indiaforeign dept. to the Chief Secretary to Govt. of West Bengal.
22. Swapneswar Das Kavibhushan - Chauhan Veera Surendra Sai, Cuttack (1958), P.-106.

THE 'PAIKA REBELLION' OF 1805-1836: ATTEMPTING A REVIEW

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Paika Rebellion, colloquially known as 'Paika Vidroha', which broke out in certain parts of Odisha from 1805 to 1836 making Khurdha as the epicenter, summoned the attention of the people as well as the scholars of different backgrounds in recent years, when, in 2018, this celebrated violent outbreak was officially declared as the 'First War of Indian Independence'. Both the State Government of Odisha as well as the Central Government of India has accepted the demand of a group of people who believed that the Odias of the early 19th century fought this war as a 'War of Independence' in India against the colonial British. The Great Revolt of 1857 no longer remained the First War of Indian Independence as enunciated by B.D.Savarkar. This incidence pushed back the origin of nationalism into the very first decade of the 19th century Odisha, creating many intellectual furores in the region and outside. This revolt, which actually was the combination of a series of bloody skirmishes and pitched battles, is also known as 'Khurdha Rebellion', because the king of Khurdha took the leadership of it in its initial periods, making his capital Khurdhagarh as the eye of the storm.

Importance of Paika Rebellion

Khurdha Rebellion has been an issue of pride and glory for the Odias, most particularly to the educated elite nationalists of the late 19th and the early 20th century, who were in search of such an incident to provoke the inert Odias against immediate political and cultural threats. The men of literature wrote poems and novels, dramas and short-stories taking the incident and the exploits of the leaders of the revolt as subject matters to awaken the people. The elites of Odisha almost remained glory-less in the early modern phase of their history till the arrival of the 20th century, when a powerful cultural-linguistic movement emerged in the region. The pitiable socio-economic and political conditions and the melancholic weak physical appearances of most of the Odias forced the outsiders to brand the former as a race of inferior 'others'. The British officials often reported Odias of the early 19th century as 'stupid', 'effeminate', 'not assertive', 'unnecessarily peaceful', 'submissive' etc. The ancient and medieval periods had been swashbucklingly glorious for the elites under absolute monarchies, but unfortunately, they lost the line abruptly since the middle of the 16th century, when their kings lost paramountcy to the outsiders. Medieval Hindu political ideas became obsolete in face of new advanced techniques of warfare and diplomacy. Once the Odia political leaders were defeated and divided, others occupied the whole region easily. Another cause of this debacle was the absence of participation of the large sections of people in administration, which ultimately ruined the very foundations of Hindu monarchies. This new pitiable situation, the tenure of which continued for a long 350 years unabatedly, made the natives, mostly the elites, absolutely insignificant, after such glorious feudal periods. The modern elites using the glorious exploits of medieval Hindu period tried to infuse a new sense of belongingness in the locals to support

them for a cultural battle. Most of them were infatuated by the newly emerging Bengal Indian nationalism. For the first time in the history their own soil, the commoners were remembered by the elites badly. It was definitely a new development.

Odia Identity through Ages

The kingdoms of Odisha since the very remote ancient times never remained voluntarily a part of pan-Indian or sub-continental empires. If, at any time, it became a part of political India, it was not voluntary. It had its own political identity and system of life, though, in many times, it became influenced by sub-continental socio-religious waves. Culturally also, Odias grew their own customs and practices independent of orthodox Indo-Gangetic Hindu-Aryan greater traditions. For a long period, Odias under their traditional political leaders remained independent from the domination of north or south. It had made them exclusive and obviously very close to their political and military leaders. God Jagannath, who had been remained the symbol of their prime identity, played the cementing role always. As the medieval kingdoms were primarily military in nature, thousands of people hailing from all castes joined the army. It clearly defied and violated traditional Varna-based professional system. It was a necessity. During the early and entire medieval times Kshyatriyasiation was a very common practice in India, by which numerous earlier insignificant peasant castes assumed power by establishing new states under their chiefs. A long political stability in the early and the medieval periods (roughly from 8th century A.D. to the middle of the 16th century A.D.) produced powerful groups of militias, having their own hierarchies region-wise. They also constituted an important part of the socio-political system. Most probably, the local leaders of the army made their services hereditary for centuries being recruited repeatedly in spite of the changes of dynasties. They, for their professional family expertise, remained in the force. They, as feudatories, enjoyed free land-holdings for their services to the king. A militaristic feudal and sub-feudal system was in vogue, besides plenty of land grants given to the priests and the temples. The common soldiery who remained loyally attached to their traditional leaders also played a powerful role. Most of them enjoyed rent-free lands supporting and safeguarding feudal values. But, the sudden downfall of the Hindu empires shook the political as well as social domination of these people. When foreigners occupied the land and destroyed the domination of these privileged classes, the latter became panic-stricken. The identity as Odias became powerful in them, which surfaced in violent revolts. It was the last spark of this great identity of the locals of medieval nature that caused the outbreak of the Revolt of 1805-1836.

The 'Rebellion of the Raja of Khurdha' of 1804-5 A.D. and the 'King without a Kingdom'.

By the time of the arrival of the English as the invaders as well as the rulers in coastal Odisha in 1803, native Odia political structure was in a very dilapidated condition. The titular head of the state was no more sovereign, his kingdom had been reduced to a small estate of few miles around Khurdha by the Moguls as well as the Marathas successively, and his prestige and position was in utterly tottering condition. Since 1568, Odia kingdom remained under the occupation of the invaders-the Moguls of Delhi, the Nazims of Bengal, the Marathas of Nagpur, one after another-till 1803, they all, did not hesitate to ravage the land as

well as the people inhumanly. It was a big shock for the native elites that after at least a thousand years of rule, they lost their monopoly to new conquerors. Not only the Muslim invaders but the Hindu powers also did not mind to plunder this defenseless land and the temples mercilessly. The condition became worst when British occupied the land. They were foreigners, imperialists and racists and had a sinister plan of modern global economic imperialism. Actually Odisha was occupied by the British not from the titular king of Odisha or Khurdha, but from the Marathas, and the natives had no role to play in this important transaction of their own history. Obviously, Odia elites including the King were sidelined and their traditional positions were completely destroyed by the new rulers. Like other Indian powers, the titular king of the time Mukundadeva II, who himself was a minor, had no option but to submit to the will of the British authorities. It is also known that he welcomed the British to get back his core areas taken away by the Marathas forcibly.¹ But, when the British did not respect the promise, frustration as well as the injured vanity went beyond limit. A sense of pride in one hand and the foreignness of the intruders on the other, impelled the king to raise a banner a revolt in 1804. He was instantly supported by his own people. The result is well-known. The outbreak of Khurdha in 1804 was an open reaction by the local political elites against the British. It was basically an anti-colonial struggle organized and managed by the local traditional chiefs and their dependants who lost their privileges which they had been enjoying. The king marched to Cuttack in March 1804 with an army of 2000 men in order to interview and impress the Commissioner, Mr. Harcourt. But Harcourt made it clear that "not a span of land could be given up". The king was even 'forbidden to issue orders on any person whatever residing within the limits of Moghulbandi territory' without the sanction of the Commissioner. Moghulbandi was the most fertile coastal area that immensely contributed for the development of Odia empires since ages serving as their core areas. This was taken away from the Odia kings by the Moghuls since their occupation. The British also continued the same policy to reduce the most vital support of the king. King's authority was tarnished in all respects. In October 1804, the offended king revolted openly, supported by the feudatory chiefs of Kujang and Kanika.

Jayee Rajguru: The Mercurial Pontiff

It is believed that the Jayee Rajguru, the then the preceptor of the King, initiated the revolt. He was the prime symbol of Odia cultural identity of the time when the king was not in a position to take any decision. One has to understand the importance of the post of Rajguru in Odia royal houses, because the former makes a vital link between political and ecclesiastical domains of medieval administration. He was the linchpin. The religious tradition of the Cult of Jagannath, being astutely represented by the Rajguru tradition, has to be piously practiced by the royal houses to keep the people in unity. The interests of both of the king as well as the Cult were interwoven. The king knew that his position was null and void unless he was not conspicuously related to the God, the temple and the Cult. The fatalist Odias of the period had a great sense of devotion to the Lord Jagannath and his customs and traditions. When the titular Gajapatis failed repeatedly to save Jagannath temple, and the autonomy of the cult was under great threat by repeated attacks and gruesome massacres of the invaders, the Rajgurus obviously became concerned

about it. The safety of the Cult and the privileges of the people related to different services of the God, from the cities to the villages, became their prime concern. Their prime objective was the safety of the temple and so the cult, which still had deep influence on the then Odia society. The medieval values which had helped the monarchs to erect grand empires and provided safety to the Cult of Jagannath were no more feasible under a new system. The importance of Jagannath and his temple and its traditions had been the prime factors of the stability and continuation of medieval Brahmanic values. The safety as well as continuity of this system had to be protected at any cost. Its downfall or demise would create problems for the traditional elites to survive. Rajguru had no option but to ask the king of Khurdha, at any cost, to protect the interest of the temple and obviously the interests of those people related to it. The whole gamut of Odia identity in that period was also at stake when the Cult was under threat.

Jayee Rajguru was the most powerful man in the then Khurdha kingdom among the natives. He was the guardian, tutor, the administrator (Bebarta), Diwan (chief financial officer) and most importantly the preceptor of the royal house.² He was actually the de facto ruler of the those areas which were under the king; but he was also the automatic cultural as well as religious leader of the entire Odia mass, whose influence was much larger than the political. He had a natural sense of pride in him as the prime symbol of ecclesiastical affairs of nearly 50 lakh Odia-speaking people and besides those devotees in other regions. His forefathers were also the same to the royals. He exerted great veneration and respect in the society. He had a foresight. But his problem was that he had to face the most powerful imperialist force of the mighty British and the king was not powerful. The king had a very small and old-modeled standing army of 10-15 thousand which could not be compared to the mighty army of the imperial Gangas or the Gajapatis of the past. His armaments were extremely old and quite ineffective in modern combats. His soldiers were not regularly trained. They also hailed from the locality only. The soldiers of the distance places, who, once constituted the grand army of his predecessors, were no longer serving him. Most of the Garhjat (Princely state) chiefs were under the complete sway of the British. Even, it is known that the king of Khemundi once came to Puri during the Car festival to forcibly perform the Chhera Panhara or the pious sweeping service in the cars of the deities, claiming him the real inheritor of Gajapati tradition to remove the king of Khurdha from the duty.³ So, the king of Khurdha was no more a respectable figure among the local fiefs, because of his quickly declining influence and finance, so legitimacy. He had no money or resources to recruit large army. He was even colloquially very lowly described as Mahalia Makunda, i.e. the 'worthless Mukunda'. No other Indian force was capable to support him as they all were defeated by the British might by that time.

Rajguru could pursue the king to fight a war against the invaders, but the consequences were very miserable. When the poor, very young and helpless king was branded as a lumpen by the scholars, Rajguru was treated with respect and veneration. Rajguru became a hero for his death by capital punishment in an unusual manner, while the king's long sufferings and ignominious death for supporting the Rajguru, even hesitatingly, were utterly undermined. Both the King and the Rajguru, in spite of their love and mistrust relationship, fought a great battle for prestige, and both of them demand huge respect and praise. That, in

spite of their shortcomings, they dared to confront the powerful might of English. The battle against the British was suicidal, but they both dared it and both deserve heroes' glory. They proved a point that even in the early part of the 19th century, when there was helplessness everywhere; the tree of Odia identity was still alive. Jayee Rajguru and his king Mukundadeva II both deserve the status of the heroes whose sacrifices later contributed immensely for the emergence of Odia nationalism in the late 19th Century. They were martyrs of Odia identity. They caused the birth of modern Odia nationalism in later period. They vigorously represented the pride of an ancient race.

The Revolt

The revolt broke out in 1804 when the king led it. W.W. Hunter calls it the 'Rebellion of the Raja of Khurdha'. The British troops arrived on the spot and pushed the retreating rebels to Khurdha. It is found that 7,000 soldiers of British were sent to Khurdha to quell the uprising.⁴ It was a huge move by the British to quell the revolt from its root. The fort of Khurdha was destroyed. The king escaped to the forest when there was no hope for him. He later surrendered.⁵ Mukundadeva was imprisoned, first in Cuttack and later in Midnapur. His territory was confiscated which meant the virtual end of the Khurdha Dynasty. The king received a pension in compensation. He was released in 1807. He was the last king of Khurda and after him his successor came to be known only as the 'Raja of Puri', the title of Raja being only personal and he solely depended on a political pension. According to Herman Kulke, the king and his successors became 'kings without kingdoms'.⁶ He died on 30th November 1817.

The king lived a very melancholy life till his death which could be compared to the life of Bahadur Shah Jafar, the last Mughal Emperor of 1857. The only difference was that when Jafar was very old; the king of Odisha was very young. One can also remember the tragic fate of the last king of Burma, King Thibaw, in the last part of the 19th century, who was defeated and was brought to India as a prisoner, who died in a jail in Ratnagiri (Maharashtra). He died as a very sad and isolated man.⁷ The other people, the participants of the 1805 skirmishes were not known. They remained unsung. The common soldiers who fought with their king and the Guru, got killed and injured, arrested and punished, could not be mentioned as there is no trace of evidence about them anywhere.

In his novel Atharasaha Satara (O) (Eighteen Hundred Seventeen), Godavarish Mishra,⁸ noted poet, educationist and statesman of Odisha of the late 19th century, Pt. Godavarish Mishra has described very vividly the revolt of 1817. He was the first modern Odia scholar who has made this attempt. Being a man from Banpur, he must have come across the popular voices prevailed in his time about the revolts. Though the incident has been narrated as the subject matter in a novel, the historical acumen of the writer cannot be undermined.

The Second Paik Revolt (1817-26) and Buxi (Bakshi) Jagabandhu, the Generalissimo

The second phase of the Paika Rebellion started under the leadership of Buxi Jagabandhu, the commander-in-chief of the king. He did not participate in the first rebellion. Like the king, the chief of the army was also titular by that time; he was also facing the consequences of British greed and interference.

The king was not in a position to save his commander when he himself was under the mercy of the British. His family estate of Killa Rorang (Buxibari), consisting of the Quilla of Rorang and fourpraganas viz Rahang, Lembai, Sarai and Chabiskud, was taken over by the British in 1814, reducing him to penury. Though he was no more a man of riches, he enjoyed a great social veneration as the traditional chief of the royal army and his village was surrounded by hundreds of traditional soldier settlements. The Paikas of Khurdha were also facing a new social atmosphere where they were becoming unnecessary and useless. Traditional occupancy on their lands was the only source of income. The forts were no more busy. There was a little political activity in the premises. The standing armies were disbanded since long. When the Gajapati of Odisha was reduced to the Gajapati of Khurdha by the Moguls in 1582 A.D., since then the Odia traditional soldiery, who were stationed across the empire since centuries, became disbanded gradually. Their orthodoxy made them crippled to adopt the new ways of life and they all lost their glories for all. Only in and around Khurdha there were some settlements where the Paikas lived with their military professions and titles. The whole militias of the coastal region, being disbanded by the Moguls and the British respectively, had lost their past, being forced to live in acute poverty and under vagaries of natural calamities. They could not serve a new power. The British also could not recruit them in their army. A few local fiefs could maintain their traditions for a period, though; many of them found using single surnames by the first part of the 20th century shedding their long traditional titles given by the royalty. In Khurdha, as the royal house had its establishments till that date, Odia military system could be found in that region. This happened throughout Odisha, lakhs of soldiers, who were mostly peasant-militias, faced the same danger of extinction as a class. They became fulltime peasants. Cultivation was extremely backward and the British did not encourage it as a meaningful profession, though their demand on the land was increasing by leaps and bounds. Kedarnath Mohapatra informs that time came when the hard-pressed Paikas became paupers⁹ to die in the time of natural calamities.

Like the King, the Buxi was also repeatedly offended and remained unheard. His grievances became known to his people, whose forefathers constituted, once upon a time, the cream soldiery of Buxi's predecessors, as the position of Buxi was also hereditary like the Rajguru or the King. Buxi was also a relative to the king of the then Bhoi dynasty of Khurdha. A direct conclusion can be made from the situations occurred since the middle of the 16th century and the evidences on the Bhoi Dynasty that Bhois were local fiefs of Khurdha who rose to prominence by dint of their merits under the Gajapatis. Govinda Bidyadhar, a Bhoi, could become the Gajapati in 1442 A.D., after the decline of the Suryavamsis. The Bhois were matrimonially related to many local fiefs of the then Odisha. Perhaps the Bhois were the offshoot of the local Samanta Khandayats. At that time only the relatives of the Kings, the royals and the powerful fiefs, were called as Khandayats. Only the officers of royal blood or high positions were addressed as Khandayats. The soldiers were known as Paikas or Orhs. Bhois were village chiefs in medieval Hindu rule in Odisha. They were also known as the recruiters of soldiers in the villages, as Bhoimulas. The origin of the Bhoi dynasty can be traced in these powerful recruiters-the Bhoimuls, who, in the course of time, made them powerful to

grab the highest political power of the state. If one sees the surnames¹⁰ of the early leaders of the Bhoi clan during war of successions, the names of Raghuvamsa Chhotaray, Narasingha Jena, Ramai Routray etc. directly prove the fact that these Bhoi scions, who were serving the Gajapati as their Khandayat officials, were trying to grab power when the formers became weak. It was natural and this incident was not unknown neither in the history of Odisha nor of India. Odra Kapilendradeva replaced weak Ganga king from the throne. It was a proud movement for the local Khandayats of Khurdha to rise or to contest for the highest political position of the state. This happened in the case of Rajputs, Marathas and the Sikhs.

The Buxi was a royal Bhoi scion having lots of social prestige to enjoy. His settlement at Rorang was encircled by numerous Orh villages, the villagers being the cream of the Khurdha militia, must have felt glorious in supporting their own clan men in power as Gajapatis and Commander in Chiefs. Obviously the leadership of the Buxi in the Paika Rebellion was imperative. It is said that the common poor Paikas did collect a traditional cess (Magana)¹¹ from themselves to pay the Buxi for his living. As they themselves were in dire situations this tribute to their chief was meager.

The Forest Paikas and the Dalit Paikas of Ghumsur and Banpur.

The Paikas of Khurdha were waiting for a proper time to strike. The rise of the Paikas of tribal origin in Ghumsur under the leadership of Sindhu and Arak Kandha and Pana Paikas of Champagarh together gave the Paikas of Khurdha the opportunity to raise a banner of revolt. Most of the Paikas of Banpur area joined it. The British report that the tribal Chuhars also joined them. They attacked the government treasury. They then attacked and burnt the police station. The salt depot located at Chilka was also attacked by the rebels.¹² The problems of the Ghumsur Paiks were different from those of Khurdha, as they became angry when the British interfered in the succession process of their royal house, which was exclusively, as they believed since ages, their prerogative.¹³ Godavarish Mishra has described about an incident which triggered the situation to an open revolt. The matter became worst when one tribal fief Anadi Jani of Ghumsur estate was illegally confined and manhandled by some Britishers when the former made a quarrel with the latter on the hunt of a wild boar. He killed the boar by his arrow and demanded its possession, while the British soldiers refused to do. The British soldiers made the chief captive and insulted him. It made the tribal warriors angry and they wanted to avenge the insult inflicted on their chief.¹⁴ They made knots in a cloth which was sent to other villages, to spread the message of revolt. War drum Changu was beaten to inform about a revolt. The enemy became common for both the Paikas of Khurdha and the Paikas of Ghumsur; they made a common cause to fight out the British from their soil.¹⁵

The Revolt in Nutshell

The Zamindars and the Paikas of Karipur, Marichpur, Golra, Balarampur, Budnakera and Rupasa supported the outbreak. While the revolt started from Banapur and Khurda, it quickly spread to other parts of Odisha such as Puri, Pipili and Cuttack and to several remote villages, including Kanika, Kujang and Pattamundai. It is also said that the impact of the revolt was seen in Balasore. The Rajas of Kanika, Kujang, Nayagarh and Ghumusur aided Jagabandhu and Dalabehera Mir Haidar Alli of Jadupur was an important

Muslim rebel. Khurdha was the epicenter of the revolt. Puri was the main target of the rebels as it was the centre of Odia identity. Both Lord Jagannath and his first Sevak Gajapati king were the symbols of Odia identity of the time. Puri also located the administrative offices of the British in their initial periods in Odisha. Being successful in different places like Khurda, Lembai, Pipli, Balakati, Gangapara, Kothdes, Hariharpur etc., the insurgents entered into Puri town. They burnt and broke down the public and private buildings as well. On 14 April, Buxi, with a large number of his followers, reached Puri. The priests of the temple welcomed him. They denounced the British authority and proclaimed Raja Mukundadeva as their ruler who was indifferent to this sort of affair. The same thing happened in 1857 when the mutineers, when captured Delhi, proclaimed Bahadur Shah as the Emperor of India. The titular Gajapati was still considered as the symbol of Odia identity. The correspondence of Impey to the Government at Bengal reveals that the revolt gradually spread to some remote areas. It is said that the king also provided moral support to the Buxi when the latter clandestinely met him at his residence at Balisahi in Puri.

The revolt was totally ill-organized. Mostly it was sporadic in nature except in certain cases when the skirmishes became decisive. The leaders of the revolt were not aware of modern warfare. They had no strong espionage system which could match to that of the enemies. Their financial condition was very pathetic. Their traditional knowledge had no use in the battles of the 19th century. A handful of British soldiers could defeat the large army of Odia combatants. The Britishers were powerful, having vast experience in inter-continental war-fares, both on land and in seas, had modern weapons, big ships, highly trained combatants, experienced officers, growing sense of nationalism as Britons etc. They had already defeated many powerful Indian forces like the Nawab of Bengal, the Emperor of Delhi, the Nawab of Oudh, the Marathas, the Sultans of Mysore and others. So, the Odia political elites at the time of British occupation were no match to the foreigners in any respect. For centuries the Odia military system was not upgraded. The number of the soldiers who fought as rebels were also not very large. If a rough calculation would be made their total number could be between 7000 to 15000. They, very often, were less in number in local skirmishes. One source says that when British occupied Odisha in 1803, there were 110 Dalbeheras, 944 Dalais, 80,000 Paikas, 800 cavalry, and 4 Sardars.¹⁶ But it was beyond truth when one sees the meager number of participants in the skirmishes during rebellion. Perhaps these numbers belonged to the soldiery of the Khurdha region of original Bhoi dynasty of Govinda Vidhyadhar of the 16th century. If the untrained commoners or those were the old remnants of irregulars participated in the battles, their heroics became fruitless if one sees the results. The British troops were in hundreds, but they were well capable to face armies of thousands of the natives. Experienced British officers, both civil as well as military, performed their duties as per their strategies. Edward Impey, the Magistrate and Judge of Cuttack, was in the overall charge of the entire event. Lieutenant Prideaux, Lieutenant Faris, Captain Le Fevere, Captain Wellington, Captain C.R. Kennet, Captain A.Macleod, Major E. Roughsedge, with the assistance of Lieutenant D. Ruddell etc. were excellent leaders of their soldiers. The British army might have included Indians besides British regulars which proved a point that if properly trained and equipped the soldiers of any root can be fatal.

Political diplomacy of the British divided local fiefs. It is seen that some influential locals helped British to give secret information about the Paikas or helped to capture the rebel leaders. Treachery of the some local chiefs proved fatal for the rebels. The king was arrested and was shifted to Cuttack. Buxi with some of his trusted aides absconded. While in confinement, the Raja used to write beautiful poems in the name of Jagannath expressing his deep respire. One of such poems can be cited here,

Ahe Niladribihari,

Katake Ataka, Hebaru Mo'dina,

Sarunahi Jhurijhuri. (O)

(Oh: Jagannath, the Dweller in Blue Mountain (Puri temple), My sorrowful days are becoming countless since my confinement in Cuttack.)¹⁷

The king suffered a lot which became unbearable for him. He was shifted to Alipure and he died very soon in his youth in November 1817.¹⁸

Popular supports were spontaneous and intense in those areas where the influence of the Buxi was high. But in western or coastal regions the rebels failed to incite the people. The old militias failed to identify with the causes of the Khurdha Paikas, as the authority of the King was no more prevailing over them, or they had lost the old chivalry due to the mass abandonment of their old profession since long. The British also issued strict instructions to the administrators of both British and local origin to be very watchful. But in Khurdha region, adherence to the Cult of Jagannath on the basis of which the revolt was nurtured, also put the extra dimension to the popular base. By May 1817, the British managed to re-establish their authority over the entire province, but it was a long while before the tranquility finally returned to it. During this period, W. Blunt, the Commissioner of Cuttack, sent Waz Mohammed to negotiate with Buxi. At Nayagarh, both of them talked and Buxi surrendered with his followers at Cuttack on 27 May, 1825. Buxi was pardoned along with his followers. His monthly allowance was fixed at Rs. 150. He lived, virtually as a prisoner at Cuttack. Writing about the sufferings and the sacrifices of Buxi, R.D.Banerjee says, "He served a noble purpose, as his rising opened the eyes of the British masters of Orissa to some extent. In any other country except India, Jagabandhu Vidyadhar would have been regarded as a national hero and a benefactor of his own people...."¹⁹

The Sardar Khandayats

Information is available about some other Khandayat Sardars as well as the local mass leaders who organized the revolt in their localities. They were mostly the Dalbeheras of their villages. They were, by that time, also respectfully called as Khandayats. They had natural inclination to the Buxi's cause, so joined him. While many of their relatives or kins preferred to remain aloof from the incident, they without hesitation gave their lives for the Buxi. Their sufferings were maximum. The Zamindars (Kundites) of Marichpur & Harishpur (Madhusudan Mangaraj) and the Raja of Kujang were supporters of the Buxi.²⁰ The uprising was also supported by the titular Diwan, Krushnachandra Bhramarabar Raya. He always remained a trusted aide to Buxi during his critical times. Damu Subudhi, Gopal Chhotray etc. were to go the jungles and to fight

from there. In Khurdha region, Padmanabh Chhotray of Badgada, Pindaki Bahubalendra of Daruthenga, Pitabas Mangaraj and Karunakar Sardar of Gop was arrested. Uttarkabata of Gangapada killed himself to avoid arrest and humiliation. Narayan Paramaguru and Bamadeva Patajoshi (Ringleaders as per British report) and their followers in Kujanga who were other key leaders of the Paika rebellion. When defeated, they were sent to the fort of Barabati as prisoners. Then, they were shifted to Alipore for life imprisonment. In 1819, in Banpur region, Sheo Nayak organized the tribals and the Pana Dalits. Another revolt broke out there in 1936.²¹ In 1827, the people of Tapanggarh under the leadership of Madhaba Chandra Routray, the Dalabehera or traditional Chief, revolted against the oppressive alien rule of the British. Another revolt broke out in Banpur. Krutibas Patsani was the Dalabehera of Arangagarh. He organized the Paikas of Banapur, supported by the Raranga Dalabehera Panchanan Nayak and Lochan Bisoyee of Khurdha. Krutibas announced Panchanan as Saran Singh, the king. The king made Krutibas his general. They ransacked government offices and declared Banapur independent. But soon he was defeated and transported to Andaman.²² Saran Singh was hanged to death.

The Subalterns-The Common Paikas

The Paikas formed the lowest class in the Odia army, the real subalterns. Dalais were the lowest ranked officers. The word 'Paika' might have been derived from the Sanskrit word Padatika, or 'Payaka' meaning the foot-soldiers. Paika practice was also prevalent in Assam and some other states in medieval periods. The term might be of medieval product, when Muslim rulers adopted it and introduced their administration throughout India. People from all castes were Paikas, though, the Khandayats constituted the majority. Upper castes naturally monopolized the higher posts. Chasas, who also claim Khandayat status in coastal regions, perhaps formed a sizeable part of the irregular army. Kanhei Champati in his Paika Kheda, written most probably in and around 18th century, clearly mentions the sons of the Chasa families could join the army having certain mandatory physical qualities, besides the Brahmins, Karanas and even the untouchables.²³ In the tribal areas the tribes constituted the majority of the Paikas having their Buxis, Bisoyees, Gargnayaks, Pradhans, Nayaks, Jena etc. The novel Bhima Bhuyan of Gopal Ballav Das also vividly talks about the monopolistic role of the Bhuyan tribals in the military services of Keonjhar princely state. They were also serving as the generals of the king.²⁴ Khurdha Khandayats were called Orhs where as coastal Chasas also called colloquially as Orhs. The Orhs were the celebrated ancient race who originated and developed the identity of Odisha in bygone days. There were Samanta Khandayats, who claimed themselves Kshyatriyas. Khandayat category was an open system, the holders of land were honored so by the kings. Most of them also were warriors. During Bhoi rule, many local Khandayats in Khurdha rose to the status of Kshyatriyas. Had there been no census works after British occupation and traditional societal structures of the late 18th century continued, the social identity of most of the Odias at present could have been different. Many Paikas of Khurdha and other princely states became Kshyatriyas when they were promoted to higher posts. It has been the most used way to upgrade oneself in Hindu society. Many scholars believe that in the last part of the 19th and early parts of the 20th century many

peasants called them Khandayats and many Khandayats called them Kshyatriyas. But it was not an altogether new move in the history of India, one can find such social mobilities in the cases of peasant castes like the Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, common Rajputs, Lingayats, Kammas, Reddys, Vellalas etc. These predominantly peasant communities in different parts of India do claim themselves and asserted as Kshyatriyas in the late medieval times, because they were soldiers in their regional armies. The Khandayats of Khurdha used high sounding titles when Bhoi Dynasty ruled over the land. Most of the Khandayats live in Cuttack, Puri, Balasore and Ganjam districts. They have their ups and downs in the last three hundred years.

The Social Composition of the Paikas

It is very difficult to visualize the Paikas of Khurdha differently from the Paikas of other areas of Odisha who also constituted a powerful social group of the province with their typical hierarchies in them. Only the difference was that the Paika class of rest of entire Odisha had lost their profession since the middle of the 16th century, whereas the Paikas of Khurdha could continue their traditional professions till the middle of the 19th century. Different regions of modern Odisha have different types and classes of soldiery having different ethnic roots. Small chieftains who rose to prominence in later periods also posted their own loyal original army men in higher positions in conquered territories. The soldiers of conquered areas were pushed to degraded positions. Often armies were sent to different distant places to safeguard the boundaries. They settled there for longer periods and adopted the customs of the local militia. There were advisors, officers, cream-combatants, archers, musketeers, men with elephants, irregulars etc. Odia army had less number of horsemen. Tribals were also recruited in large number as archers. There were also local armies could be compared with modern Armed Constabulary or the Territorial Army. The Garh Paikas were the standing army to face any type of sudden eventualities. Including the Chasas, Mahanayaks, Sudhs, Benatia, Garhuas, tribes and Dalits etc., the Khandayats constitute a majority of Odia population.²⁵ It indicates the military nature of the state and also corroborates the information of Abul Fazl about the vast army of Odisha king of his time. They were the standing army. They were like the Mogul emperor's own troops called Ahadis. There was a personal army of the king who usually stationed in the capital. The Paikas of Khurdha belonged to such army, very devoted and loyal to the king. These Khandayats in this army naturally enjoyed superior social as well as administrative statuses as compared to other soldiers. In some Garhjats, except a few Samantas, most of the soldiers were of tribal origin. In the course of time they also called them Kshyatriyas. The classification of Odia army into Paharis, Dhenkias, Dhanukis etc., as frequently mentioned in different government and private sources were of very recent origin as compared to their thousands of years of glorious existence. This type of classification was the product of Khurdha kingdom of the 18th century which was mentioned earliest in Paika Kheda. What was the actual system is difficult to ascertain. Odia Mahabharat of Sarala Das also could not talk about the titles, surnames of the soldiers of armies of his period, though military nature of the state of his time is distinctly visible in the work.

Paika Kheda of Kanhei Champati gives the information of the army and military tradition in and around

Khurdha, which was only a small land of a titular king of that time. This only indicated the iota of a grand tradition of Odia military glory in its declining time. But, the composition of the Grand Army of the celebrated Odra Kapilendra could have other majestic dimensions and connotations. Nothing is available about the common soldiery. The Marathas, the Sikhs, the Jats and the Rajputs are extremely fortunate that by their time of glory, they knew the art of history-writing adopting it from the Muslim chroniclers. Large numbers of written materials are available to glorify them in historical pages, but Odias are unfortunate to identify their heroes in written manner. Only kings became famous and glorified at the cost of the subalterns. In spite of their careers as soldiers for thousands of years, the Odia military class does not enjoy the status of Kshyatriyas. Brahmanical traditions call them Sudras; even the King was called so. The Madala Panji, the temple chronicle of Puri, also has no information about the composition of traditional Odia army.

From the list of the people punished by the British one can clearly see the multi-social background of the Paikas. It is a fact that it is difficult to find who was not a Paika in the list. There were the Dalbeheras, Khandayats, Orhs and others in the list. If one goes through the traditional surnames of the list of the victims, there were Chasas, Khandayats, Brahmans, Karanas, artisans etc. They all were punished. There were a few Muslims. One got capital punishments where some were transported for life. Many tribals and Dalits also faced capital punishments or long term imprisonments. There were countless, who could not be traced. There were many unsung heroes.²⁶ The tribals and Dalits who faced maximum repression. A sense of pride and belongingness and devotion to their local chiefs made them heroes to display rarest of braveries. They participated in the battles, killed their enemies under the leadership of their chiefs, so faced dire consequences.

Nationalism in Odisha of the early 19th Century?

The heroes of Paika revolts are not unsung; they are great personalities of Odia identity. They are revered across Odisha as own martyrs. They did not glorify a particular caste or represented a particular caste; rather they represented the whole sense of Odia pride against all odds. Displaying rarest of braveries they faced the most powerful military power of the world, the British. They created anecdotes of sacrifices for future. It is a fact that they had personal grudges, they represented mostly the interests of the traditional elites, but nobody can take away their glory as the brave protectors of their traditions and class interest as well. Preservation of class interest is not a sin.

Nationalism, as it is understood today, cannot be applicable to justify the sacrifices of those Paikas who were killed or suffered for a 'nation'. The present sense of nationalism is a product of the intermixture of western ideas of popular sovereignty, social justice, equality, democratic spirit and participatory administration and traditional Odia values of Jagannathdharma. Most of the western ideals originated in post-renaissance Europe, when monarchical systems failed to cater to the need of the hurriedly changing modern industrialized world. History, cultural traditions, literature etc. definitely played their roles in the origin as well as the growth of new idea of nationalism, but, in India in the first decade of the 19th century, these types of mentalities were quite absent in the people. In case of Odisha, the situation was more severe.

If there was a state, it was not of the Odias. The political consciousness of the traditional feudal Odia elites of the early 19th century cannot be compared with the modern idea of nationalism. But cultural consciousness played the role in creating a strong anti-colonial situation. Odia identity in the line of medieval monarchical consciousness played its role in shaping the birth of modern Odia nationalism few decades later. Odia nationalism merged with the pan-Indian nationality when era of freedom movement compelled the Odia elites to join Indian identity. Indian identity became a 'super tradition' for the Odia elites of that time. Mukundadeva II, Jayee Rajguru, Buxi Jagabandhu etc. all represented classical ways and values of medieval Jagannath tradition or Jagannathdharma. They did not possess the mentality of a modern national man, but, they displayed the braveries as the most ardent champions and protectors of their culture and feudal rights. They lived in their own socio-political milieus with the dignity bestowed by the tradition. They were not nationalists, but they created sagas as the propellers of the growth of Odia nationalism in succeeding decades.

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Re-assessment of unsung Women Freedom Fighters: A Birds View on Western Part Odisha

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India saw a constant battle and strife for years together preceding the attainment of its freedom from the shackles of colonialism. The people of India had to overcome a long road to make India free from the clutches of British hegemony. History of our country is the mute witness of those people who have showed their courage and deep love and loyalty to their motherland. The Indian liberation movement is honoured singing the narrative of those gallant heroes. As it was the involvement of all parts of the society the movement was described as 'mass movement' which could be achieved only after the appearance of Mahatma Gandhi in the liberation movement. The clarion appeal of Mahatma Gandhi gave an impetus to the people in every nook and corner of India. People of Odisha also played key involvement in the liberation movement. While first it was restricted exclusively to urban educated class, royal and educated families, but the Gandhi's inspiration operated like a magic wand that allured the people of the entire of India. At that time how could have women stayed confined them inside the four walls of their home? People reacted to Gandhiji's call in great number by directly or indirectly joining and it was developed into a popular movement.

The region of West Odisha has made important contributions of its own to this historic fight for independence. The western region of Odisha is comprised of nine districts: Balangir, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Sundergarh, Deogarh, Suvarnapur, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Bargarh, and the Athmallik subdivision of the Angul district. It stretches from the Kalahandi district in the south to the Sundergarh district in the north west. Before the 8th century A.D., the western portion of the state of Odisha was referred to as DakshinKoshala. This region covers a large geographical area and has a very diverse population and way of life due to the region's size. The rich history and diverse culture of South Koshal are depicted in its cultural profile. Throughout the history of freedom movements, western Odisha's female residents have been active participants.¹ They have made a remarkable contribution, exhibiting unwavering bravery and unwavering patriotism, despite the fact that this contribution is rarely brought to light. Krishna Devi, a Punjabi woman, had arrived in Sambalpur with her businessman husband prior to Gandhiji's visit. She was accompanied by her husband. She had been an instrumental figure in leading others in this region to find inspiration through their work. Earlier on, she was a part of the Satyagraha movement in Raipur. In 1928, Gandhiji and Kasturba travelled to this part of the world for the very first time. At a gathering that was held in Sambalpur in honour of Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba, the local women came together under the direction of Krishna Devi, who served as the meeting's leader. She was an extremely influential figure in spreading Gandhi's message and serving as a source of motivation for the women living in this region. In March of 1931, while she was giving a speech at a massive peasant conference in Budharaja, she was taken into custody and taken to the Sambalpur jail. Immediately following her release from jail, she paid Bargarh a

visit. In celebration of Krishna Devi, the women of Bargarh organised a large gathering for their community. The building that would later be known as Krishnasram was initially the home of the Congress Office in Bargarh, which was made possible by a donation from Fakira Behera. A significant number of women were moved to join the freedom movement as a result of Krishna Devi's leadership. It is possible to mention Jambubati Devi, who was the wife of the well-known freedom fighter Bhagirathi Pattanaik, as well as Gandharvi Devi, who was the daughter-in-law of Fakira Behera; Ia Meher, who was the wife of Kunja Bihari of Tukurla; Shreeyabati Devi, who was the wife of senior freedom fighter Ghanashyam Panigrahi of Manpur, Bheden; At the Gandhi Ghat in Sambalpur during the month of March 1931, Krishna Devi presided over the Dandi Divas.²

Jambubati Devi was the first woman to be recognised as a freedom fighter from Western Odisha. She was a member of the Jambubati family. She was born on November 9th, 1886, in the town of Binka. Jambubati Devi joined the freedom movement after she got married to Bhagirathi Pattanaik of Barpali, who was a frontline freedom fighter. Jambubati Devi was from Barpali. At that point, she had very little information regarding the movement. Bhagirathi Pattanaik was a supporter of Swaraj and was working to advance its cause. When Jambubati Devi learned about the freedom movement, she took out the last piece of property she owned and gave it to her husband. This piece of gold was the only possession Jambubati Devi had with her at the time. In the wee hours of 1931, Gandhi and his entire family packed up their belongings and drove off to begin their journey. Along the way, they visited various villages and spread the word about Gandhi's philosophy. She founded Ashrams in Balitikira, Tukurla (Bargarh), Budharaja (Sambalpur) and also at Jharsuguda. Through taking this action, she bolstered the Congress Organization and increased the number of influential women within the movement. They headed to Kumbhari, Remunda, Manpur, Bargarh and Tukurla. During their travels, they spread awareness of Gandhian ideals and brought forward messages from Gandhiji.³ They travelled to Sambalpur, where they checked into the home of one Kuldhar, which was located in the Kolh- Para neighbourhood, not far from Budharaja. Following that, the home was converted into an Ashram, which also happened to be the very first Congress Ashram in Sambalpur. Jambubati Devi was arrested for the first time as a result of her participation in a civil disobedience movement and was held in Sambalpur Jail. She was held there for a period of six months before being transferred to Bhagalpur Central Jail for an additional period of six months. In the city of Balasore, twelve women participated in the nationwide movement of Salt Satyagraha.⁴ Jambubati Devi served as the movement's head. She might be able to instill a sense of patriotism in the hearts of women.

The meeting of the peasant congregation took place on March 2nd, 1931. The district authority arrested Jambubati, Krishna Devi, Bhagirathi Pattanaik, and Prafulla Pattanaik (son of Bhagirathi Pattanaik), although Jambubati and Krishnadevi were released in the evening. The arrests were made because the district authority feared the impact it would have on the people in the area. After Bhagirathi Pattanaik was arrested, Jambubati and Prafulla sought refuge at the residence of Krishna Devi. Once the Gandhi-Irwin Accord was signed in March of 1931, all of the political prisoners were eventually set free. The congressmen of

Sambalpur organised public gatherings and rallies in response to this occurrence. These gatherings and rallies took place in Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, and Bargarh. At the conference that was being organised by Krishna Devi and Jambubati Pattanaik, there were several hundreds of women in attendance. In the wake of the Gandhi-Irwin accord, the rest of the nation entered a period of relative calm; nonetheless, the city of Sambalpur remained extremely active in its efforts to organise people in support of the Independence Movement. Prafulla Pattanaik, son of Bhagirathi Pattanaik, proceeded to organise gatherings at Jharsuguda with the assistance of Jambubati Devi, mother of Bhagirathi Pattanaik, and Tulsi Devi, mother of Bihari Ram. This was done despite the fact that the British government had implemented repressive measures.⁵

The second phase of the Satyagraha movement started on July 8, 1932 at Bargarh. Except for Jambubati, who was transferred to the prison at Sambalpur, all of the Satyagrahis were thrown behind bars in Patna. Gandhi made the decision to put a stop to the Civil Disobedience Campaign; nonetheless, individual Satyagraha campaigns continued to be carried out in various locations around the country. In August of 1933, Jambubati Devi was participating in an individual Satyagraha when she picketed in front of a foreign liquor shop and a foreign cloth shop at Marwadi Pada in Sambalpur and a liquor shop in Bargarh. As a result of her actions, she was sentenced to four months of rigorous imprisonment. The husband of Jambubati Pattanaik, Bhagirathi Pattanaik, informed the District Magistrate of Sambalpur on the 18th of September 1933 that they were going to embrace individual Civil Disobedience Movement on the 22nd of December 1933. Their appeal was denied, and they were placed under arrest as a result. Jambubati Devi was sentenced to hard imprisonment and was taken to the Bhagalpur Central Prison while Bhagirathi and his son Prafulla were both transferred to the Patna Central Jail. After serving their time in jail, Bhagirathi, Jambubati, and Prafulla decided to devote their time to helping those who had been affected by the earthquake by becoming volunteers. They went to the camps that were located in Madhopur and Basudevpur. When they arrived, they found Jawaharlal Nehru, who was touring the relief camp at the time. They had the honour of spending the night with Mahatma Gandhi, Mirabehn, Bhagabati Devi, the older sister of Rajendra Prasad, and Jamunalal Bajaj on April 3, 1934. They also spent the night with Jamunalal Bajaj. After paying his respects to those affected by the earthquake, Mahatma Gandhi continued his tour of Harijan. On May 4th, 1934, Gandhi travelled by rail to arrive in Jharsuguda. The staff members of Congress extended to him an enthusiastic greeting. Marigolds were presented to Gandhi by his mother, Tulsi Devi, who was also known as Bihari Ram. O Harijan Mother was the greeting that Gandhi murmured when he placed the same garland around the neck of Tulsi Devi.

Jambubati and Tulsi Devi were devoted followers of Gandhi for a period of two days. In December of 1935, the National Congress celebrated the culmination of its first half-century of service to the country. The entire country honoured the holiday with appropriate solemnity. Under the direction of Jambubati Devi, hundreds of men and women participated in the march that was held at Barpali. At the time of the Quit India Movement, thousands of men and women all around the country participated in processions. Students from the Ghoremara training school in Bihar were looking for someone to take the lead. In the

meanwhile, they might be able to select Jambubati as their leader so that he might guide them. The procession was headed by Jambubati, who was carrying a tricolour flag, and was joined by Smt. Prema Devi, who is the wife of Shri Krishna Prasad Saha.⁶ Jambubati served as the meeting's chairperson throughout its whole. She was arrested together with Prema Devi at Dumuka during the Quit India Movement in 1942 while she was working in the state of Bihar.⁷ Upon her release from prison, she found refuge in the home of BinodanadaJha, where his wife was treated as though she were her own mother. Because of her unwavering devotion, undying love, and unwavering enthusiasm for her homeland, the Satyagrahis in Bihar used to refer to her as "Ma ji" (mother). She passed away on April 17, 1943, the following year, having had a significant and indelible impact on the independence cause before her passing.⁸ Daughter of Dhanapati Dash, ruler of Bargarh, Prabhavati Devi was a devoted freedom warrior who fought for India's independence. At the age of ten, she lost her husband to death. She had completed her studies till the fifth class. She pleaded with Malati Devi to continue employing her in any capacity.

After receiving instruction at the Bari Ashram, she participated in the gherao at the police station in Bargarh and distributed brochures for Congress propaganda. Due to her participation in this activity, she was sentenced to a year and a half behind bars. She went from village to village to spread the word about the Swadeshi Movement and encourage people to participate in the boycott of foreign goods. On the bank of the river Jeera, where MalatiChaudhury had arranged for a meeting to take place, she was the first woman to attend the gathering. In 1938, Prabhavati Devi travelled to the Bari Ashram, where she engaged in activities such as the Satyagraha, spinning and weaving, cottage industry, fundamental and adult education, women's development, Khadi, and animal husbandry, as well as received instruction in national linguistic education. ⁷ She spent a total of 15 days working alongside Gandhi at the Wardha Ashram. At the age of 26, Prabhavati became involved in the freedom movement. On August 23, 1943, she was taken into custody by the police due to the distribution of pamphlets by the Congress. She was arrested and taken to the Sambalpur jail, where she remained until her release in 1945. She became a member of the Bhoodan movement and took an active role in the foot marching led by BinovaBhave.

After the country gained its independence, she established the Rukmini Lath Bal Niketan in Bargaon for abandoned children. On September 19, 1926, ParvatiGiri, who is known as the Mother Teresa of Western Odisha, was born at Samaleipadar, which is located within the jurisdiction of the Bijepur police station. The word of the liberation struggle had already spread throughout the villages of Odisha by that time. She completed the third grade of her education. She made the decision to become a Satyagrahi when she was just 12 years old. In the year 1937, Samaleipadar played host to a congress meeting that was organised there. One year later, in 1938, a massive gathering of Congress delegates took place at Samaleipadar. The eloquent statements of renowned independence warriors like Malati Choudhury and PranakrushnaPadhiari have the potential to reinvigorate the general populace. The young girl ParvatiGiri was unable to keep quiet, and she eventually coerced her father into allowing her to participate in the work of the Congress. After performing well on a challenging test, ParvatiGiri was granted permission to visit

Rama Devi at her ashram in Bari. A young girl who was still a juvenile at the time ran away from her family and went to live at the Bari Ashram during an era marked by conservatism and dogmatism. It is without a doubt a really impressive accomplishment. After receiving instruction in weaving, ParbatiGiri travelled from village to village in the Sambalpur town area, where she taught people how to weave, spin, and knit. Among of the villages she visited were Samaleipadar, Sarandapali, and Daleipara. She was a very active participant in Mahatma Gandhi's KhadiAndolan movement. The sound of the thunderstorm, which was devoid of thunder, reverberated across every nook and cranny of India. How the people of the villages could stand by and do nothing while a daughter like ParbatiGiri worked tirelessly as a Satyagrahi is beyond comprehension. Panimora, Samaleipadar, and Ghens were some of the villages in the Bargarh district that formed the epicentre of the liberation struggle. In the course of their participation in the independence movement, individuals such as Ramachandra Giri, UjjalGiri, KuberaGiri, and Dwitiya Giri were arrested and transported to a jail in Bengal. Due to her involvement in anti-government activities, ParbatiGiri was taken into custody. She remained under Prabhabati Devi's care for a full year. When some time had passed, Prabhabati was transferred to the prison in Cuttack. She was a very active participant in Mahatma Gandhi's KhadiAndolan movement. 1942 was the year that saw the beginning of the Quit India Movement. The deafening roar of this uprising could be heard throughout the many villages that make up Odisha. The villages of Samaleipadar, Panimora, and Ghens, among others, are known for being the birthplaces of important figures in the liberation fight. When he was younger, ParbatiGiri, along with a bunch of other lads, used to give antiBritish shouts. But, due to the fact that she was so young, the officers on duty were unable to place her under custody. Despite this, British law enforcement eventually apprehended her and threw her in jail at Bargarh. While ParbatiGiri was too young to participate in the fighting during the liberation struggle, she shown an extraordinary amount of bravery and valour via her efforts that were directed against the regime.

In addition to this, she was known for her work in social reform, which was heavily influenced by the high ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. Once India gained her freedom, she devoted the rest of her life to helping the impoverished and disadvantaged. She founded Kasturba Matruniketan at Nrusingnath, which was located in the Paikmal area of the undivided Sambalpur district. She was a brilliant luminary in the state of Odisha. Although though she had originated from a little town in the western part of Odisha, the people of the area will remember her for the unwavering commitment she had shown to the cause of mankind throughout her life. She holds a position in Indian history that is unlike any other person who has ever lived. She was awarded the title "Rashtragaurav" and an honorary "D.Litt." by Sambalpur University in recognition of her outstanding service. 1998 was the year of her passing away.⁹GurubariMeher of Sonapur was a brave woman who fought for freedom, and she, along with other women Satyagrahis from Western Odisha, had an essential part to play in the independence movement. The Praja Mandal movement, which was first established in Cuttack in 1938, was the progenitor of the movement that GurubariMeher was instrumental in leading. This office was established for the very first time in Sonapur with LaxmanSatpathy serving as the

head of the organisation. The government of the princely state of Sonapur unleashed a reign of terror on the town of Binika on January 28, 1947, just a few days before the country was officially granted its freedom. As a result of the monarch of Sonapur state's support for the British government, his subjects became quite angry with him. A large-scale uprising against the king was orchestrated by close to 20,000 independence fighters under the leadership of Gurubari Meher. As a kind of demonstration against the additional cess that was levied on a variety of commodities, Gurubari marched forward. She was shot by the police, which resulted in her anti-royal supporters bringing down the royal regime.

The tale of Gurubari Meher is not widely recognised by the general public. Her narrative was first revealed to the public when it was unearthed by historians such as Professor Sadhu Charan Panda and Professor Siba Prasad Nanda in response to a news clip that appeared in *Dainika Asha*, a local newspaper produced in Sambalpur. Only then did her valour and bravery become known. Rukmini Devi Lath, who hailed from Kansaripara in the Sambalpur district and was married to the independence warrior Sri Prahallad Rai Lath, was providing the Congress leaders with assistance of every kind. Her spouse was serving in Congress in the year 1930 when this event took place. Many avoided going to the Congress party because of fear of getting in trouble when the government outlawed the congress.¹⁰ Despite this, Rukmini Devi, thinking of her husband's best interests, provided them with food and a safe place to sleep while they were in a precarious situation. She provided Ramadevi, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Pandit Nilakantha Das, Krupasindhu Hota, Sri Nabakrushna Choudhury, Harekrushna Mahtab, Surendranatha Dwivedi, Nilamani Routray, and Malati Choudhury with any and all assistance that they required.¹¹ Apart from that, the following women—Tulasi Devi, Ketaki Devi, Indu Pradhan, Jambovati Sahu, Sehati Pradhan, and Lilavati Pradhan, etc.—might not be regarded to be outstanding freedom fighters, but they did play an important role in the process of the independence movement in Sambalpur. Bhela, a secluded village in the Nuapada area, was the birthplace of many people who fought for their country's independence. In addition to this, it has documented a number of significant events that have left an indelible mark on the annals of freedom movement history. During the time of the fight for independence, notable women such as Leelabati Devi, Annapurna Devi, Shrimati Panigrahi, Taramani Devi, and many others served as leading women Satyagrahis in the village of Bhela, which was located in the undivided district of Kalahandi. These women fought for their rights and liberties. At the time of the Quit India Movement, when there was widespread protest over the entirety of the nation, the women of this particular region were also fighting against the authoritarian control of the British Government. At that historical period, the government of Great Britain levied unfair levies. Individuals who used more than one chullah were required to pay tax on each additional chullah that they used. As a means of self-defense, the women attacked the British police with paharuns, which are wooden poles with an iron cap attached to one end and are traditionally used for thrashing corn. In their demonstration against the British power for their oppression of the indigenous people, the ladies of Bhela demonstrated both their bravery and their capacity for self-determination. Famous female freedom warriors who have devoted their lives to serving their country will be honoured with songs of pride and

devotion when their contributions to history are written down and recorded.

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Ratnamali Jema: An Unsung Hero of Freedom Struggle of Odisha

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ABSTRACT:

The present paper highlights the legacy of an unsung hero of our struggle for liberation from the British rule. Although the history of freedom movement in Odisha is well recorded but the central role played by thousand unknown people in this movement continue to be an area of darkness both in the realm of historiography as well as in public memory. This paper will explore about Ratnamali Jema, the princess of the Kujang Estate of Odisha and her role in India's struggle for independence. She has made a lasting impact on the history of India's freedom struggle, from meeting Mahatma Gandhi and taking part in the Salt Satyagraha to serving lunch to the nation's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Along with her mother and Rama Devi, she took part in the 1930 Salt Satyagraha in Jagatsinghpur's Kaliapata village. Inspired by Gandhian thoughts in 1938, Ratnamali along with her husband led the lower caste march into the Pareswar temple in the village of Nimadiha. From 1942 to 1944, her husband was jailed by the British in Bihar's Hazaribagh jail. In 1962, she was elected to represent Tirtol as a Legislator. When Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru travelled to Paradip to lay the port's cornerstone, she had prepared food and given him a silver boat.

Key words: unsung heroes, freedom struggle, Gandhiji, legislator, satyagraha, Kujang.

INTRODUCTION:

India's freedom struggle is a saga of bravery, long struggle, and self sacrifices. The history of our freedom movement would be incomplete without giving recognition to those innumerable common people who sacrificed their everything to gift us a free nation to live. They faced tortures and exploitations which can't be explain in words to free the motherland from the powerful British Imperialism. Many of us don't know the contributions and sacrifices of these unknown heroes .If we were to recall the names of these unsung heroes, the list will be a very long one. The fight to free our country from the foreign rule was headed by Mahatma Gandhi, Subash Chandra Bosh, Jawaharlal Neheru, Bhagat Singh Sarojini Naidu, Laxmi Bai ,Mangal Pandey etc. We are familiar with the names and roles of these famous freedom fighters but don't know anything about the people who supported these leaders to fight against the British Raj. Their stories are missing from our history books and literature. Unsung heroes are those nameless freedom fighters who dedicated their lives for the liberation of this country and their records are not available much. We, the people of free India while celebrating seventy-seven years of our freedom do not even know the names and faces of these unsung heroes for a number of reasons. These brave hearts hardly find reference

in our history books. Now when the nation is celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to commemorate our 75th years of independence, it's time to give these unsung heroes their due honour for their sacrifices. Time has come to acknowledge their contributions in the same way we respect those renowned freedom fighters. Its times to celebrate these faces, to highlight their valiant fight and ultimate sacrifices. One such unsung hero was Ratnamali Jema from a tiny estate of Kujang in present Jagatsinghpur district of Odisha. She was the princess of Kujang born on 20 September 1916 in Paradeepgarh to King Narendrabahadur Sendha and Queen Bhagyawati Patamahadei.

ABOUT RATNAMALI JEMA:

Before 1868, Kujang was a rich estate of the Sendha dynasty deriving handsome revenue from agriculture and sea trade. It was a very tiny princely estate that refused to bow down before the British rule. The ruling Sendha dynasty lost its estate and the King died leaving behind the Queen and two daughters. Due to the rebellious nature of its zamindars and their continuous debt, the British government sold the estate in an auction in 1868 to the Queen of Bardhaman. Therefore, though the royal family of Kujang was dispossessed of their estate, they were still respected by the native people. Kujang like all other parts of Odisha participated in the national movement. Its participation was more significant during the Salt Satyagraha. In pre-British period, Kujang was exercising control over the salt affairs of the estate. But within a year of the British occupation, the salt business became the monopoly of the Government.

For the education of his daughter, the King had engaged a private tutor Duryodhan Pattnaik who was a follower of Gandhian ideologies and later took part in the national movement. The princess was inspired by him from a very tender age and developed a passion to fight against the foreign oppression. With Gandhiji's entry into the Indian National Congress and the commencement of the popular movement in 1920, the nature of Odisha's role in the freedom struggle took a new dimension. A great number of women like Rama Devi, Sarala Devi, Malati Choudhuri, etc rose to fame and took part in various Congress programmes like Satyagraha, weaving Khadi in Charkha, picketing in front of the foreign liquor shop, etc. Ratnamali Jema was influenced by these changing scenarios and joined the national movement at a very young age with her mother Queen Bhagyabati Patamahadei. She campaigned for women education, widow remarriage, removal of purdha system, abolition of child marriage, etc. She also worked for individual freedom, national unity, solidarity and the democratic transformation of every level of society. Because of Ratnamali Jema and her mother Queen, hundreds of village women of Kujang walked out of their houses to participate in the Congress demonstrations during the Non-co-operation Movement and boycott and Swadeshi programmes. Women were mesmerised by their incredible energy and leadership. She had a great influence on the woman of her region who was urged to stand against the evils of drinking, boycott foreign clothes and reject untouchability.

HER ROLE IN SALT SATYAGRAHA:

Inspired by Gandhiji's teachings, she and her women associates worked for the development of Khadi and village Swadeshi industries. Her journey to freedom struggle started in 1930 with her

participation in Salt Satyagraha in the seaside village of Kaliapata and Panchapaligoda not far from Kujang. During the Civil Disobedience Movement she was inspired by Gandhian ideas of peaceful protest for the manufacturing of salt by breaking the Salt law. She played a vital role in the salt movement in Kujang. When Mahatma Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement and began his famous Dandi March, it had its echo in Kujang. Ratnamali Jema, her mother, Rama Devi, Malati Devi Chaudhury, Nabakrushna Chaudhury and others started the movement in Kujang area and made it a huge success. Kujang was one of the most significant centers for manufacturing salt next to Iram. When most of the Congress leaders were arrested, Satyagrahis, particularly women, led by Rani Bhagyabati Patamahadei and Princess Ratnamali Jema disobeyed the salt rules and manufactured salt on June 6, 1930. They renewed the campaign the next day with three thousand men and women from their land by breaching the salt rule at Balikuda. Many additional women, led by Rama Devi, Malati Devi and Annapurna Devi produced salt in Kujang. Ratnamali Jema, along with the other women leaders, was instrumental in arranging the Satyagrahis for the salt campaign. The Satyagrahis effectively convinced the masses to throw away foreign salt and use Satyagraha salt for their consumption.

In same year she married Narayan Birabar Samanta (later on became the king of Kujang only by name) who also played an active role in the freedom struggle. Along with her husband she used to go from village to village to encourage women to join the freedom struggle. Her clothes were stitched with Khadi thread that she spun at home. The salt campaign on her estate spanned over several kilometers along the shore, with Kujang as the major centre. The Satyagraha had an enormous effect on Kujang's political and social life. This was mirrored in the role performed by diverse segments of its population in successfully completing the salt campaign. Ratnamali Jema and other women folk played an important role in this regard. Even women who rarely left their homes dared to participate in the fight for liberation under the direction of their Queen and Princess.

Ratnamali Jema in her small estate tried to popularise the Indian National Congress as a people's organisation and the national movement a mass movement. She also organized groups of women in Kujang and picketed shops selling foreign clothes and liquor. She participated in the protest marches, manufactured salt by defying Salt Law and inspired the women to the Gandhian ideologies to see the service to the nation as a sacred duty for them.

INFLUENCE OF GANDHI:

In 1938, she and her husband went to Gandhi Seva Sangha in Delang to meet Mahatma Gandhi. Being inspired by him she with her husband led a group of Dalits to enter into Pareswar temple in Nimadiha village. Gandhi's philosophy of Charkha and Khadi was designed to ignite the spirit of nationalism and freedom to every home. She worked actively to popularise the Charkha and Khadi in Kujang. She also organized women gatherings and enlightened them about different constructive programmes of the Congress. Thousands of women followed her in long procession defying government law. The response was so overwhelming that illiterate women of the lower strata of the society came out of their static indoor

life resisting the opposition of the family. Hence the participation of royal elites like Ratnamali Jema , her mother Queen and husband Narayana Birabar Samanta in the freedom struggle provided a new dimension to the fight against the British rule.

The Quit India Movement was launched in Odisha and Kujang participated under the leadership of Ratnamali Jema and Narayana Birabar Samanta. A large number of women participated in it. Her husband was arrested and imprisoned in Hazaribagh jail from 1942 to 1944. During the Quit India Movement apart of participating in the Satyagraha, she was engaged in delivering fiery speeches, providing shelters to the Satyagrahis, spinning Khadi, using Charkha, anti untouchability programmes, etc.

HER ROLE IN POST INDEPEDENCE PERIOD:

Finally when India celebrated its first day of freedom on 15th August 1947, the sacrifices of generations of patriots and the blood of countless martyrs had borne fruit. As the news of British quitting India spread all over the country, the British administration over the estate of Kujng was dismantled. With the end of the British rule in India, Kujang also became independent. She was elected as a member of Legislative Assembly in Odisha from Tirtol in 1962. During the post independence period, she achieved a lot for the people of Kujang as the MLA of Erasama from the establishment of Paradeep Port to Indian Oil Depot and turning Paradeep as a port and commercial Town not only of Odisha but of the entire eastern India. She was also influenced by Jai Prakash Narayan and Vinobha Bhave. She participated in Binoba Bhave's Bhoodan movement and pursued many landlords to donate land to the landless poor. She also fought for the fishing rights of local fishermen in Kujang. To finance this movement she even sold her ornaments. Just in the last phase of her life she expressed her pain in the following words, "before independence we were the slaves of the Britishers, but after they left they were replaced by corrupt politicians and bureaucrats who were only interested in themselves". She passed away on 29 January 2014 at the age of 97.

CONCLUSION:

Our country achieved its independence on 15 August 1947 because of the sacrifices, a century of struggle and blood shedding of the innumerable freedom fighters. These unsung heroes bravely faced the baton of the British imperialism and went behind bars with smiling face to liberate Mother India. Thus, the story of India's struggle for freedom is the story of pain and sacrifices of thousands of lives of unknown heroes .The mighty British Empire whose sun never sets was challenged and brought to an end in India by the common people armed only with non-violence and peaceful protest. The memory of the unsung heroes of the national struggle needs to be remembered by today's generation The legacy left behind by these name less freedom heroes represents an extra ordinary vision of self sacrifices for the cause of nation. It is hoped that by reclaiming the lost story of these unsung heroes, we can aim to rebuild a greater nation.

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THE LITTLE KNOWN FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF SAMBALPUR DISTRICT: A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

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Abstract

Sambalpur has indelibly registered her name in the glorious chapter of Indian history, particularly the Indian freedom movement. In the course of freedom struggle of Odisha many freedom fighters, particularly in the Sambalpur district, took part in the national movements and were instrumental, yet they went unacknowledged and unrecognized. In Odisha, the freedom movement went through three distinct phases. The first phase (1803–1855) saw the establishment of British administration in Odisha and the armed struggle of people against the imposition of taxes. After the Indian National Congress was founded and political consciousness among the people grew dramatically during the second phase (1885–1920). The Congress was a major factor in the third phase, which lasted from 1920 until 1947. Sambalpur was the forerunner of national movement in Odisha and it played a vital role in three phases of movement. Despite their commitment and sacrifice in the aforementioned movements, they were unable to secure a lasting position in Sambalpur history and remained unrecognized, unappreciated and neglected. They ought to be emphasised and made prominent. So, in this article, sincere efforts have been taken to educate readers about a few of Sambalpur's lesser-known freedom fighters like Krishna Devi, Ghanashyam Panigrahi, Prabhavati Devi, Jambuvati Devi and Gurubari Meher.

Keywords: Undivided Sambalpur, British, Freedom movement, little known freedom fighters, neglected.

Introduction:

The Undivided Sambalpur District, the hub of British imperialism in Odisha, had been named after the headquarters town, Sambalpur. Ramai Deva (1355–1388) laid the groundwork for the Chauhan dominance in western Odisha in the middle of the 14th century. However, the Chauhans' dominion came to an end, and in 1817, it was eventually transferred to the British. Rani Mohan Kumari, the widow of Maharaja Sai, ruled Sambalpur till 1830; that period was marked by political unrest.¹ Following Narayan Singh's passing away in 1849, the British Empire acquired Sambalpur in accordance with the philosophy of the doctrine of lapse. As a result, from 1849 until 1864, Surendra Sai and his allies led a resistance movement against the British in Sambalpur.²

In Odisha, the freedom movement went through three distinct phases. The first phase (1803–1885) saw the establishment of British administration in Odisha and the armed struggle of people against the imposition of a new, highly unfavourable to their interests' form of governance. After the Indian National Congress was founded and political consciousness among the people grew dramatically during the second phase (1885–1920), political institutions were formed. The Congress was a major factor in the third

phase, which lasted from 1920 until 1947 and is known as the Gandhian Era.

In the three phases of the movement, Sambalpur played a vital role in creating national consciousness among the people. Sambalpur is replete with acts of courage, sacrifice, and dedication to the cause of liberation. The heroes of the freedom struggle came from every nook and cranny of the district. They spoke heterogeneous languages, followed heterogeneous religions, and belonged to heterogeneous castes, but an intense love for their country and a keen desire to see it free permeated all their existence. Some of them laid down their lives and immortalized themselves in the annals of the freedom struggle. Some of them remain anonymous, and their names are not mentioned on the page of history. The chivalrous history of Sambalpur is virtually replete with valour to safeguard the swaraj.

Review of Literature

The present study will make an effort to offer a broad framework for 'The Unsung Heroes of Sambalpur District: A Bird's Eye View.' For this article, the author has reviewed a few works on the subject. They are Siba Prasad Dash's (1962), 'Sambalpur Itihas', N.K Sahu, P.K, Mishra and J.K. Sahu's (1980), 'History of Orissa', J.K.Samal's "Orissa under British Crown" Bishnu Charan Mohanty's (2006), 'Smutivasi', Balakrushna Kar's 'Illustrious Sons of Sambalpur(1996)', Prof. G.P.Guru's 'Freedom Fighters of Panimara : The Unsung Heroes'(2008), Orissa Sanskutik Samaj's 'Upekshita Baraputra' Part I & II(2002 &2012), Kumar Hasan, Sambalpurara Swadhinata Sangram (2001) and Karunakar Supkar's Sambalpurara Parichaya (2008).

Some of the names of the freedom fighters have been mentioned in the aforementioned works, but nothing is known about the lesser-known freedom fighters in this district. The left-discussed unidentified heroes of Sambalpur have been highlighted in this paper in an effort to raise their profile.

Objective of the project

The objectives of the study are to:

- bring the obscure freedom fighters of Sambalpur into the limelight.
- show how they helped the vanguard make the movement go but remained unsung.
- highlight the role of women freedom fighters and their ability to play at par with their male counterparts.
- enlighten the causes of the neglect of freedom fighters and their status in society.

Hypothesis:

Due to the public's ignorance of their contributions, the ex-babus' plot, and the government's apathy, the little-known freedom fighters did not receive the recognition and honour they rightfully deserved. As a result, they went unacknowledged and unrecognised. It's possible that media professionals were not interested in enlightening them because doing so would harm their families' economic and prevent them from publishing their work in books, journals, etc.

Data Collection and Research Methodology

Library documentation is the main source of this data. In order to gather information, the researcher has been to the Sambalpur District Archives, Sambalpur Town Hall, Sambalpur Collectorate, and Sub Divisional Office. For the purpose of compiling this article, proper consideration was given to secondary sources, such as literature, books, newspapers, periodicals, reports, souvenirs, pamphlets, administrative reports, and official documents.

Numerous research approaches, notably both inductive and deductive ones, have been used to best meet the needs of the study. Empirical data is also taken into consideration. Simple random sampling, closed-ended spoken questions, and questionnaires have all been employed to collect pertinent data. Manuscripts, tales of freedom fighters, and samples of villages have all been gathered for this article. The assistance of research experts has been considered in order to synthesise all the evidence.

Discussion:

To avoid producing an excessive quantity of subject matter, I have chosen a few names of little-known men's and women's freedom fighters from the Undivided Sambalpur district in accordance with the seminar's requirements. These freedom fighters below made a great contribution to the independence movement and gave their lives to ensuring the country's freedom, yet they remained inconspicuous and unrecognised. They include Gurubari Meher, Krishna Devi, Prabhavati Devi, Jambuvati Devi, and Ghanashyam Panigrahi.

Krishna Devi - A Devoted Congress Worker

Krishna Devi, a Punjabi woman, arrived to reside in Sambalpur before Gandhiji and his wife visited the place. She was the wife of a Biri merchant and had previously participated in the Congress movement, displaying her bravery and passion for her country. She led numerous Congress projects during her three years in the Sambalpur region. The women of Sambalpur gathered for a special meeting under her direction in Kasturba and Gandhiji's honour. In Sambalpur's history of the liberation movement, this was the first time ever that women came together. She was detained and imprisoned while speaking at a sizable peasant convention in Budharaja in March 1931.

After being released from jail, she visited Bargarh. The women of Bargarh organised a grand meeting in honour of Krishna Devi. She stayed there sometimes and created political consciousness among the Congress workers. At that time, Fakir Behera donated his Bargarh residence for the Congress Office, and it was denominated as 'Krishna Bhawan'. She inaugurated the first Congress office in Bargarh. By that time, this Bhawan was the only training centre for Congress workers in western Odisha.

Krishna Devi served as an inspiration for many women to join the Congress movement. Mention may be made of Jambuvati Patnaik, wife of famous freedom fighter Bhagirathi Patnaik of Barpali; Gandharvi Devi, daughter-in-law of Fakir Behera of Baltikira; Ila Meher, wife of Kunja Bihari of Tukurla; Shreeyabati Devi, wife of senior freedom fighter Ghanashyam Panigrahi of Manpur (Bheden); and so many wives of leaders, workers, and their kiths and kins participated in the national movement in spite of their domestic

grim and social restriction. On March 19, 1931, she even presided over the Dandi Diwas at Gandhi Ghat in Sambalpur.

Early life of Ghanashyam Panigrahi :

Ghanashyam Panigrahi was born in Manpur village (now Bargarh district) on October 27, 1881. He was the middle son of Uddhaba Panigrahi and Rahi Devi. He began his career as a school teacher at the age of 12, with a monthly salary of Rs. 10/-. He was the first teacher at Manpur U.P. School in 1901. ³ He was a sincere teacher and made a whirlwind tour from village to village to contact the people. He worked sometimes in the village of Ganiapali around 1910 A.D. He came close to the local Kaviraj and became a practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine for a long period of time. It is surprising to note that Ghanashyam Panigrahi was the first person to eagerly react to Gandhiji's call for the people to join the non-cooperation movement.

Ghanashyam Panigrahi: A devoted and dedicated Congress worker

Up to India's independence, he was an active member of the Indian National Congress. As a representative of the Sambalpur District Congress Committee, he attended the All-India Congress Committee meeting in Ahmedabad in 1921. ⁴ He spent all of his time and effort after his return from Ahmadabad recruiting new primary members. He attempted to spread the message of Gandhiji and the Congress by making a quick tour of various villages. He was present at the Gaya Congress Annual Session in 1922. Gandhi's non-cooperation movement became violent in 1922 as a result of the Chauri Chaura incident.

Gandhiji pushed the members of the Congress to dedicate themselves to the 18-point plans, and Ghanashyam Panigrahi scrupulously adhered to his teachings while encouraging people to shun imported products and sew their own clothing. He put in a lot of effort to spread awareness of Khadi in the Sambalpur district. He was the first person to take the initiative and organise the movements with the aid of other volunteers in Sambalpur's rural districts. In 1936, he established a Congress Committee at Remunda and Garturun. With the aid of Upendra Panigrahi, he established a second Congress Committee in the same year with sixty members at Bargaon.

In 1925 and 1928, he went to attend the Congress meetings in Gaya and Kolkata, respectively. The Congress should pursue full dominion status for India from the British government, it was resolved at the 1928 Calcutta session. Therefore, January 26, 1930, was chosen as the day to mark Purna Swaraj throughout India. As a result, on January 30, 1930, at midnight, a sizable gathering was gathered in Sambalpur, close to the Balibandha Shiva Temple. The meeting was presided over by Ghanashyam Panigrahi.

Ghanashyam Panigrahi and Constructive work:

Ghanashyam Panigrahi eventually forged strong bonds with the congressmen and the Satyagraha

centres in Bheuria, Panimora, and Samalipadar. He organised a sutra yajna, or suta performance, in Bargaon in 1938, among other locations. District Congress Secretary Dayanand Sathpathy and President Prahalad Rai Lath were present on this occasion. He founded the Charkha Sangha in 1939, bringing together people from various villas. Sambalpur's "Samagra Grama Seva Mandal" was established to promote village and rural Khadi enterprises. He served as the mandal's president, and Shiva Narayan Padhi served as the secretary. Attended the Ramgarh Congress Session in 1940 was Ghanashyam Panigrahi.

Ghanashyam Panigrahi and Prajamandal Movement:

Along with the aforementioned works, Ghanshyam Panigrahi also took part in the Prajamandal movement meetings held at Sonapur, Dhenkanal, and Sambalpur. At Kalapathar in Sonapur, he presided over a Gadjat Karmee Sammelan with roughly 6,000 attendees. He however continued to collaborate with Binoba Bhave and be engaged in the Bhoodan and Sarvodaya movements. On December 12, 1965, this gallant congressman left this earthly body and entered into eternity.

Despite playing a significant part, Ghanashyam Panigrahi remained unknown and did not receive the acclaim he deserved.

Prabhavati Devi - A childhood widow dedicated congress worker

Prabhavati Devi was the daughter of Dhanapati Dash of Bargarh. Though Prabhavati became a widow at the age of 10, when she was a student in class 5th yet, her conservative Brahminical tradition could not keep her within four walls of home. She was inspired by Fakir Behera, the then-Congress leader, and desired to join the freedom movement in Odisha. When popular women in Congress Leader Malati Devi visited Bargarh, and Prabhavati requested that she keep her as a worker, and to take her with her. Malati Devi understood the sorrow of Prabhavati and decided to take her to the Bari Ashram of Rama Devi. Prabhavati went to Bari with her maternal uncle, Raghava Chandra Dash, to enrol in Congress against the will of her parents.

Prabhavati left home, so the villagers boycotted her family from the social customary. From the incident, one can imagine the pathetic and pitiable condition of the widow at that time in Sambalpur. The social boycott was withdrawn when they knew that Prabhavati was in the ashram of Rama Devi. After taking training at Bari, she took part in the police station gherao in Bargarh, the distribution of congress propaganda pamphlets, etc. For this reason, she was arrested and went to jail for a year and a half.

When Malati Choudhury organised a meeting on the bank of the river Jeera in Bargarh, Prabhavati Devi, was the first woman to join there. Through Malati Choudhury and Prabhavati Devi met Parvati Giri at Bari Ashram in 1938. and participated in satyagraha, spinning and weaving, cottage industry, fundamental education, adult education, women's development, Khadi, animal husbandry and took training in national linguistic education.⁷

This ashram had been established with the collaboration of Gopabandhu. Choudhury, Surendra

Patnaik, Rama Devi, Godavari Devi, Sushila Devi, and Tulasi Devi, Mangala Sengupt, and Annapurna Devi Due to the want of Congress workers, Prabhavati Devi and Parbati Giri were sent to Sambalpur in 1940. She became the dedicated worker of the Indian National Congress in 1941 and toured from village to village to make people boycott foreign goods and propagate Swadeshi movement. She also participated in the salt satyagraha. She often took part in the freedom fighters meeting in Panimara. She also worked for 15 days with Gandhiji in Wardha Ashram.

Prabhavati Devi participated in Quit India movement at the age of 26. She was arrested by police on August 23, 1943, due to the circulation of Congress propaganda and pamphlets were sent to Sambalpur jail. Next year, she was shifted to Cuttack jail, where she stayed with Rama Devi and Malati Devi. etc., and released from jail with them in 1945. Then she resumed the work. So, She was again arrested and sent to Cuttack jail for six months. After returning from jail, she opened a Matrumangal centre in Bargaon with the cooperation of of Upendra Panigrahi, Ghanashyam Panigrahi, Narasimha Panigrahi, and Shiv Narayan Padhi, at the instruction of Rama Devi. This centre was situated only 7 km from Sambalpur. She joined the Bhoodan Movement and participated in foot marching of Binoba Bhave

Jambuvati Devi (1886-1943): First woman Satyagrahi of Western Odisha

Jambuvati Devi was the first woman satyagrahi of western Orissa. She was born on November 9, 1886, at Binka. She got married to Bhagirathi Patnaik of Barpali, who was the front-line freedom fighter in western Orissa. Jambuvati Devi was very interested in making a happy family, but man proposes God dispose. She was very much influenced and inspired by Rama Devi and jumped into the fight for freedom in India. In 1929, she left home with her husband and son Prafulla for the cause of the Congress Movement. She established ashrams at Balitikira, Tukurla (Bargarh), Budharaja (Sambalpur), and Jharsuguda. ⁸By taking this step, she strengthened the Congress organisation and produced female leaders for the movement.

From February 1931, she walked shoulder to shoulder with her husband and son in the freedom struggle of the country. It was a rare case in India that a whole family jumped into freedom movement for the service of the motherland. For the first time, she participated. in the Civil Disobedience Movement, and was arrested and sent to Sambalpur jail. for 6 months, and then shifted to Bhagalpur Central Jail for the next 6 months. ⁹

Under her leadership, 10 women joined the Balasore Salt Satyagraha. She was an expert to organise a women's association and collect subscriptions for salt Satyagraha. She played a unique role in creating a patriotic feeling among the women. During the Civil Disobedience Movement, she was the front leader to distribute the pamphlets of Congress propaganda. At the time of individual Satyagraha, in August 1933, she picketed before foreign clothes shops at Marwadipara in Sambalpur and before foreign liquor shops in Bargarh and got rigorous imprisonment of four months. She had done social work for the victims of an earthquake in Bihar with her husband and son in 1934. She started Satyagraha at Bargarh and was imprisoned for six months.

She also actively participated in the Khadi movement, picketing, and the establishment of the Gandhian Society. For this reason, she was arrested and sent to jail during the Quit India Movement. Many times, along with her husband and son, she moved from village to village to spread the message of Congress. She participated in the Harijan march from May 1934 to 1942. During the Quit India Movement in 1942, she was arrested at Dumka (Tukni) in Bihar.¹⁰ In her role in the freedom year of 1943, she returned to an immortal soul on the soil of Bihar.

Gurubari Meher: The First Martyr woman Freedom Fighter of Sambalpur

She was a valiant woman and freedom fighter in Sambalpur. Gurubari Meher played an important role in the freedom struggle as three other famous women fighters of western Odisha—Jambubati Devi, Prabhavati Devi, and Parvati Giri—inspired other women so as to emulate Gurubari Meher. "Gurubari's story of valour should be made popular to inspire modern Indian women. The movement of Gurubari was spearheading and was an offshoot of the Praja Mandal Movement, which was inaugurated at Cuttack in 1938. This branch was launched for the first time at Sonepur under the leadership of Laxman Satpathy. She took the plunge and led a protest against the extra cess charged on various goods.

A few months before India became independent, the then-principal state of Sonepur let loose a reign of terror over the Binika area on January 28, 1938. The people rose in revolt against the king for his pro-British stance. Nearly 20,000 freedom fighters, led by a brave woman, Gurubari Meher, organised a mass movement against the king. Police resorted to a baton charge and the woman leader, Gurubari Meher, was shot dead by the police. She became a martyr in India's freedom struggle. She laid down her life for India's sake but remained unsung.

Research Findings:

Western Odisha's freedom struggle, in particular the Undivided Sambalpur area, was exceptional since only the rarest examples have been documented. Unfortunately, their devotion, sacrifice, and heroic service to the motherland's cause have gone unrecognised. Instead of receiving the respect, acclaim, and reward they so well deserve, they are slowly losing public favour. The research's key conclusions include the following:

Sambalpur is the forerunner of the national movement in Odisha.

The whole family (father, mother, and son) of Bhagirathi Pattanayak jumped into the frying pan of the freedom movement in Sambalpur and dedicated their valuable lives for the sake of a free country. Bhagirathi Pattanayak travelled on foot from Bargarh to Vijayawada to attend the Congress meeting.

The fact that all of the Panimora villagers, regardless of age or gender, enthusiastically engaged in the Quit India Movement and set a positive example for the entire nation was a distinctive aspect and noteworthy event of western Odisha. Nowhere in India can one witness such an uncommon occurrence.

Fakir Behera lived in a house with no doors or windows and offered his property as well as his personal home to the Congress Office.

Young Parbati Giri warned her father that she would plunge into a well and perish if she was not permitted to join the Congress movement.

After joining the Congress movement, a 10-year-old childhood widow named Prabhavati Devi's family experienced social isolation from her village.

Why they were neglected?

It is said that great men are public misfortunes. The subjects and the soldiers showed their indomitable valour, valiance, and courage for the cause of the nation, but the credit went to the Kings only. They remained unknown. This is exactly what happened during the freedom movements on the land. Many freedom fighters were real organisers, active workers, motivators, and inspirers behind the movements, but they are vanishing from the memory of people day by day. They could not come to the light. The people are oblivious to their sacrifice, dedication, and duty towards the motherland.

By virtue of initiation, either of their relatives or well-wishers could accumulate public recognition, but those concealed hands that were behind these stars are still unknown. Many freedom fighters in this region have been neglected, and the project tends to enlighten their dedication and selfless work for the sake of their motherland during British rule. These freedom fighters were treated as rebels and traitors even by the indigenous people of high ranks like kings, zamindars, etc., and were harassed and troubled by them. Even after independence, the same traitors managed to hold the administrative and electoral bodies and behaved as in the pre-independent period. They contested elections because of their abundant money and supporters, and they debarred the freedom fighters from contesting elections, lest if they did, they would easily win the favour of the people. Therefore, they said that the work of the freedom fighters had been over and they would work for the constructive work of the country. Only a few freedom fighters that were elected by people or got higher posts could command some mix of respect and feeling, but others were derogated and disgusted.

Therefore, they remained obscured and unsung. If the freedom fighters hailed from other nations, they would be honoured and rewarded, but unfortunately, the high-profile people of this nation denied them what they deserved but rather viewed them with derogatory and trifling eyes. Therefore, it is high time we woke up to reality.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

The freedom struggle in Western Odisha, especially the undivided Sambalpur district, was exceptional compared to the rest of the state because only a handful of cases like those of Bhagirathi Patnaik's family and the villagers of small Panimora. Instead of receiving the respect, acclaim, and compensation they so well deserve, they are slowly losing public favour. Future scholars should simply be encouraged to look into more information on this subject, as doing so will tremendously help them shed light on the shrouded events of the Sambalpur freedom movement.

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Late Radhashyam Meher: the creation of the Golden Era of Baandha, Freedom Fighter, and Social Reformer

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ABSTRACT

Late Radhashyam Meher created the first handloom in 1926 that could weave textiles up to 90 inches wide. His artistic expression is the Sambalpuri Sari. He encouraged, tutored, and led the weaving community in developing their abilities. He is regarded as the creator of Sambalpuri textiles, which usher in the Baandha Art era. He took part in the fight for freedom and was imprisoned during the Quit India movement. He worked to end "untouchability" and uphold racial and religious equality in the community. Only his lack of self-interest has doomed him to oblivion. His mastery of the Baandha craft and his capacity to inspire the local weaving community to advance their abilities by offering the required training and incentives made it possible to create new designs that gained attention on a global scale.

Key words: Radhashyam Meher, Baandha, Freedom fighter, Sambalpuri textile, weaving

INTRODUCTION

Sambalpur is known since ages for its Diamond mines, rich history, culture and traditions. Sambalpuri Handloom is an age old weaving tradition of predominant Sambalpuri language-culture area, specially practiced in Districts like Bargarh, Subarnapur, Boudh, Sambalpur and Bolangir. It is the costume which makes an identity of an area. Sambalpuri Handloom follows Tie and dye process in weaving of single and double Iket Sambalpuri sarees. Iket is called and known as Baandha in this area. If both warp and weft are resist dyed the resultant weave is called 'Double iket'. Double iket tie and dye design does not require any extra yarn, the opposite side of the design has the same shape and beauty of the face which distinguishes it from other styles of weaving. If either the weft or the warp yarn alone is dyed, the weave is termed 'Single Iket'. Sarees of Single Iket is widely produced or created in Sambalpuri region. Undoubtedly double iket sarees are of superior class. Such sarees are produced only at two places in India; one is the Patola saree of Gujarat and another is Sambalpuri saree of Sambalpuri region or West Odisha. Saptaper and Bichitrapuri are two designs of double iket Sambalpuri sarees. Saptaper is identical with its square motifs of red and black colours. Bichitrapuri saree has motifs of deer, lion, elephant, geese and ducks in its end panel. While on the surface, deracinated from its context, these motifs might look merely decorative; to depict a horse or camel in these sarees would thus become completely illogical and counterproductive.

The Kosthas are specialized in silk thread work, kumbha saree and butti or dotted work means motifs spread over the sari's body. Originally they are the master weavers of silk and then turned to weaver of fine cotton cloth. Many of the Kostha weavers have changed the means of livelihood. The Kantias are of

schedule cast. They were used to weave cloth from thick thread. They were the weavers of Dhoti and usually meant for the poor. But due to unsociability they were not able to sell it to others except people belongs to schedule caste. So they failed to survive.

The Bhulias or Mehers of Western Odisha master weaver of single iket silk and cotton sarees. They also produce doubleiket sarees. They are known for progressive minds and new thoughts. Due to these reason, the clothes of the modern mechanical age have not been able to match this great Bandha art even today. Almost all members of the family contribute to the work collectively. From generation to generation it has been their business. Before, this band was in its infancy. It was limited to only a few traditional designs. At that time, the average length of the shawl was 10 cubits and the width was 2 cubits. While the body of the saree was plain, only on the sides of the skirt had designs.

Baandha designs are usually for bathing women classically, these sarees were known by names such as elephant sign 'Gajgamini', lion 'Singhakati', deer 'Mrig Nayani', fish 'Minnayani' and lotus flower 'Padmini'.²

All these sarees were usually sold in nearby markets. As there were very few buyers, the weavers were struggling to make a living without getting the right price. In this, the cloth made by modern mechanized methods and western fashion mills started to be found in the market gradually. This made the traditional method of handicraft, a kind of place because of the public interest in modern clothes. Due to all these reasons, the economic condition of the handloom weavers has become very weak and as a result, these weavers have abandoned their traditional work for sustenance and have taken up other occupations such as farming, fishing or labor. In such a situation, one person did not get discouraged and fought like a warrior, that is Late Radhashyam Meher, the great son of this soil. With his strong self-belief, creative and inventive powers, he was able to bring about amazing revolutionary changes in the core of Banda Art..³ Rabindranath Tagore was presented a piece of bed sheet at Java in 1934. The bed sheet is said to be gone from Kalinga so many years back. Late Nityanand Kaningosaw this bed sheet at Shantiniketan and recognized it to be Sambalpuri handloom. Radhasham Meher was called and was shown it. He said it used to be produced previously. When he was asked whether he could weave such a bed sheet now, Meher took the challenge and prepared two pieces of such bed sheets. One piece was gifted to Shantiniketan and his descendants are having the second one.

LIFE HISTORY OF RADHASHYAM MEHER

Radhasham Meher was born on November 20, 1909 in a weaver's family of Sambalpur. Arakshit Meher and Jemadei Meher had five sons and a daughter. Radhashyam Meher was their third son. Radhashyam has two elder brothers by name Harekrishna and Dasrath. He had two younger brothers by name Indra, and Brindavan. He had one sister too. Radhashyam, along with his brothers and sister learned the art of weaving from their parents. But from all Radhashyam improved to be the most efficient. From the age of 13, he was able to show his creative power and amazing skills. He wanted to bring some

revolution in weaving art. He reached to the conclusion that with clothes weaved in 16th to 22nd count threads Sambalpuri handloom cannot attract the middle and high class people. To make it viable he used in bandi designs on door- window curtains, table cloths and handkerchiefs on experimental basis. The double bed cover made of 90 inch wide which he developed became very popular. These manufactured clothes became popular in all walks of life and the demand continued to grow. He succeeded in persuading his contemporary weavers to weave this new design.⁴

He established "Utkal Parada Agency" which distributed Sambalpuri handloom for various markets of Odisha and outside; especially Bihar, Delhi and Bombay. To meet the growing demands, he opened a training center at his home, trained and created skilled weavers which produced new attractions. He was on experiments. He adopted modern chemicals for dyeing and used threads of 60, 80, 100 counts threads for weaving sarees. He changed the length and width of the saree to 58 yards (length) and 48 inches (width). The sarees are Sharadi, "Chandwapari", "Bichitrapari", "Sarbarari", "Bichitra", "Asman Tara", "KumudLata" and "Kaminikeshgarh" etc. The beauty and craftsmanship was so captivating that it became popular. It was highly appreciated by VIPs visiting Sambalpur. Sale of Utkal Parada Agency was blooming, He reached up to famous personalities of the country those mesmerized by the beauty of Sambalpuri saree and other weaving products. He popularized Sambalpuri saree among the top actresses of Bombay film industry. They posed for photographs in Sambalpuri saree, also used on silver screen. As a result, Sambalpuri Saree earned recognition and became very popular.⁵

Radhashyam Meher became Bihar government's official "Parada agent" and got the same position after creation of separate Odisha State. Radhashyam Meher toured around India to attend and to exhibit Sambalpuri handloom. Stage and halls started to be decorated with Sambalpuri handlooms. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Prime Minister of India on his visit to Sambalpur appreciated Sambalpuri handloom. Mrs Indira Gandhi, his daughter and also the Prime Minister of India became so fond of Sambalpuri saree that she was using more than any other saree throughout her lifetime. Radhashyam Meher's work of art was highly praised by great people like Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Mayadhar Mansingh, Dr. Harakrishna Mahatab, Dr. Radhanath Rath.

RADHASHYAM MEHER IN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Life of Radhashyam Meher was also dedicated towards the Nation. He participated in the Quit India Movement. As a true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi he called upon the Bhulia clan or the Mehers to join the movement. He toured several Meher dominated areas, organized meetings and called people to join the freedom movement. Along with Yudhusthir Meher, Premanand Meher and Anand Chandra Meher he could influence people and brought them to the movement. This great soldier of the freedom movement was arrested on 21 August 1942 and was imprisoned for 11 months. After he was released, he devoted time for upliftment of the lower and oppressed sections of the society. His work as a social reformer was exceptional. Along with Yudhusthir Meher, he organized a function at Bhuliapada on 2nd October 1946 (Gandhi Jayanthi

Tithi), to open the door of the temple for everyone.⁵

He formed Sambalpur Regional Co-operative Marketing Society Ltd. (RCMS) and Meher Art Fabrics cooperative society, both of which were involved in the cooperative movement. In 1953, he became a member of All India Handloom Board. He was the president of Sambalpur Mandal Congress. He was elected as a ward councilor of Sambalpur Municipality for three times, he devoted himself to the service of the people till his death. He was associated with many famous persons, known throughout the state and country but never took advantage of it for own benefit. Unfortunately, he died in an accident on due to an accident on 19 May 1961. A holiday was declared for the day. Tributes poured in from the mourners. Sambalpur lost a great son; the weaving community lost a great path finder and a guardian.

He inspired many weavers with this teaching. As a result these weavers could take Sambalpuri handloom to more heights. Kruthartha Acharya initiated co-operative movement for the weavers which could provide raw materials and marketing facilities for them. This created larger market chain for Sambalpuri handloom. He is honored with Padmashri award. Kunjbihari Meher of Barpali and Chaturbhuj Meher of Sonepur are two crowns among the jewels. They also got Padmashri awards for their excellence of innovative ideas and products in Bandha art and its familiarity in the world market; it is a test of his creativity and determination.⁵

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Late Radhasham Meher dedicated himself for preservation, development and marketing of Sambalpuri handloom, participated in the freedom movement and worked as a reformer. Though a memorial committee is formed and Bandhakala Diwas is celebrated on 20th November, his birth anniversary he is hardly remembered. The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India had sponsored textile exhibitions that coincide with Radhashyam Meher's birth anniversary on November 20 and are organized by the Director of Textiles, Government of Orissa. This is done to recognize Radhashyam Meher's unparalleled contribution to the growth and popularity of "Baandha art" and to honor him.⁶

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Orissa textiles are famous for their beauty. Sambalpur is a centre for these and I am happy to find that this art is flourishing. I hope, it will grow and flourish.
Jawaharlal Nehru
 14.12.1951

I was delighted to see the specimens of characteristic Orissan textiles shown to me by Meher Art Fabrics Co.op Society, Sambalpur. They are real things of beauty.
Zakir Husain
 07.12.1959

‘ରାଧାଶ୍ୟାମ ସରଳ ବୁଦ୍ଧି। ସାଧୁତାରେ ତାଙ୍କ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ। ଅସାଧୁ ଭାବରେ ଅର୍ଥ ଉପାର୍ଜନ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ଗୁଣା କରୁଥିଲେ। ତାଙ୍କର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ଓ ନିଷ୍ଠା ଫଳରେ ସମ୍ଭବପୂର୍ବ ତତ୍ପରୀତ ଭାଗଦସାରା ଜନପ୍ରିୟ ହୋଇପାରିଥିଲା।’ ତତ୍କାଳୀନ *ଉତ୍କଳ ପାର୍ଦା ଏଜେନ୍ସୀ*
 I was delighted to visit the Utkal Parada Agency this evening. The Paradas made in Sambalpur are now world famous. This Home has been a good deal to improve the quality and designs and they deserve all encouragement. I congratulate them.
Radhanath Ratha
 14.01.1953

Millions come to Orissa every year on pilgrimage. Now to many not only in India. But all over the world, Orissa in a centre of art as well as of religion. To those who are keen on knowing. Orissas artistic Heritage at its best my advice is to see two things. These are (1) Konarka on the east coast and (2) the sambalpur textiles in the west of the state. Without seeing the excellence of the handloom products of the poor Sambalpur weavers, no person can have the full idea of total artistic life of the Orissas as a whole.
Mayadhar Manasingh
 28.01.1955

ଉତ୍କଳର ଗୌରବ ବାହକଲାର ଯୁଗ ସ୍ରଷ୍ଟା,
 ସାଧାନତା ସଂଗ୍ରାମୀ, ସମାଜସେବକା ଓ ସଂସ୍କାରକ
 ସ୍ୱର୍ଗତ ରାଧାଶ୍ୟାମ ମେହେର

ଆବିର୍ଭାବ ଚିରୋଭାବ
 ତା: ୨୦.୧୧.୧୯୦୯ ଚା: ୧୯.୦୫.୧୯୬୧

ତାଙ୍କ କୃତି ଓ କୃତିତ୍ୱ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ କିଏ କ’ଣ କହୁଛି....
 I must congratulate Sri Radhashyam Meher on the beautiful textiles he is producing. The two samples that are before me, a silk saree and a silk and wool mixed shawl, are quite perfect in their way and are the best specimens of Sambalpur work that I have seen the texture of the materials and designs and the colouring are really lively.
Indira Gandhi

I have admired Orissa textiles for a long time. I am happy to see that they continue to improve both in texture & design. My congratulations to Sri Radhashyam Meher and all good wishes for further success.
Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit
 14.12.1951

LOCATING BHIMA BHOI IN MAHIMA DHARMA

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ABSTRACT

This research paper attempts to understand the agency and role of Bhima Bhoi, a 19th century Odia tribal poet, who popularised an indigenous autochthonous Hindu reform movement that later emerged as a distinct religious cult in Odisha-- Mahima Dharma. A critical scrutiny of Mahima Dharma reveals that it was a cultural dissent and protest movement in nineteenth century Odisha that rose against the dominant Jagannath cult marked by a distinct moral and philosophical vision. The major concern of the sect seems to be that of building a model social order and it derives its notion of a model society from the critique of the existing orthodox dominant system. The need for building a new moral order arises when value system of the dominant system no more serves the popular aspirations and demands of the contemporary social conditions. Hence, the decadent, crises-ridden nineteenth century Hindu society is lamented upon and cited as the cause for the evolution of the Mahima Dharma. It is argued that the cult and its founder Mahima Swamy, had a definite counter ideology or an alternative conception of society which was inherent in its philosophy as revealed in the radical humanism and cultural critique embedded in the poetry of its main proponent Bhima Bhoi.

KEY WORDS: Cultural Dissent, Jagannath Cult, Radical Humanism, Counter Ideology

Introduction

In the light of recent researches carried out in the field of social and cultural awakening in colonial India it appears that though western education and ideas did play a crucial role in the process of regeneration of Indian society, there were potentialities for social development and modernization in the pre-colonial Indian tradition itself. Without belittling the importance of western influence, it should be pointed out that this analysis not only misses the complexities of the social and intellectual developments during the nineteenth century but also overlooks the elements of protest and dissent in the Indian intellectual traditions and potentialities of social developments in the pre-colonial era. Above all it totally ignores the material conditions within which these developments occurred.¹

Movements for social mobility, particularly against the Brahmanical model of Hindu society, were more or less witnessed in nineteenth century India. However, there were regional variations on the strategies and approaches in these movements. These socio-cultural protest movements arose from within the Indian traditions and played a crucial role along with the neo-Hindu movements that emerged under the leadership of reformers like Ram Mohan Roy and Vivekananda ,etc.,in the process of socio-political transformation of Indian society. Some examples of these movements which arose in different parts of the

country are sects like the Satnamis, Appapanthis and Shivnarayan in Uttar Pradesh, Virabrahma in Andhra Pradesh, Kartha Bajas and Balramis in Bengal, and the Charan Dasis in Rajasthan etc.² A similar movement emerged in nineteenth century Orissa under its founder named Mahima Swamy. The Mahima Movement (or Mahima Dharma as it is popularly called) was essentially an autochthonous Hindu reform movement emerged against the Brahmanical Hindu society in general and the dominant Jagannath cult in particular. Like other autochthonous Hindu reform movements, the Mahima movement provided significant insights into the weaknesses and discontentment against the dominant traditions. This sect denounced the then prevailing Hindu socio-cultural order beset with caste distinctions, idolatry, polytheism and a host of other superstitions. Mahima Dharma or the sect like the other heterodox sects had its own methods of organization and functioning and had a significant social base in some of the most backward and feudatory regions (Garhjat or Princely states) in Orissa.

In this paper I would argue that Mahima Dharma emerged from the socio-economic and cultural formations of pre-colonial Orissa and a tradition of dissent and protest did exist therein which manifested itself in the practices of the sect. This sect tried to establish an alternative social and moral order to the powerful and dominant Jagannath cult. The Mahima Dharma championed the notions of social equality, anti-idolatry, anti-Brahmanism as its central themes. For the construction of an alternative order the sect appropriated some symbols, myths and practices of the Jagannath cult and reinterpreted them in the context of its own vision of life and society. This becomes evident when one critically looks at the works and pronouncements of the sect's most important preceptor namely, Bhima Bhoi, Orissa's nineteenth century saint-poet, whose poetry in the grab of mysticism and religiosity is still popular in many parts of the state today and is the main primary source for understanding historicity of Mahima Dharma.

Bhima Bhoi : A Radical Humanist

Bhima Bhoi was a lower caste tribal of western Orissa who was instrumental in popularising the tenets of the Mahima Dharma during the later part of nineteenth century. Bhima articulated a rationality of radical social equality and a theory of secular rationalism in colonial India thereby laying the foundations for an indigenous comparative modernity. The ingenious ways in which Bhima Bhoi does this through the aesthetic form of his poetry enables us to decolonize indigenous thinkers, and give them back their ability to articulate their own identities. The materials they provide help us changes the terms of the debates about modernity. It allows us to see a vast array of local narratives from all corners of the world conflicting intersecting or adding to one another, all contributing to the modernity we live in today.³

Mahima Dharma is perhaps the only genuine anti-caste movement in the history of colonial Orissa with a strong non-Brahman ideological orientation. It became popular among significant number of the impoverished oriya low caste, untouchable, and tribal groups, especially in the Garhjat regions after the devastating Orissa famine of 1866.⁴ This terrible famine shook up the traditional faith in Jagannath as the protector of its devotees, especially at a time when the cult had already generated some social alienation

due to its close association with royalty and discriminatory caste practices in Puri temple. Times of scarcity and disaffection in the feudatory states bred a ground swell of devotional faith with pronounced anti-Brahman elements. Originating as a reformist movement preaching total devotion to one omniscient and formless god, (Alekha or Anama or Anadi) Mahima Dharma rejected the deities of Hindu pantheon, dispensed with the Brahman's role in mediating between God and humans, and contested idolatry and Brahmanical caste practices.⁵ In March 1881 the movement took a violent turn with a group of followers making a futile attack on the Puri temple in an iconoclastic bid to quell the supremacy of the Jagannath cult. This, argues Jayanta Sengupta, is the only instance of how an alternative social movement with a sound agrarian base, even in a predominantly agrarian state like Orissa, had little chance of success against upper caste ideological dominance embodied in the dominant Jagannath cult.⁶

Bhima Bhoi's poems were written originally on palm leaves in colloquial Oriya which remained scattered and mostly transmitted through the oral traditions. They were later published in a collection of works known as "Bhima Bhoi Granthabali" which includes all the major works of the tribal poet, including the most famous Stuti Chinatmani.⁷ A careful reading of these works help us to construct the ideology of Mahima Dharma embodying its ideas and objectives and how it tried to interrogate the dominant Jagannath cult and articulated a form cultural dissent thereby advocating for creating an alternative socio-cultural order in Orissa.

Bhima Bhoi's Core Concerns

The major issues which can be discerned from the poems of Bhima Bhoi are the impending social crises and the concept of Kaliyuga, and anti-Brahmanism and the notion of equality, monotheism, notion of anti-Idol worship and the notion of avatar or incarnation etc. we shall take up some of these few ideas to construct a protest ethic of the Mahima Dharma wherein its ideas and objectives would be revealed. In short, we would see that the vision of Mahima Dharma was essentially an attempt to meet the weaknesses of the existing Brahmanical Hindu society in Orissa. The principles of dominant system such as purity-impurity, distinctions among the individuals, differential access to religious scriptures and knowledge, priesthoodship as a medium to reach God are either modified or subverted by Mahima Dharma, especially through, the radical poetry of its main preceptor, saint-poet Bhima Bhoi.⁸

The Notion of "Kaliyuga" as Social Crisis

In criticizing the then prevailing social order Bhima says that there is no code of civilized conduct or Dharma left in the lives of individuals whether it is the king or the Brahman all have become sinful and corrupt. This state of total social chaos disintegration is embodied in the notion of Kaliyuga which is frequently used in his poetry. Bhima therefore forecast that a new liberator in the form of Mahima Swamy has already arrived to end all evils and restore order. In many poems or Bolies as they are called in Stuti chintamani the emphasis attached to kaliyuga and the coming of Kalki Avatar reveals an inherent motive.

Apparently, the analysis serves the purposes of Mahima dharma in two ways firstly, comprehensive description of the existing society which has become utterly sinful, corrupt and chaotic is necessary to prepare the ground for the emergence of the sect, which holds the promises to save the society from destruction. Secondly, the enormous social decay, which characterised the prevailing system, offers the reasons for rejecting the system, as well as the dominant order. In other words the motive is to build up an alternative social order wherein the ills of the dominant traditions (the Jagannath cult) can be done away with. At the same time the narrative also provides space to express the feeling of exploitation and injustice which prevailed among the people of the subaltern starta. There is a difference in the way in which the notion of Kaliyuga is expressed in brahmanical literature and the literature of Mahima dharma. The focus of the perception of kaliyuga in the literature of the former is on the unruly of the sudras and women whereas the centre of Bhima Bhoi conception of social disorder is the failure of the Brahmins and the kings (kshatriya) to stick to their socially prescribed roles. So he says
 "Whether it is Brahman or prince, all have become evil minded. Why you (guru) have to think so much? It is you who will save all the three worlds". (1st poem Stuti Chintamani)⁹

Critique of Brahmanism and Status quo

Bhima Bhoi construed his polemics with great care to pick up his adversaries and delegitimize their claims of social leadership. In this connection he has been particularly emphatic upon the falling values among Brahmans and kings. For example he writes,

"Extreme darkness has surrounded al the three worlds, even the saints are becoming thieves, as they have developed lust for wealth". (19th poem of Stuti Chintamani).

And again,

"Being twice born you do not perform the rituals and have no knowledge of the Vedas meditated thrice a day without the prayer". (5th poem of Stuti Chintamani)

These expositions convey that the main who have been traditionally expected to be pure and moral ain't provide social leadership have become immoral and corrupt. Hence, they have no real rights to assert their superiority over the common masses. In other words, Bhima makes it clear that the 'theory of purity-impurity' which forms the basis for the hierarchical division of society is empirically wrong. Extending the attack on Brahmanical authority, Bhima Bhoi as the main proponent of Mahima Dharma challenges the principles of twice born or dvija, the notion which forms the major basis for social division in the dominant tradition. Thus, he exposes the hollowness of the purity status attached to the twice-born. The system that gives status in the society, on the basis of birth in a particular caste is thus rejected. By doing this the Bhima opens the way for the lower caste to gain social status through the acts of purity.

Mahima Dharma's Notion of Theism

Mahima Dharma has shown a great philosophical understanding and intellectual manoeuvring in explaining its concept of theism. The sect's monotheistic concept of one God is derived and based upon its

theory of cosmology. This is because it becomes logical to derive a theory of equality of rights for all individual on the ground that all of them worship the same god who has created them. For example in the 78th Boli, he says :

“From the nameless unwritten Brahma which is the embodiment of silence void was born. From void, space and sky were created. From Annama were created air, fire and water and also the sun and the moon to cause day and night. In fact, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (three major Brahmanical Gods) and 56 crores of organisms have sprung from this formless brahma and are taken care by Annama”. (78th poem of Stuti Chintamani)

What follows from a careful reading of this exposition of cosmology in Mahima dharma is that all major divine characters the brahmanical system owes their origin to Annama. A divine being whose incarnation is believed to be Mahima Swamy, the founder of the sect. Hence, the guru of the Mahima sect, according to Bhima Bhoi is of supreme divine character whose discourses are more authoratative and ought to be followed even if it denies the brahmanical practices and beliefs. Thus, as the displacement of the divine authority of the dominant tradition takes place, the cultural and ideological hegemony of the upper castes is bound to collapse.

A logical fallout of the sect's and Bhima's views on cosmology is the conception of anti-idol worship. Since, according to Bhima, Mahima Swamy the human form of Supreme divine has taken abode in this place, there is no need or use of worshipping idols who wields symbolic authority as the Swamy's subordinate. This makes the sect to reject idol worship and the ritual associated with it. Thus, he writes, “Now listen and see, the astonishing story of the Vaishnava, will all the idols of God and goddesses be buried now”. (23rd poem of Stuti Chintamani)

The anti-idolworhisp theme in Mahima Dharma scheme of alternative society rules out any medium or priesthoodship in Brahmin in particular. The consequential effects of this change alters the whole pattern of cultural and economic framework of the society. Culturally the Brahmins are deprived of the special role to act as agencies through which the people can seek divine blessings. The non-brahmins are no longer under religious obligations to follow the Brahmanical discourses. The social status then attached to the Brahmin is stripped off. The economic consequence comes in the shape of delegitimation of properties attached to the temples and sacred Brahmanical institutions. Hence, the Brahmins those who mostly enjoyed these properties of sacred institutions as reward to the service rendered by them would now lose it.¹⁰

Apart from these issues Bhima Bhoi's poems reveal his concern for gender equality and woman liberation. The central focus of Mahima sect's attitude towards women was that of creating a new and equal husband-wife relationship thereby breaking down the old patriarchal structure. BhimaBhoi, thus argued that, as long as there was inequality in the family, there could be no true equality in the society. This dimension of Bhima's work needs further serious investigation.

Conclusion

Mahima Dharma as a cultural dissent and protest movement against the dominant Jagannath cult in Orissa is marked by a distinct moral and philosophical vision. The major concern of the sect seems to be that of building a model social order and it derives the notion of a model society from the critique of the existing orthodox dominant system. The need for building a new moral order arises when value system of the dominant system no more serves the popular aspiration and demands of the contemporary social conditions. Hence, the decadent, crises-ridden nineteenth century hindu society is lamented upon and cited as the cause for the evolution of the Mahima sect. Mahima dharma and its founder Mahima Swamy, had a definite counter ideology or an alternative conception of society which was inherent in its philosophy as revealed in the radical poetry of its main proponent Bhima Bhoi.

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CRIMINAL TRIBES ACT (CTA) AND BRITISH RULE IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 1870s, various pieces of [colonial](#) legislation in India during [British rule](#) were collectively called the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA), which criminalized entire communities by designating them as habitual criminals. Under these acts, ethnic or social communities in India were defined as "addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences" such as thefts, and were registered by the government. Adult males of the groups were forced to report weekly to local police, and had restrictions on their movement imposed.

The first CTA, the Criminal Tribes Act 1871, applied mostly in [North India](#), before it was extended to the [Bengal Presidency](#) and other areas in 1876, and updated to the Criminal Tribes Act 1911, which included the [Madras Presidency](#). The Act went through several amendments in the next decade, and, finally, the Criminal Tribes Act 1924 incorporated all of them.

At the time of [Indian independence](#) in 1947, thirteen million people in 127 communities faced search and arrest if any member of the group was found outside the prescribed area. The Act was repealed in August 1949 and former "criminal tribes" were [denotified](#) in 1952, when the Act was replaced with the [Habitual Offenders Act](#) 1952. In 1961 [state governments](#) started releasing lists of such tribes.

Today, there are 313 [Nomadic Tribes](#) and 198 [Denotified Tribes](#) of India, yet the legacy of the past continues to affect the majority of 60 million people belonging to these tribes, as their historical associations have meant continued alienation and stereotyping by the police and the media as well as economic hardships. Many of them are still described as "Ex-Criminal Tribes".

ORIGIN OF THE ACT

Sociologist MeenaRadhakrishna writes that after the [revolt of 1857](#), many tribal chiefs such as [AvantibaiLodhi](#), and [Dhan Singh Gurjar](#) were labelled traitors and considered rebellious. The colonial government found the demarcation between wandering criminal tribes, [vagrants](#), [itinerants](#), travelling tradesmen, nomads and [gypsies](#) difficult to manage, so they were all, even [eunuchs](#) ([hijras](#)), grouped together, and their subsequent generations were labelled a "law and order problem" for the state.

Nomads vs Settlers

Historian [David Arnold](#) has suggested that because many of these tribes were small communities of poor, low-caste and nomadic people living on the fringes of the society, living as petty traders, [pastoralists](#), gypsies, hill and forest dwelling tribes, they did not conform to the prevailing European standards of living, which involved settled agriculture and waged labour. Those with [nomadic](#) lifestyles were seen as a menace

to 19th century society and required control, or at least surveillance.

Social Engineering

The measure was a part of a wider attempt at [social engineering](#) which saw, for example, the categorisation of castes as being "agricultural" or "martial" as a means of facilitating the distribution of property or recognising which groups were loyal to the colonial government and therefore suitable for military recruitment, respectively.

Elsewhere the concept of [Reformatory Schools](#) for such people had already been initiated by mid-19th century by social reformers, such as [Mary Carpenter](#) (1807–1877), who was the first to coin the term "dangerous classes".

Because it came to be thought that behavior was hereditary rather than learned, crime became ethnic, and what was merely [social determinism](#) till then became [biological determinism](#).

BACKGROUND

The colonial government prepared a list of "criminal castes", and all members registered in these castes by caste-census were restricted in terms of regions they could visit, move about in or people they could socialise with. In certain regions, entire caste groups were presumed guilty by birth, arrested, children separated from their parents, and held in penal colonies or quarantined without conviction or due process.

Scope

The Criminal Tribes Act was one of the many laws passed by the British colonial government that applied to Indians based on their religion and [caste](#) identification. The Criminal Tribes Act and its provisions used the term [Tribes](#), which included castes within their scope. This terminology was preferred for various reasons, including Muslim sensitivities that considered castes by definition Hindu, and preferred Tribes as a more generic term that included Muslims.

Colonial Justification

When the Bill was introduced in 1871 by British official T.V. Stephens, he said: "... people from time immemorial have been pursuing the caste system defined job-positions: weaving, carpentry and such were hereditary jobs. So there must have been hereditary criminals also who pursued their forefathers' profession."

[James Fitzjames Stephen](#) testified, "When we speak of professional criminals, we...(mean) a tribe whose ancestors were criminals from time immemorial, who are themselves destined by the usage of caste to commit crime, and whose descendants will be offenders against the law, until the whole tribe is exterminated or accounted for in manner of thugs".

Labelling and restrictions

The castes and tribes "notified" under the Act were labelled as Criminal Tribes for their so-called "criminal tendencies". As a result, anyone born in these communities across the country was presumed as a "born

criminal", irrespective of their criminal precedents. This gave the police sweeping powers to arrest them, control them, and monitor their movements.

Once a tribe was officially notified, its members had no recourse to repeal such notices under the judicial system. From then on, their movements were monitored through a system of compulsory registration and passes, which specified where the holders could travel and reside, and district magistrates were required to maintain records of all such people.

Colonial Support

The British government was able to summon a large amount of public support, including the nationalist press, for the excesses committed, because the Criminal Tribes Act was posed widely as a social reform measure which reformed criminals through work. However, when they tried to make a living like everybody else, they did not find work outside the settlement because of public prejudice and ostracisation.

Extension

An inquiry was set up in 1883, to investigate the need for extending the Act to the rest of India, and received an affirmative response. 1897 saw another amendment to the Act, wherein local governments were empowered to establish separate "reformatory" settlements, for tribal boys from age four to eighteen years, away from their parents.

Eventually, in 1911, it was enacted in [Madras Presidency](#) as well, bringing entire India into the jurisdiction of this law, in 1908, special 'settlements' were constructed for the notified tribes where they had to perform hard labour. With subsequent amendments to the Act, punitive penalties were increased, and fingerprinting of all members of the criminal tribe was made compulsory, such tight control according to many scholars was placed to ensure that no future revolts could take place.

RESETTLEMENT OF TRIBES

Many of the tribes were "settled" in villages under the police guard, whose job was to ensure that no registered member of the tribe was absent without notice. Also imposition of [punitive](#) police posts on the villages with history of "misconduct" was also common.

The Aziz Nagar settlement in South Arcot District was opened on 22 September 1913 to deal with the so-called criminal tribes of the Madras presidency, including Veppur [Parayars](#) and PiramalaiKallar, in South Arcot district. Some of the peoples of Veppur [Paraiyar](#) and [PiramalaiKallar](#) were arrested under the Criminal Tribes Act and formed the Aziz Nagar settlement. The oppressed people in the Aziz Nagar settlement were without even basic facilities and food. [T. M. JambulingamMudaliar](#) visited the Aziz Nagar settlement unofficially and provided food and basic necessities to affected people there. JambulingamMudaliar vehemently opposed the Criminal Tribes Act, but only the Criminal Tribes Act against the [Vanniyar](#) Padayachi of the South Arcot was repealed.

In the coming decades, to evade prosecution under the Act, many of these notified tribes took up nomadic

existence, living on the fringes of society.

VICTIMS

Professor of history Ramnarayan Rawat states that the criminal-by-birth castes under this Act included initially Gujjar, Gadriya, Ahir but expanded by the late 19th century to include most of Chamars, as well as Sanyasis and hill tribes. Other major British census based caste groups that were included as criminal-by-birth under this Act included Chamars, Bowreah, Budducks, Bedyas, Domes, Dormas, Gujjar, Rebari, Bhar, Pasi, Dasads, Nonias, Moosaheers, Rajwars, GahseesBoayas, Dharees, Sowakhyas.

Hundreds of Hindu communities were brought under the Criminal Tribes Act. By 1931, the colonial government listed 237 criminal cases and tribes under the act in the [Madras Presidency](#) alone.

REFORM OF THE ACT

This practice became controversial and did not enjoy the support of all British colonial officials. Henry Schwarz, a professor at Georgetown University specialising in the history of colonial and postcolonial India, wrote that this decades-long practice was reversed at the start of the 20th century with the proclamation that people "could not be incarcerated indefinitely on the presumption of [inherited] bad character".

In 1936, [Jawaharlal Nehru](#) denouncing the Act commented, "The monstrous provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act constitute a negation of civil liberty. No tribe can be classed as criminal as such and the whole principle is out of consonance with all civilised principles."

Post-independence reforms

In January 1947, Government of Bombay set up a committee, which included [B.G. Kher](#), then Chief Minister [Morarji Desai](#), and [Gulzarilal Nanda](#), to look into the matter of 'criminal tribes'. In 1949, after a long campaign led by Communist leaders such as [P. Ramamurthi](#) and [P. Jeevanandham](#), and Forward Bloc leader [U. Muthuramalingam Thevar](#), who had [led many agitations](#) in the villages since 1929 urging the people to defy the CTA, the number of tribes listed under the CTA was reduced. Other provincial governments soon followed suit.

The Act was repealed in August 1949, which resulted in 2,300,000 tribals being decriminalised. The committee appointed in the same year by the central government to study the utility of the existence of this law, reported in 1950 that the system violated the spirit of the [Indian constitution](#).

A massive crime wave after the criminal tribes were denotified led to a public outcry. The [Habitual Offenders Act](#) (HOA) (1952) was enacted in the place of CTA, it states that a habitual offender is one who has been a victim of subjective and objective influences and has manifested a set practice in crime, and also presents a danger to society. The HOA effectively re-stigmatised the already marginalised "criminal tribes".

Continued Effects

Many of these denotified tribes continued to carry considerable social stigma from the Act, and come under the purview of the new 'Prevention of Anti-Social Activity Act' (PASA). Many of them have been

denied the status of [Scheduled Castes](#) (SC), [Scheduled Tribes](#) (ST) or [Other Backward Classes](#) (OBC), which would have allowed them avail [Reservation](#) under [Indian law](#), which reserves seats for them in government jobs and educational institutions, thus most of them are still living [Below Poverty Line](#) and in sub-human conditions.

Over the course of the century since its passing, the criminal identity attached to certain tribes by the Act, was internalised not just by the society, but also by the police, whose official methodology, even after repeal of the Act, often reflected the characteristics of manifestation of an era initiated by the Act, a century ago, where characteristic of crimes committed by certain tribes were closely watched, studied and documented.

The new Act simply relists the "Criminal Tribes" as [denotified tribes](#). Today the social category generally known as the denotified and [nomadic tribes](#) includes approximately 60 million people in India.

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RESURRECTING PARI BEWA: UNVEILING THE UNTOLD NARRATIVE OF ODISHA'S LONE FEMALE MARTYR IN INDIA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE

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In the annals of India's struggle for independence, one name shines brightly, that of Pari Bewa, a remarkable female freedom fighter hailing from the heartland of Odisha. Born in a modest village, Pari Bewa's life story exemplifies unparalleled bravery and unwavering commitment to the cause of her country's liberation. Her legacy as the first female martyr of Odisha remains etched in history, forever inspiring generations with her resolute spirit and sacrifice. Pari Bewa's indomitable courage became evident during the Quit India Movement, a pivotal chapter in India's fight against British colonial rule. This brave lady fearlessly stood up against oppression, rallying her fellow villagers to join the movement and demand freedom from British tyranny. Her devotion to the cause was so intense that she willingly faced the ominous threat of bullets during the infamous Erram Massacre, a tragic incident that claimed numerous lives. Pari Bewa's unflinching determination led her to stand firm against the forces of oppression, ultimately sealing her place as a symbol of courage and sacrifice. Inspired by the ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi and the guidance of Harekrushna Mahatab, Pari Bewa embarked on her journey as a freedom fighter, propelled by her unwavering love for her country. Her unyielding commitment resonated deeply with those around her, igniting the spark of patriotism in the hearts of her fellow villagers. Her influence extended beyond the boundaries of her village, as her name and deeds spread throughout the region, inspiring countless others to join the struggle for independence. Pari Bewa's life story serves as a testament to the strength that emanates from even the smallest of villages. Her determination to see her country free from colonial shackles and her willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice exemplify the essence of patriotism. Pari Bewa's memory lives on as a beacon of courage, reminding us that ordinary individuals can achieve extraordinary feats when fueled by an unshakeable belief in justice and freedom. Today, Pari Bewa's name is etched into the tapestry of India's freedom movement, an emblem of bravery and sacrifice. Her legacy continues to inspire individuals to stand up against injustice and oppression, fostering a sense of unity and national pride. Pari Bewa's remarkable journey remains an everlasting source of motivation, urging us to uphold the values she held dear and to cherish the hard-fought independence that she, and countless others like her, helped secure for our nation.

ERAM MASSACRE:-

Eram, an enclave nestled within the Bhadrak district of Odisha, emerges as a pivotal actor in the tapestry of India's relentless struggle for sovereignty. The village's fervent nationalist fervor was met with a cataclysmic episode in the annals of the freedom movement, etching its name in

history as the Eram Massacre of 1942. In the backdrop of the Quit India movement, a nationwide surge of anti-colonial fervency ignited by Mahatma Gandhi's clarion call to "do or die," the residents of Eram cast their lot with this tumultuous wave. In a resolute emulation of parallel governance, they conceived the Swadhin Banchhanidhi Chakala, a moniker drawn from the luminary nationalist poet and political luminary Banchhanidhi Mohanty, whose origins intertwined with Eram's soil. This "Sovereign Administration" of Eram promulgated decrees advocating non-compliance with tax payments, prohibition of rice trade with colonial intermediaries, and the symbolic incineration of village watchmen's uniforms. The crescendo of these actions reached its zenith on the 28th of September in 1942, when multitudes, marshaled under the leadership of Kamala Prasad Kar, convened at the Eram Melan grounds to voice their resolute dissent against British dominion. This assemblage, however, triggered an escalation of tension with the local constabulary, which was already inflamed by the village's audacious maneuvers. The situation culminated in a fateful decision to dispatch a contingent commanded by D.S.P. Kunjabihari Mohanty, who, with alarming alacrity, opened fire in the face of scant provocation. The very geography of the locale, besieged on three flanks, constricted avenues of escape. The toll exacted was harrowing: twenty-eight souls were extinguished on the spot, while an additional fifty-six bore the scars of injury. This somber chapter etched its mark as one of the most sanguinary junctures within the Quit India Movement. The heft of this occurrence earned it the moniker 'Second Jalianwala Bagh,' an invocation that resonates with the infamous Amritsar massacre. The site of this tragedy, now enshrined as Rakta Tirtha Eram (The Pilgrimage of Blood at Eram), bears witness to a poignant testament of sacrifice and valor in the ceaseless struggle for India's emancipation. During our pursuit of a master's degree, Sri Satybrata Pani and I visited the village of Pari Bewa, where we engaged in discussions with her present family. The family shared various distinct narratives and stories, diverging from what we initially expected.}

Scant information is available regarding the identity of this valiant individual, as she continues to be an enigmatic subject of intrigue. Frequently, individuals erroneously interpreted her appellation "bewa" to be her authentic surname. Pari Bewa, hailing from an obscure village with an untraceable lineage within the undivided Balesore district, emerged into existence. Her familial recollections recount her exclusion from formal education and her early matrimony, which was soon followed by widowhood. It is at this juncture that the designation "bewa" becomes pertinent, as it was customary for women to adopt this title upon widowhood. Her genealogical roots are often expounded upon by her great-grandsons, who affirm that their great grandmother was affiliated with a lineage of potters before entering into matrimony with a family renowned for confectionery craftsmanship. This legacy endures in her descendants, who continue to perpetuate the art of baking and confectionery, thus attesting to the veracity of these claims. Commendations from her grandsons and local denizens extol her active participation in the Quit India Movement.

The harrowing ordeals she underwent are still vividly encapsulated within the narratives frequently disseminated by local inhabitants. She persists in their collective memory as an icon and a source of regional pride. The events of the infamous Eram massacre, an event etched in history, merit examination. On this fateful day, 29 lives were lost, and numerous individuals, including Pari Bewa, sustained injuries. The community hails her for her resolute and dauntless stance amid the onslaught of bullets, which culminated in her heroic demise. However, her great-grandsons provide an intricate account of her final moments. They recount that she suffered a gunshot wound to her lower abdomen, resulting in significant blood loss. The exigency of the situation rendered transportation for medical treatment nearly impossible. Consequently, she was conveyed to her nearby residence, where she drew her last breath on the veranda, encircled by her kin, under the shroud of night. The profound reverence held by her great-grandsons and local populace serves as a testament to her enduring legacy, one that eclipses the prominence of other notable figures within the region. Her memory perseveres as a revered hero, enshrined in every nook and cranny of Odisha, though her narrative remains concealed from the larger Indian populace. This serves as a modest aspiration – that the sacrifices of Pari Bewa may be acknowledged and commemorated with due regard.

In conclusion, the story of Pari Bewa, the first female martyr of Odisha, stands as a poignant testament to the often overlooked sacrifices of women in the annals of history. Despite the strides made in contemporary narratives of subaltern perspectives, it is evident that our understanding of the freedom struggle remains predominantly centered on male figures. Pari Bewa's absence from the mainstream historical discourse becomes emblematic of this historical oversight, especially as we commemorate the 76th year of our independence. While it is heartening to observe the State Government's annual tributes to Pari Bewa on Independence Day, it is disheartening to note that her memory soon fades into obscurity once the ceremony concludes. This lack of sustained recognition perpetuates the cycle of neglect that her present-day family continues to endure. Pari Bewa's contributions, like those of numerous other unsung freedom fighters, demand our attention and reverence. As we reflect on the sacrifices of those who laid down their lives for our nation's freedom, it is crucial to expand our historical narrative to include the narratives of women like Pari Bewa. Only through a more inclusive portrayal of our past can we begin to acknowledge and honor the invaluable roles played by women in shaping our nation's destiny. It is high time that Pari Bewa's story finds its rightful place in our collective memory, ensuring that her bravery and determination inspire generations to come.

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Purubai :

An unsung heroine of Odisha and the true disciple of Gandhiji

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Through the ages, women have played an important role in the society through their sacrifice and devotion. In the nineteenth century, the reformist movement led by Raja Rammohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and others though created an ambience of freedom for the fettered women of India for which they came out of their age-long "invisibility", their participation in national movements actually began after the 1st World War when it assumed a strident and vigorous form on account of a "pressure from below." Besides other reasons, Mahatma Gandhi was primarily responsible for the social resurgence of the Indian women. Gandhi was different in his perception about the role of women in the family, society, community and in the freedom struggle from most of the regional and the national leaders of his time.¹ His benign speeches strewn with examples of heroic women from mythology and history and the religious overtones of his propaganda could effectively attract women towards the national movements.² However, their active political participation en masse was not seen prior to the Civil Disobedience Movement both at the regional and the national level.³

The story of journey of Smt. Purubai Liladhara Ben, popularly known as Purubai, from Kutch to Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat and from Sabarmati Ashram to Soro, a small town in the Balasore district of Odisha and her silent dedication and devotion for the Gandhian ideals and the cause of national movements has till yet remained in palpable obscurity. This article is meant to highlight the unsung greatness of Purubai in its proper perspective.

Purubai (Nov.1871—Sept.1971) was born in a wealthy family in Kutch of Gujarat who became a widow in her prime of youth. She had had a daughter by that time. Leaving the daughter with her relatives, she came to Sabarmati Ashram and with the permission of Gandhiji she stayed in the Ashram and did the daily chores. She became an adept in the khadi work—both spinning and weaving. She was quitting the bed in the wee hours of the morning before anybody had woken up and did the daily chores of sweeping and cleaning the prayer hall, well bases and the latrines etc.⁴ Thereafter she was ringing the bell for others to get up.

Gandhiji had given clarion call to all the industrialists and business people of India to quit their businesses and join in the non-cooperation movement. Jivaram Kalyanji Kothari, a wealthy business people (seth) from Kutch also responded to the call of Gandhiji like others, who promised to give his time and money for the cause of freedom struggle of India. Jivaramji not only gave money but also offered his entire life to Gandhiji for his cause. Gandhiji advised him to do relief work at Bhadrak in Odisha and also in the rural areas of Bhadrak up to Chandbali. Jivaramji with his

pledged money of one lakh reached Bhadrak and started the relief work. After a few days of relief work he thought that relief should be given through some work and wrote about this to Gandhiji who advised him that both men and women could get work only through the spinning work. Gandhiji invited Jivaramji to learn spinning at Sabarmati Ashram. Jivaramji saw Purubai there and also her dedication for works. He told Gandhiji that he want Purubai who can help him in his work at Bhadrak and particularly for teaching spinning to others. Gandhiji had replied, "You have chosen the right person".⁵ Gandhiji sent Purubai in 1927 from Sabarmati Ashram with Jivaramji to work in the famished rural coastal areas of Odisha.⁶

Gandhiji had the programme to come to Calcutta and it was decided that Jivaramji and Purubai would accompany Gandhiji to proceed for Odisha. Purubai with the permission from Gandhiji went to her village for one or two days to meet her relatives before her departure. While she was in her house her only daughter (by now married) died in the midst of her delivery. As her husband had died earlier she had to cremate her deceased daughter in her hand as per the Gujarati tradition. From there she straight proceeded for the railway station without going to her house for there was little time for the departure of the train to Odisha. She told the news of her daughter's demise to Gandhiji only when they had reached at Calcutta for the fear lest Bapuji would have cancelled her programme and would not have allowed her to proceed to Odisha. Gandhiji became astonished to see her utter patience and her dedication and blessed her to dedicate her entire life for the cause of the suffering and famished masses of the rural Odisha.

For two years the relief works in exchange of labour, particularly spinning works, continued from Mahatab Kothi at Bhadrak and later at the house of Nishamani Devi and at various sub-centres. Purubai along with others like Makhanlal, Iswarlal Vyas helped Jivaramji in the relief work. Her main work was to teach spinning to others. She had also taught Subhadra Mahatab, the wife of Harekrushna Mahatab, the art of spinning⁷ for which she could pass the test of Gandhiji with praise, while Gandhiji stayed at Mahatab Kothi at Bhadrak in 1934.

When relief works ceased many returned to their states. However Purubai, Makhanlal and Iswarlal decided to stay back in Odisha and dedicate their lives till their last breath. Jivaramji advised his fellow workers to go to different places choosing as their places of service. Makhanlal and Iswarlal went to Kupari (Balasore district) and Aul (previously in undivided Cuttack district, now in Kendrapara district) respectively and Jivaramji sent Purubai with a letter to Mukund Prasad Das, an advocate and a Gandhian follower at Balasore. Mukund Prasad Das engaged her in some social work in Balasore, however it was not sufficient for Purubai. Hence he decided to send her to work at Soro, his own locality.

She reached at Soro in 1930 and dedicated her life for the cause of the poor and famished people of Soro till her demise on 25.9.1971. With the help of Keshavlal T. Vora, Mulji Chowda, Hazarilal Khandelwal and others she started an ashram in the village of Chakaraipur (popularly

Raipur), Soro, which was named later as Purubai Ashram (still now active). Initially this ashram was opened in a kuchha house with 5 orphaned baby girls. She reared them in the ideals of a pure ashram life and she herself led a pure life of a hermit. She would never rest for a while and never let inmates of the asram to rest. Early in the morning she would get up and sit down for the spinning work till she spins a hunk (853 yard) of cotton thread.⁸ She was self-reliant and taught everybody to be self-reliant.

After Dandi March (12th March, 1930), the Provincial Congress Committee decided on 16th March at Balasore for commencing the Salt Satyagraha or the 'Labana Satyagraha' in Odisha. At Inchudi, on the sea-shore and nearly 20 k.ms. from Balasore, salt was collected violating the Salt Law, which is considered as the "second Dandi". On 20th April, a long procession of women led by Rama Devi, Annapurna Devi, Malati Devi and many others also collected salt at Inchudi. The Samaj, an Oriya daily had reported the presence of volunteers from Gujarat and Bengal joining them.⁹ Purubai was one of those Gujarati volunteers.

In 1934 when Gandhiji came to Odisha for the fifth time and on 6th May started his padayatra from Puri to Bhadrak, Purubai also accompanied him from Puri to Bhadrak along with other Oriya women leaders like Rama Devi, Malati Devi, Annapurna Devi, and several others.¹⁰

The fourth Annual Conference of Gandhi Seva Sangha, which was established in 1924 in order to keep the principles and programmes of Gandhi intact,¹¹ was held in Odisha at Delang from 25th to 31st March, 1938. Mahatma Gandhi accompanied by Kasturba, Durgaben, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Acharya Krupalini, Mahadev Desai and many others visited Odisha to attend the Conference. Purubai as the member of Seva Sangha had attended the same.

When Gandhiji gave the constructive programmes of Khadi along with village construction and Harijan welfare from 1934 onwards, he had in mind the enormous contributions that Indian women could make for the cause,¹² as from time immemorial spinning had constituted a special occupation for them. Though spinning was only "symbolic", Gandhiji was convinced that the Indian villagers and particularly, the women would be "self-reliant" and "disciplined" and would learn "self-help". That would naturally lead to "Swaraj" or self-government.¹³ As a true follower and representative of Gandhiji, she participated in the myriad constructive social movements like Charkha movement, removal of 'untouchability', women education and 'caste-horoscope-dowry less marriages' etc. and became the guiding spirit in her area of work, for her selfless example of dedication. She went to villages to tell the villagers how charkha can make them self-reliant and distributed them charkha made in her ashram. Whenever she would listen that anybody, be he/she a Hindu or Muslim was sick, she would go immediately to look after him/her and would very often help them with money for the treatment. She loved people so much that she would take with her the hand-made pickles in which she was an adept, for the convalescing patients so that the patient would like her food. Hence by the common people in the region of Soro, she was affectionately

called 'Maa' (the mother).

During the famines of 1942-43 orphanage at Soro was opened. Purubai also greatly helped the Congress leaders in their mission. In 1955 Vinoba Bhave, while touring (padayatra) in Odisha visited this ashram at Soro and had lavishly praised Purubai for her work and dedication.

Purubai at her ripe age got incapacitated and in 1970 requested Kapil Charan Das, a freedom fighter and an honest Gandhian, with whom she had developed a filial relationship of a son to take over the charge of the ashram. Kapil Charan Das became its Secretary and Nanda Kishore Das, the erstwhile speaker of Odisha Legislative Assembly became its Acting President and a Managing Committee was instituted for the smooth functioning of the ashram. As the health of Purubai deteriorated instantly, she went to her relatives to Calcutta and breathed her last there.

As per the desire of Gandhiji, Purubai was not directly active in the political activities of the National Congress, though she was associated and actively participated in the various programmes of the Congress. Further, she always talked in Hindi, though she had managed to sign in Oriya, the language problem remained with her till her demise, for which she remained in the palpable shadow in the political history of Odisha. However, Purubai shall be remembered in the social history of Odisha for her selfless sacrifice and utter dedication in ameliorating the grief and suffering of the poor and common masses of Odisha and particularly by the people of Soro-Bhadrak-Balasore region.

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3. M. Kaur, Women in India's Freedom Struggle, Delhi, 1985.
4. Personal interview with Kapil Charan Das, a freedom fighter.
5. Personal interview with Kapil Charan Das, a freedom fighter.
6. In 1920's Odisha was grievously suffering from the natural calamities like cyclone and flood and concomitant famine and infectious diseases like cholera etc. Gopabandhu Das highlighted the situation in the Bengal-Bihar Assembly but no steps were taken by the British Government. Gopabandhu Das wrote to Gandhiji and Mahatma Gandhi felt for the famished people of Odisha and decided to visit Odisha in 1921. Gandhiji visited Odisha several times.
7. Personal interview with Kapil Charan Das, a freedom fighter.
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AUGUST KRANTI AND JATIYA SARKARS IN ORISSA

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After the failure of the Cripps Mission a popular sentiment for a determined assault upon British imperialism ran extremely high. The hopes of understanding and co-operation between the British and Congress disappeared. Gandhi now began to inaugurate his systematic campaign for "orderly British withdrawal" from India. The campaign started late in April, 1942. In his views, "whatever the consequences to India her real safety and Britain's too lie in an orderly and timely withdrawal from India". The phrase 'Quit India' in a spirit of 'Do or Die' came into vogue. The Summer of 1942 found Gandhi in a strange and unique militant mood in the reflection of which he wrote in the Harijan on 10th May, 1942 - "The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal removes that bait". A fortnight later he again wrote, "Leave India in God's hands or in modern parlance to anarchy. Then all parties will fight one another like dogs or will, when real responsibility faces them, come to a reasonable agreement." He repeatedly urged the British "This orderly disciplined anarchy should go and if as a result there is complete lawlessness I would risk it".¹

The famous 'Quit India' resolution was passed by Bombay Session of the All India Congress Committee on the 8th of August 1942 followed by a call for 'mass struggle on nonviolent lines on the widest possible scale.' From 9th August onwards what Linlithgon privately described on 31st August as "by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857 and the extent of which we have so far concealed from the world of military security."² The rout of British hegemony in South East Asia by the victory of an Asian power totally shattered the white prestige. It again revealed the gross racialism of the rulers of India. The Europeans in Malaya, Singapore and Burma ordered all forms of transport of their escape flight. At the same time they left the Indian immigrants there to make their own way by trekking in atrocious conditions through the dense forests and dangerous mountain range. Eastern U.P. Northern and Western Bihar regions were traditionally the main catchment areas for Indian migrant labour to South East Asia and other parts of the world. Coincidentally the 1942 rebellion attained maximum popular intensity in these regions with its influence spreading over to the neighbouring states and adjoining areas.

The arrest of the Congress leaders triggered off a massive popular upsurge throughout India. In all the metropolitan cities, provincial capitals and district towns it sprung up. Unlike the civil disobedience movement, this rebellion was mostly confined to students, peasants and the lower-

middle class population. August Kranti became a formidable phase of National movement for the mass upsurge of peasantry and common people. For the space a few weeks or months or years, the British rule ceased to exist. Intensity was manifested in the establishment of Parallel governments or Jatiya Sarkars and the British government seemed to be in real danger of being overthrown.

This paper aims at these Jatiya Sarkars with a specific study of Orissa vis-a-vis India. At Bhagalpur in Bihar and Balia in Uttar Pradesh, the peasant discontentment manifested in the parallel governments. The wrong economic policy and relief scares served the basis of Jatiya Sarkar in Midnapore. In case of Satara, it was the Maratha lineage and Satara heritage that were the key factors. But in case of Orissa there were reflections both in Garhjat and Mughalbandi areas. Even in the absence of proper leadership and able guidance, the mass national upsurge ran high. In case of Garhjats the oppression by the rulers and elite Prajamandal leaders set the high national ideals to be echoed in popular hearts. In the Coastal British belt commoners embarked upon the process of political experimentation with future dreams. Even though they failed, these Sarkars of 42 days bear the testimony of Oriya Nationalism which still stand unrecognised. In the remote state corners also the inhabitants of the province do not pay any heed to this glorious trend. The objective of this paper is to highlight this feature of Orissan Freedom struggle in the Indian context. It deals with the study of Bhagalpur in Bihar Balia in U.P., Satara in Maharastra, Midnapore in Bengal with specific reference to Basudevpur in Balasore , Talcher and Dhenkanal in Orissa. These storm centres, as a matter of fact, reflected the real mass rebellion at the grass root level.

Bhagalpur:

The idea of August Kranti flew fast over the Bhojpuri speaking tract of Bihar. Both in intensity and extent Bhagalpur since 1930's had served as an important base of Kisan Sabha. The people declared the establishment of a National Government or Jatiya Sarkar in North Bhagalpur. Under the guidance of indomitable revolutionary Siaram Singh (the pivot of Bhagalpur people's movement) a parallel government sprang up at Sultanpur and this government appointed its own Daroga. In the constituent element of Bhagalpur such as Madhipur, all government offices came under people's possession who virtually ran them for few days. A police Sub-inspector fired indiscriminately on a gathering of 12,000 through the barred windows of a specially constructed quarter of iron frame with asbestos roof. Immediately as a counter attack, the Assistant Sub-inspector and three others were overpowered and burnt alive. At Karabara, five British and one Anglo-Indian soldiers who had fired on a meeting were disarmed and finally killed.³ The leader of the insurgency Jaglal Choudhury was later sentenced to ten years rigorous imprisonment on the charge that he had urged the crowd to tie up a Sub-inspector in a sack and throw him into the river. According to official version of course he had made plans to resist troops with spears, lighted torches and boiling oils. In Manjhi, Daravli, Parsa, Siswan, Baikunthapur, Ekama, Dighwara,

Raghunathpur and Garkha the British Machinery was almost paralysed. An efficient administrative system was set up by the people in the areas. Swatantra Mandal was the highest body which worked through village Panchayats. Above it were thana Panchayats. There were four main departments under Swatantra Mandal - Department of Dislocators, Publicity Department, Village Defence Department and Volunteers Department or Sevak Dal. The head of each of the Department was known as Adliyaksha whose orders were carried out by the Sevak Dals under him. The two revolutionary groups Siaram Dal and Parasuram Dal were active in Bihar. With a band of 150 young followers Siaram Singh, founder of Siaram Dal carried on guerilla activities in Bhagalpur and adjoining districts to paralyse the government. A Region of terror by police and military raj were let loose. Loot, arson and assaults were unrestrained for a number of days. Even women were stripped of their ornaments. From a Congress source the estimated number of tribal killing in Bhagalpur was 447.⁴

Ballia :

The movement took a very serious turn in U.P. especially in the eastern District of Ballia. To quote the official report "in these areas the trouble soon spread from the big towns to the outlying areas, thousands of rioters gave them up to an orgy of destruction of government property, while districts were isolated for days on end, a large part of the East India and practically the whole of B & N.W. Railway systems were put out of action."⁵ The government report also refers to a typical type of mass attacks on government buildings at a Tahasil in Ballia district which was one of the citadels of national government. The Mob led by a local Congress Man (Chitu Pande) according to government version had installed himself as Swaraj Tahasildar brokedown the wall, destroyed official records, broke the treasury and looted Rs.15,000/-. In the connecting part of Bairia, a huge procession of over 20,000/- marched to the Kotwali and demanded its surrender. Eight police stations were set ablaze by the rowdy mob who were in total control of the district by 19th August.⁶ Each and every organisation in Ballia was destroyed and the roiters took possession of treasury, armoury and everything else. One person took charge of the office as one administrator and another assumed the office of another officer and they attempted to carry on the administration in their own way. ⁷The arrested leaders were made free and National Government was established under Chitu Pandey. The people were asked to return the looted public property. To quote Nehru "In Ballia the British rule ceased to exist. The whole structure of the British government collapsed from top to bottom though not for long". ⁸ The military arrived on the scene within three days and a wave of repression flooded in.

Midnapore:

The best account of a rebel 'National Government' is found from Tamluk subdivision of Midnapore district in Bengal. In comparison with Ballia and Bhagalpur flareup it was less violent but better organised and more sustained. The inhabitants of the region started slogans of

resistance to British policy and stopped grain exports from the region. Well-planned attacks were made on the police stations of Tamluk, Mahishadal, Satahat and Naudigrah. On 16th October, 1942 a terrible cyclone destroyed half of the crops, 70,000 herds. In Satara, the people threw up the foreign yoke and set up a parallel government known as 'Satara Prati Sarkar'. Nana Patil was at the head of this government which ran its course for a number of months. Patels of about 50 villages tendered their resignations.¹⁰ As per the plan of Anna Master of army created was known as 'Tufan Sen' with the task of maintaining peace and discipline. Nathlal was the founding father of the village Raj and coordinated the works of Prati Sarkar.

The Satara movement was closely related to the peasant based Non-Brahmin Bahujan Samaj tradition which was strong in this region. The parallel government developed bit late from mid 1943 and maintained its existence as late as 1945-46. It managed to run people's courts (Nyayadan Mandals). Apart from carrying guerilla war it took constructive works on Gandhian lines. Mortgaged land was returned to poor peasants and exploitation of women by village big wigs were severely tackled. It reminds us the peasant mobilisation in French Revolution of 1789 which had directed itself against the so called aristocratic plot and brigands.

Basudevpur:

August Kranti in the province of Orissa was sporadic by nature and could not be a sustained one for the arrest of almost all top-ranking leaders. The congress organised plunder of salt depots, disruption of communication. Swaraj Panchayats were held to stock food. The most spectacular was the formation of a parallel government on 17th December, 1942 in Eram-Basudevpur. It was handed as Swadhina Banchhanidhichakla (in the name of native Oriya Nationalist poet Banchhanidhi Mohanty) comprising 6 Panchayats and 24 villages within a radius of 19 sq. miles.¹¹ For the smooth functioning of the government a five member apex committee was formed with Gouranga Chandra Mohanty as its Prime Minister and Ramala Prasad Kar as its Director-cum-Commander-in-chief. Anirudha Mohanty, Pravakar Tripathy and Shyam Sundar Panigrahi were the three members. The house of Arjuna Biswal was made the office with Congress flag hoisted everyday and lowered after sunset. They too had their own jails for offenders. Bhagi Singh and his son Ram Singh of Eram were detained in their jail for defiance of Congress activities. The government had three departments : Intelligence Department, Food Department, Army Department with two wings, i.e. A. Death squad B. Peace Squad. A letter from B.O. to C.O. dt. 29th Sept. 1942 reported the formation of Swaraj Panchayats in 12 villages and 250 soldiers of Marana Sena (Death-squad) had been enrolled." Attempts were made to destroy rural police stations. As a counter balance 29 persons were killed in mass attack on Eram - Basudevpur police station on 28th September. Cases of extortion of Paddy under threat from the rich were there. The official inquiry report on Eram-Basudevpur firing stated that rumours had spread "Swaraj would be attained within a week... that under a Swaraj government no taxes would be paid and the paddy of the rich

will be available to the poor."

Talcher :

Kranti had its flame in the princely state of Talcher. It had already witnessed struggle against forced labour (Bethi) forest laws and autocratic rule in September 1938. The immediate cause of the popular upsurge was a rumour that Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, President of Talcher state Prajamandal had been murdered.¹³ For all practical purposes the ruler's administration had collapsed from 31st August 1942.¹⁴ The Jatiya Sarkar was called as 'ChasiMaulia' or 'Mazdoor Raj'. It was to be set up on the basis of adult franchise in each village, block, circle, pargana and subdivision. The Central Government was accordingly constituted on the same line. Some government servants voluntarily resigned, burnt their European Dress and uniforms, set fire to the official records and swore allegiance to the New Raj. People had their Raj almost in the whole of Talcher except Talcher town where the ruler and his entourage were under British protection. A National Militia was formed by the rebels. They were well equipped with crude implements and made an organised march in Talcher principality. They requested the ruler to relinquish British authority and to hand over the government of Kisan Mazdoor Raj - the ruler might act as the constitutional head.¹⁵ The counter move started with the machine - gunning the mob from the air. The firing of the British troops below resulted in many casualties. Thus Talcher was one of the five places in India where in 1942 the masses were machine-gunned from air because of the intensity of the movement.¹⁶

Gurpal :

Jatiya Sarkar bloomed with its multifarious petals in the Gurpal area of Balasore district in September 1942.¹⁷ The residents of the locality being influenced by Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar in the East and SwadhinaBanchhanidhi Chakla in the west resolved to have their own National Government. A strong determined public in the open meetings vowed to paralyse the Government machinery. Payment of taxes were stopped. Government servants were socially boycotted. Rural police force was compelled to resign. Post offices, police station and the government offices were demolished. In a parallel judicial system the criminal cases were settled by local Panchayat courts rather than by government institutions.¹⁸

Madhi (Kamakshya Nagar):

The Quit India movement in the state of Dhenkanal bore a violent look on 26th August, 1942. Baishnab Charan Patnaik led a group of 19 persons at Madhi and created a serious problems of law and order for the authorities.¹⁹ Burning of Madhi Police Station and its capture were the most sensational events. The guerilla squad of 19 members including Musa Mallick, Ananda Charan Swain, Baidhar Sahu and others looted the armoury, captured all armaments, burnt the police station and quarters of all police personnel, Tahasil and forest offices. Then they proceeded to Malapur and looted the granary of the Raja. After the success of the operation the rebels

established an independent government at Madhi. The headquarter of the state being 22 miles away from Madhi was having no easy communication in rainy season. The river Brahmani in between was in spate. So nothing could be done immediately. State administration became thoroughly demoralised. The political Agent also asked the neighbouring state of KeonjharPallahara, Talcher, Hindol and Tigiria to co-operate with Dhenkanal in capturing the so called miscreants.²⁰

For a short spell confusion engulfed the state. It was Baishnab Charan Patnaik who mooted the idea and mobilised the people into action. Gandhian call of 'Do or Die' and the torrent of repression unleashed by the government engendered in him the spirit. State administration vanished for few days and parallel government worked at his initiative. The mass participation during this period of August Kranti surpassed all the previous records. Rightly Nehru remarks in Discovery of India - "The sudden unorganised demonstrations and outbreaks on the part of the people culminating in violent conflicts and destruction of powerful armed forces were a measure of the intensity of their feelings."

These intense attitudes manifested in the establishment of Jatiya Sarkars in different parts of the country. While volumes have been brought to lime light about these Jatiya Sarkars or parallel governments of outside states in Orissa still more facts are to be explored for their gallant contributions to August Kranti. Orissa was no less. It stands in equal rank with that of Satara, Ballia, Tauluk or Bhagalpur. Both in Garhjat and Mughalbandi areas of Orissa Jatiya Sarkars made their benign presence to be felt. These unrecognised heroes and martyrs and their unsung activities still remind the modern generations to fix them at their proper places in the annals of August Kranti.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF ARMED STRUGGLE AT SAMBALPUR (1827-1862)

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ABSTRACT

Sambalpur, both as a Kingdom and a District of the British Empire witnessed skirmishes against the British at some places where as armed struggles for liberation could be sustained for a year or two elsewhere but the scenario of Sambalpur was quite different. Revolution against the British started at Sambalpur in 1827 which continued at a stretch up to 1840; took a long break of 17 years as Veer Surendra Sai, the leader of the Rebellion of 1857 and his brother Udanta were confined in Hazaribagh jail till 1857. They were released when soldiers of two platoons of Danapur Force became rebels and broke open the jail gate. Both the brothers returned towards Sambalpur and revived the Rebellion in a big way.¹ Sambalpur Rebellion became the longest armed struggle of profound significance; it has many special features for which it can be termed as the most remarkable of all such in the country. Surendra and Udanta had a very long period as Political prisoners too. Besides unique strategies adopted for the Rebellion, this is a great saga of bravery, sufferings and sacrifices of so many families of two generations dedicating their life for the cause of Motherland in fighting against the British.

Key words: Sambalpur, armed struggles, Veer Surendra Sai, 1827-1862

Surendra's Advent

Surendra Sai a member of a collateral branch of Sambalpur ruling family, of Khinda started revolution in 1827 when the British started controlling helm of affairs of Sambalpur State by placing Mohan Kumari on the throne. Mohan Kumari was the widow Queen of King Maharaj Sai who died without a successor in 1827. The widow queen was restrained from adopting Surendra Sai or Govind Singh, a scion of the royal clan belonged to Jharsuguda branch; instead British made her the ruler. Balram Singh, uncle of Surendra resigned from the post of Treasury officer on protest of British interference and encouraged Surendra to fight. Soon Mohan Kumari was dethroned and was replaced by Narayan Singh, also a scion of the royal clan of Barpali branch in 1833.

Surendra, Udanta and their uncle Balaram Singh were arrested by J.R.Ousley, Agent to the Governor General; and were sent to Hazaribagh jail on murder charges in 1840. Narayan Singh died in 1849 and Sambalpur was annexed to British Empire by the Law of Escheat. The annexation and hike in revenue amount after every four year caused dissatisfaction and discontentment among the peasants and landlords. Surendra and Udanta made a comeback to Sambalpur at such a time. The message moved throughout the District like wild fire. Thirteen out of sixteen Zamindars (Landlords), many Gountias (village head) and ordinary people rushed to them as they found a ray of hope in liberating Sambalpur from the

clutch of the British. Surendra marched through the streets of Sambalpur with more than 1500 supporters and occupied the old fort on 7 October 1857. Jail term of Surendra and Udanta was terminated and proposal to stay at Cuttack or Ranchi with provision of pension was offered. They preferred to go into hiding and started consolidating their position.²

Unique War Strategy

SûrêndraSâi tried to consolidate his position by adopting guerrilla tactics of warfare. In a well-planned manner he selected a few peaks of hills having a straight wall like appearance from one side, which cannot be scaled. Two sets of stone walls were erected towards the other side of the slope for taking position and firing. There were holes in between the walls to fire from inside. Round shaped boulders of considerable weight were fixed at the slope, in front of the walls tied with sturdy twines made of wild creepers locally known as 'sialilatâ'. As the column of British soldiers would try to scale the hills the mutineers would cut the ropes causing the boulders to roll down. It killed, injured and blocked the passage; restraining the enemy from scaling up and advancing further. Firing would be resorted to if required through the gun positions made in the ramparts of the fort. If the company soldiers would prove powerful then the fighters would sneak away in a phase manner through the back side escape way amid firing and would emerge at a safe distance. When firing from the top would stop; and when the company soldiers finally would reach at the hill top, there would be none to apprehend or fight with.³

A chain of forts were built in such geographical locations that all the three vital roads connecting Sambalpur with Ranchi, Raipur(Bombay- Calcutta Road) and Cuttack could come under the clutch of the fighters. By controlling these three roads they could take the reins of the Rebellion into their hands. Hill bastions were built at Débrigarh, BâraBakhrâ, Gadpâti, Badpâti, Singhodâ, Jharghâti, Pâhâdsirgidâ, Patnigarh, Kûdopâli, Jûjomûrâ, Badrama and several other locations. Local Zamindârs were put in charge of the nearest hill forts in the vicinity of their estate as Commanders. Few families were made to settle near each of the forts. Rice and other provisions collected from the merchants and big farmers by the fighting forces were being kept with these families; any moment fighters reached at any fort they would use the provisions of food because those families were there to look after them.

Recruitment of Fighters

The fighters were not regular soldiers. They were mostly recruited from among local tribal people. Potters were also recruited to carry materials to the hill top as and when required. Surendra Sai had a network of spying system. He used a few local "Sanchar" artists for gathering information. They were moving from place to place to perform a form of singing, dancing and thus collecting information.

Procurement of weapons

Matchlock and Percussion guns were procured through the Kings of neighbouring States. Those secretly helped Surendra Sai by their own accord or by force. The Rajas, of course wanted to play safe when

one foot was in one boat and another foot at the other; one for the good for the fighters and the other to please the Government. The fighters had secret weapon making unit at Jobe near Pahadsirgida and at Kudabaga.

Collection of funds

Surendra used to collect funds from the Village heads; those were not with him in the fight, as well as from big farmers and merchants to meet the expenses. Sometimes the fighters used to be very rude if a donor denied or anybody tried to avoid paying. Anybody trying to be smart or trying to betray Surendra in order to get into the good book of the British Administration then he used to get befitting punishment if the spies of Surendra informs.

Caste no bar

One of the most significant aspects of fight at Sambalpur under the leadership of Surendra is Brahmins, Gonds, Binjhals and people from other castes mostly from schedule tribe and schedule caste, stayed together, dined, fought and suffered together. This is quite strange and unbelievable because of social custom and untouchability prevalent at that time. A good number of Brahmins wholeheartedly extended logistic facilities and also worked for him.

Moments of humiliation for Company Government

The hill tracks, stone walls, caves, guerrilla warfare, logistic support made the unconventional soldiers sustainable against the mighty arms power of the company soldiers. All the three roads connecting Sambalpur with Raipur, Cuttack and Ranchi came under the control of the rebels. They could interrupt movements of postal dak and Government officials. Many times the fighters would suddenly emerge, attack the soldier's tent and run away. So many units of Infantry, Artillery, and Cavalry force from Madras, Chotanagpur, Raipur and Nagpur were brought to Sambalpur. Many raids were conducted. Most of the time the company soldiers failed to scales the hills because of rolling down of boulders.

The British company soldiers suffered a humiliating defeat and lost Captain A.P.Woodbridge with several others at Paharsirgida on 12 February 1858. Fighters killed Dr Thomas Moore while he was on his way to Sambalpur. His companion Hanson, an apothecary narrowly escaped. Several occasions of massive military mobilization of the British could gain no result; rather most of the time company soldiers lost a few of their colleagues.⁴

So many Martyrs

The fight of 30 December 1857 at Kudopali took a toll of lives of as many as 52 fighters. The martyr includes Chabila Sai, a brother of Surendra; 11 were taken as prisoners of which four were hanged. Likewise 11 fighters lost their life at Singhoda on 19 February 1858. Twenty fighters including Manohar Singh, Zamindar of Bheden lost their life on an ambush by the British company soldiers while they were taking

dinner on 17 September 1858.⁵

Many experienced Captains with so many forces were brought in, yielded no result. So Colonel Henry Forster of Shekhawati Brigade was brought. He took all the measures to destroy the support and supply lines of the fighters. He imposed fines on many Kings of the States surrounding Sambalpur, gave task to catch the fighters, and compelled them to provide soldiers. He also went with massive arrest drive and put all of them behind bar. Those were suspected of helping Surendra and his men- landlords and principal fighters were caught and hanged.

The Hanged Martyrs

Ujwal Sai, a brother of Surendra Sai, Karunakar Naik, Khageswar Naik and Kanhai Naik belonged to Zamindar family of Kolabira, Madho Singh Zamindar of Ghess, Dayal Singh Sardar Gountia of Kharsal, Ganesh Upadhyaya of Singhabaga, Madhusudan Singh alias Madhu Gartia of Jujomura, Shukru Mohanty alias Jamadar, Jagabandhu Babu, Biju Dafadar, Narsingh Ghatwa of Boipali, Rehnu Biswal of Byasapara, Damru Kondh of Badpada and several others were hanged. Loosing so many fighters in war and hanging of many principal fighters had no adverse effect on the fighters. They filled the gap with new recruitments.⁶

Surendra sai lost control over the area after creation of more pickets of the soldiers for surveillance of the roads. Surendra adopted a new strategy and shifted to the forest of Khariar State, close to Raipur district. Now both Sambalpur and Raipur District Administrations faced difficulties in dealing the fighters as they soon consolidated their position.

At that point of time Major H.B.Impey joined as the new Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur. He studied the reasons behind the success of rebels for continuation of fight for so long and came to the conclusion that Surendra Sai can never be captured. He deliberated on a plan to resolve by a diplomatic way of brokering peace with the fighters. After obtaining permission from the Government he started taking several measures including announcement of amnesty, releasing the arrested rebels, returning seized property and ownership of villages, granting pension. He worked hard to reach up to the rebels, discussed about the proposals with them, persuaded them and at last brought them into the mainstream of the society in 1862.

Conspiracy

But the course of history changed the following year as Major Impey died suddenly due to illness. All British officers posted at Sambalpur and Raipur was feeling hurt and insulted when rebels were leading prestigious life with pension money. So they expressed their bitterness to the Superintendent of Police who not only supported it but also hatched a conspiracy. False allegations on the basis of fake witnesses and letters could bring misery for the ex-rebels as all of them got arrested in a single night operation and were sent to jails. The leading fighters despite acquittal by the court of the crime charged upon them were never

released. They were detained under Bengal State Prisoner's Regulation III of 1818 till their death. Sambalpur is described as the last place of Sepoy mutiny in the report arguing for detention.

Longest serving Political Prisoners

Udante Sai, brother of Surendra is the longest serving political prisoner had to stay in the jail for more than 47 years in two phases and died in the jail in January 1894. Surendra himself remained in jail for long 37 years and finally died in the jail on 28 February 1884.⁷

Sacrifices of many of one family

This is a saga of supreme courage, patience and sacrifices in one hand and a sad treacherous cruel story of prosecution on purely frivolous and concocted grounds of conspiracy. Members belonged to two generations of so many fighter families had to suffer. They were hanged or died in the war or languished in the jail.

Balaram Singh uncle of Surendra died in jail in captivity. Surendra, his brothers Udanta and Medini died at Asirgarh fort jail. Chabila, another brother was killed while fighting and Ujwal was hanged. Brother Dhruv and son Mitrabhanu were released after 13 years of imprisonment at Asirgarh but were barred from entering into Sambalpur. Karunakar Naik, Khageswar Naik and Kanhai Naik, three members of Zamindar family of Kolabira were hanged.

Balabhadra Singh Dau, Zamindar of Lakhanpur was killed while Khageswar Singh and Kamal Singh Dau of his family died at Asirgarh in captivity. Many more members of this family were arrested. Madho Singh, Zamindar of Ghess was hanged. Hatte Singh, his eldest son was deported to Andaman. Bairi Singh died in Sambalpur jail while Kunjal Singh was hanged. Govind Singh son in law of Kunjel was jailed while Narayan Singh father of Govind Singh was tied at the mouth of a canon and was blown at Raipur.

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Lokanath Panda: The Principal Advisor of Veer Surendra Sai

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Surendra Sai was arrested in 1840 and sent to Hazaribagh Jail for conspiracy and revolt against the-then Puppet Ruler of Sambalpur, named Narayan Singh (1833-1849). Surendra Sai raised his arms as he was a notable claimant to the gadee of Sambalpur. He was a descendent from Raja Madhakar Sai, the fourth Chauhan king of Sambalpur (Reigning Period: circa 1630-1650)." When the last king Maharaja Sai died in 1927, leaving no male son but only two daughters, the widow queen Rani Mohan Kumari was put on the gadee by the British authorities,. After her, the gadee was given to Narayan Singh on 11th October, 1833 and he continued till 1849.

The installation of a Rani created discontentment and the contingent of the Ramgarh Battalion stationed at Sambalpur could not coup with the situation. As the rebellion under the true claimant to the gadee(Surendra Sai)could not be put down, the Britishers deposed Mohan Kumari and installed Narayan Singh. The revolution of Surendra Sai against the Raja continued unabated and Britishers were in search of pretext to punish him. The opportunity came in 1840, when Surendra Sai attacked the Zamindar of Rampur (Brajarajnagar), DariarSingh,who was a strong supporter of Raja Narayan Singh. Although the Zamindar escaped in this attack, his son and grandson were killed by the rebels and his house was destroyed. Then the Raja with the help of Britishers could capture Surendra Sai, his brother Udanta and uncle (kaka) Balaram, who were sent to Hazaribagh Jail for confinement.

Raja Narayan Singh died in 1849 and as he had no son, under the provisions of the Doctrine of Lapse the Sambalpur kingdom was merged into the Company Rule in 1849. It was made a part of the North West Frontier Agency (created in 1834 with Ranchi as the headquarters of the Agent to the Governor General under the Regulation XIII of 1833 after the Kol Rebellion of 1831-32). Dr. J. Cadenhead was appointed as the Principal Assistant Agent of Sambalpur in December 1849. The direct administration assumed by the British Government was not liked by the people of all sections.The new Government immediately after taking over administration made a fresh settlementof lands, and the revenue was at once raised enormously by one fourth.The fiscal policy of the new Government gave rise to widespread discontentment among the land-owners.

In July 1857 the detachments of 7th and 8th Bengal Native Infantry were sent to Hazaribagh from Patna. They revolted on the 30th July. The Companies of the Ramgarh Light Infantry Battalion were despatched from Doronda under Lt. Graham to Hazaribagh to disarm the rebellious Sepoys, but the Ramgarh Sepoys also joined the mutineers. They broke open both District Jail and Agency Jail of Hazaribagh and set all prisoners free. There were 32 prisoners from Orissa and the Tributary Mahals. Surendra Sai with his brother Udanta Sai travelled through forest tracts almost unaided facing great hazards as the rainfall was heavy and

they had to cross many flooded hill streams, before reaching Sambalpur.

Surendra Sai and his brother Udanta Sai reached Sasan village, situated at a distance of only ten kms. from Sambalpur town and camped in the nearby jungles in October, 1857 and started preparations to strike. Two Sepoys of the Ramgarh Light Infantry, sent by Capt. Leigh with a parwanah for Surendra Sai and Udanta Sai reported on return that "the two Baboos had with them about two thousand men of whom about one thousand with match-locks (desi bandhuk)'. As reported in the letter No.57. dated 8th October 1857 of Capt. Leigh to Capt. Dalton he had grave doubt about the trustworthiness of the Rajahs and Zamindars of Sambalpur area, who were secretly supporting Surendra Sai.

In the morning of 7th October, 1857 Surendra Sai entered Sambalpur accompanied by 1000 to 1200 armed men, and met Capt. Leigh and explained him that if the govt. will remit the remaining part of his sentences, he would like to remain in peace. Next morning when Surendra Sai met Capt. Leigh for the second time, he told Surendra to disperse his forces and wait for govt. order on their petitions. Therefore Surendra instructed his brother Udant to return to their native village Khinda with all followers, leaving behind only twenty followers for him at Sambalpur. Thereafter Surendra Sai was living innocently in his residence at Sambalpur, being strongly guarded by his armed followers. But when he got inkling of large concentration of British troops, he started suspecting the behaviour of Capt. Leigh and escaped courageously in the night of 31st October from Sambalpur to Khinda on horse back. There heralded the great revolution called 'Ulgulaan' of Sambalpur at Khinda, the native village of Surendra Sai. After that he had never looked back. He moved from place to place and gave a tough time to the Britishers in guerilla warfare like that of Shjivaji against the Mughals. In this historic struggle, Lokanath Panda, gountia (land lord) of three villages was his principal adviser. Lokanath Panda was the gountia of three villages namely Rampella, Adhapada and Kumarbandh.

In 1861 due to the issue of Proclamation of Amnesty by Major Impey, the Dy. Commissioner of Sambalpur, rebels like Udant Sai and Dhruv Sai, both of them brothers of Surendra, surrendered on 7th January 1862 and subsequently Surendra Sai surrendered on 16th May 1862 on guarantee of "Life, Liberty, Free Pardon." But after the death of Major Impey in December, 1863 things changed rapidly. Major Cumberledge assumed charge of the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur on 19th January, 1864 and he was determined to make reversal of the conciliatory and lenient policy of his predecessor late Major Impey and to suppress the Sambalpur Rebellion by any means, foul or fair.

Lt. Col. J.G. Balmain, Commissioner, Chhattisgarh Division came down to Sambalpur from Raipur to personally supervise the execution of the secret plan to arrest Surendra Sai and his associates. The detailed plan was executed in a secret meeting held by Cumberledge with Captain Stewart, the D.I.G. of Police, and a list of persons to be apprehended by surprise attack was prepared. They were Surendra Sai; his brothers Udant, Dhruv and Medini, Khageswar Dao and his two brothers and, three councillors of Surendra Sai namely Lokanath Panda, Dharani Mishra and Sardhakar Mullick. Captain Stewart along-with five other

British officers, namely J.N. Berill, J.Walker, Lt. Rideout, Dr. Gross and Lt. Bowie along with Inspector Mohan Singh and a few trusted Sepoys marched stealthily after 10.00 p.m. along the bed of river Mahanadi and in the dead hour of the night surrounded the house of Surendra Sai at Bargaon village and captured him along-with his son Mitrabhanu and councillor Dharani Mishra. Dr.Gross rushed to Rampella to capture Lokanath Panda. Captain Stewart alongwith Lt. Rideout, Lt. Bowie, James Walker and Mohan Singh rushed to Talub situated at a distance of ten kms from Sambalpur the same night, where they apprehended Udant Sai, Medini Sai and four others. Lt. Rideout took the prisoners to Sambalpur and others left Talub at 4.25 a.m. riding sixteen kms through paddy fields, reached Tabla village at sunrise and arrested Dhruv Sai.

After capturing Surendra Sai at Bargaon. Cumberlege and Berill travelled a distance of forty kms in the same night, reached Bonda village at dawn and taking Khageswar Dao and his twobrothers Minketan and Mohun to surprise, arrested them.

In such treacherous way the Britishers arrested Surendra Sai and his close associates numbering fifteen who were sent to Raipur immediately after two days on 26th January, 1864, being escorted by a company of twenty foot soldiers and twenty Sepoys on horse back under the command of Lt. Rideout. Lokanath Panda was one among those fifteen state prisoners, whose age had been recorded as 55 during the time of arrest, the same age of Surendra Sai. As Surendra Sai was born in 1809 on the full moon day of Pausa, his friend and councillor Lokanath Panda might have taken birth the same year, 1809.

The arrested fifteen persons were tried before the Court of the Commissioner of Chhattisgarh Division, who was also a Sessions Judge. They were all sentenced to life imprisonment and transported for life, except four persons who were sentenced to seven years imprisonment each. But on appeal to the Court of the Judicial Commissioner John S.Campbell they all were honourably acquitted. In spite of the verdict of the Judicial Commissioner to set them free, Surendra Sai and six others namely, Udant Sai, Dhruv Sai, Mitrabhanu Sai, Khageswar Dao and Lokanath Panda were placed under personal restraint under Regulation III of 1818. In 1866, M.T. Pearson, the Advocate for Surendra Sai and others, filed a petition to release his clients in obedience to the order of the Judicial Commissioner. But the prayer was turned down by the Governor General.

All the seven rebels of Sambalpur Rebellion were first kept in confinement at Nagpur but later on in 1865 were removed to the Asirgarh Fort in Nimar district of Central Provinces and kept in a special building with liberty to movement inside the fort under police escort. Lokanath Panda along-with the two brothers of Surendra Sai, named Dhruv Sai and Medini Sai, and associates Mrutyunjaya Panigrahi. Jagabandhu Hota and Sardhakar Mullick were found guilty of the 2nd charge - "Abetting the preparation to wage war against the Queen during the months of December 1862 and January 1864 and previously thereto, under Section 109 and 123 of the Indian Penal Code; and also the 3rd charge - "Concealing the existence of a design to wage war against the Queen."

The Supreme Government recognized the necessity for keeping them in confinement as dangerous

political offenders. All of a sudden Lokanath Panda died in Asirgarh Fort in confinement in 1869. The Station Staff Officer of Asirgarh Fort in his letter No.1050 dated 20th September 1869 informed the Deputy Commissioner, Nimar that Lokanath Panda who had been detained in the Asirgarh Fort died suddenly of heart attack at 7.30 p.m on 19th September 1869. (This was intimated to the Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur by the Deputy Commissioner Nimar in his letter No.3011 dated September 1871, two years after the death of the Martyr) and Capt. Bowie, the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur conveyed the said news to Padmalochan Panda the adopted son of Lokanath Panda on 29th Sept. 1871.

Surendra Sai's fight against the British was in two phases. Much before the First War of Independence in 1857, Surendra protested against the illegal installation of Rani Mohan Kumari as a puppet ruler by the Britishers. His fight against such misrule started in 1827, till he was arrested and sent to Hazaribagh Jail of the British authority in 1840, where he was imprisoned till 1857 for long seventeen years. It is astonishing that although Sambalpur went under the British rule in 1849, how in 1840 the Britishers interfered in the affair of the Raja of Sambalpur kingdom, and took him as a state prisoner to a British prison instead of keeping him in the prison of the Raja.

Surendra Sai returned to Sambalpur in 1857. But during the time of his imprisonment in the Hazaribagh Jail from 1840-1857, his followers and close associates were actively preparing themselves for a war against the Britishers in the future. Therefore, when after the British authority took over the administration of Sambalpur in 1849, and increased the land revenue arbitrarily, the Brahmin landlords under the leadership of Lokanath Panda, Dharani Mishra, Mrutyunjay Panigrahi, Jagabandhu Hota, Padmanabh Guru and others met Dr. Cadenhead, the Principal Assistant Agent, Sambalpur twice in 1850 and appealed for redressal and reduction of land revenue.

Lokanath Panda was the Principal advisor of Surendra Sai during the second phase of historic struggle against the British from 1857- 1864. He was his "Mita" or "Maitra", the friend, philosopher and guide. Like Surendra Sai, he also suffered through-out his life for lending support to Surendra Sai. Noted historian Dr. N.K. Sahu writes about Lokanath Panda, "He was a notable rebel and was almost to be hanged in 1857 because of his rebellious activities." Through this article we pay tribute to this hitherto unknown martyr.

FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN UNDIVIDED KORAPUT DISTRICT

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Papadahandi Firing 1942

A landmark event, of course, was the firing at Papadahandi (Nawarangapur). The Police were on one side of the Turi river bridge and hundreds of people on the other side. The people were intent on capture of Papadahandi Police station. The Police warned the people to go back but the people refused to budge an inch. In the commotion of Police lathi charge, the tip of an axe of one man struck the right ear of A. Mutyalur, Sepoy no. 170. He fell down making a loud cry. Without knowing the real incident, the Police D.S. - I.K. Gaud in charge of the bridge ordered firing. A large number of people jumped into the river, 14 were seriously wounded, hundred were hurt, and importantly, 12 became martyrs. As many as 140 fighters were arrested and taken to Nawarangapur temporary jail and cases were instituted against them.

The Papadahandi firing remained a comparatively unknown incident till Sadasiva Tripathi, the Member of Orissa Legislative Assembly of Nawarangapur made five questions in 1946 to the Prime Minister Dr. Harekrushana Mahatab vide Assembly question no. 76. On the basis of the Report of the District Magistrate Koraput Mr. A.G Bunn (vide Letter no. 739/46cc) dated 6 Sep 1946 to the Home Department, Government of Orissa it was replied by the Prime Minister of Orissa :

- (a) The Government agreed that there was firing in Papadahandi in August 1942.
- (b) The following reasons necessitated the opening of a firing.

On 23.8.42 in reaction to appeals from local leaders including Madhab Pradhani, Bagsimini, a mob of mostly illiterate hillmen came various villages, with their rations for a few days and arms such as lathis, tangis, bows and arrow, and assembled at Gumadpadar. That night they aimed to start for Dabugam but rains prevented the march. Next morning they assembled at Chikili on Nowrangpur- Dabugaon road. The mob was further swelled; there also Madhab Pradhani addressed the mob. He asked the people there to show him that arms they had brought and the people apparently much to the satisfaction of their leaders, showed their arms which included tangis, lathis, bows and arrows and pick arms.

The march began and when the mob reached Papadahandi it was faced by an armed police party headed by the Circle Inspector of Police. The police party had been stationed for some time past at Papadahandi. Police outpost at Papadahandi was at the centre of the disturbed area. The party was moving to different threatened areas from Papadahandi and Papadahandi outpost building were also threatened. The Police Party paraded on the 23rd night on the road branching off from Nowrangpar-Dabugaon on main road to the O.P. buildings, to protect the buildings as the party had received information that on 23rd night, the

buildings would be attacked. On the 24th morning the party left for Dotikot village at some distance from Papadahandi and returned to Papadahandi at 12 noon.

On the way they received information from three different places that in course of that day the police station to all these places viz. Papadahandi, Mydalpur and Kondinga should be attacked. The party took their food and by 2 p.m. got information that a large mob had come very near Papadahandi on the main road. They at once got ready with loaded guns and came to the branch road. It looked from there as if the mob had left the main road and were marching to the O.P building through some paddy fields, but coming on little farther they found the mob proceeding on the road straight. They ran through a foot- path across the paddy field and joined the mob on the road.

The armed party headed by Subedar, Koibolyo Gouda, P.W.-18 ran ahead on the right side of the mob while the Circle Inspector, P.W.1's way was blocked. He mingled in the crowd and proceeded among them to the left side at some point, explaining matters to the people. The P.W.1 found himself in a drain to the left side of the road and could not get through the mob to the front to join the main force which had then taken its position in the front of the crowd. It is said that Subedar P.W.18 after coming to the front exhorted the mob to stop, but they did not. One of the mob hit him with a lathi, but he went inducing the people to go back. The mob however grew more violent and another person struck the constable PW/I of the armed party with a tangi on his head. The subedar then ordered and in all 38 rounds were fired.

(c) Sri Koibalya Gowda, Subedar of the Koraput APR as stated above ordered firing.

(d) 12 persons of the mob died on the spot. Their names were not known as their bodies were unidentified.

14 persons in all were wounded. Their names are:

- (1) Boli Omonaitho of Ghatguda
- (2) Anondo Goudo of Dukuguda
- (3) Balaram Gouda of Thurangi
- (4) Trilochan Bhothora of Narasingogida
- (5) DambaroSiwra of Bhoronpur
- (6) Nindi Sowra of Kongra
- (7) Hori Sowra of Bhoronpur
- (8) Krupa Haluva of Bhoronpar
- (9) Madhu Bhothora of Kontagam.
- (10) SunadharaBhothra of Userpodara
- (11) Moni Brothora of Kontagam

- (12) MoinuBrothora of Umeri
- (13) Modhubhothora of Turangia
- (14) Bhegleaubhothra of Montriguda.
- (e) 3 persons out of the wounded died in hospital.

I have the honour to be, sir

Your most obedient servant.

Sd/ A.G. Bunn

District Magistrate Koraput

Further for all the incidents between 13 and 24 August 1942, 92 were arrested and tried in the Court of Koraput Sub-Deputy Magistrate vide S.R. Case no. 72/42. They were sentenced to different terms of imprisonment on February 1943.

From August 1942-1943 about 500 people were interned in an unhygienic place. They were made naked or wore a piece of loin cloth which made them suffering from mosquito-bite, skin diseases and blood dysentery. Eight of them died in the jail. Many others died of Police lathi charge, some committed suicide fearing Police action. Some were kept starved for a week or so. The atrocities of the Police reached the noontide. The Hindustan standard¹ reported

The ugly story of blood curdling atrocities committed by the Police in Koraput District of Odisha during the troublous days of 1942 are, indeed, shocking.

The New Odisha² also reported In the District of Koraput during the historic day of August 1942 has come not a day too soon. Though Koraput District is generally taken to be closed mountains fortress, yet there can be no earthly reasons why three years should pass and scarcely anything be known to what really happened there in those hectic days.

The case of Laxman Nayak

The worst sufferers of British maladministration were the people of Tentuligumma and Sanagumma under Matili Police station of present Malkangiri District. The property of the people was looted, they were cruelly beaten and their women and daughters molested and raped. One Kesaba Patra was the perpetrator of all heinous crimes.

In August 1942 the Koraput District Congress Committee decided to launch a movement and inspire the tribal people³. They attacked Laksmipur, Mathili and Dasamantapura Police Stations. The Government took serious action with arrest, lathi charge and firing on 21st Aug. About 2000 persons under the leadership of Lakxmana Nayak of Tentuligumma made a public meeting at the weekly market of Mathili. The leader was arrested. The large crowd gheraoed the thana. The Police made lathi charge and firing in which six persons

were killed and 100 received injuries.

A case was made against Lakshman Nayak and 53 others for an alleged offence of murder of a forest-guard. On 13 November 1942 V. Ramanathan, ICS Additional Sessions Judge charged Laxmana and another Balaram Pujari was charged with Act.302 of Indian Penal Code and others for disturbing peace, loot and other offences. Of those 49 were sentenced to 9 years of rigorous imprisonment. Four of them were acquitted on appeal. Laksman Nayak was ordered to be hanged till death. Lakxman Nayak was hanged in Berhamapur Jail on 29 Aug. 1943.

The A.B. Patrika⁴ has reported that in Koraput District 25 persons died in firing, 2 persons including a boy of four years died in lathi charge, 50 died inside the jail and 32 persons were sentenced to transportation for life. Those persons were however released on 23rd April 1946, with the assumption of office by the Congress Ministry. Besides this, the courts imposed fines amounting to Rs. 11,200 out of which Rs. 9,371 was realised.

Some Eminent Freedom Fighters

Some of the eminent persons of the Freedom Movement from un-divided Koraput district are late Laxmi Chandra Dash, late Radhakrushna Biswasray, late Radha Mohan Sahu, late Harihara Mishra, late Mallu Santa. Late Mrs. Laxmi Panda even though was not a freedom fighter in India, she was a soldier in Indian National Army of Netaji Subash Bose in Burma (now Myanmar) at a very young age. A short description on these persons is given below.

Laxmi Chandra Das

Laxmi Chandra Das played a major role in the Congress Organisation of Koraput District. He moved through the nook and cranny of the inaccessible parts of Koraput in 1937 to spread the message of the Congress for freedom and, in the process covered about 700 miles. He organised meetings in the villages and asked the people to stand against bethi, gadam and other forms of exploitation of both the king and the British Government. His speeches profoundly influenced the people and they joined the Congress by their thousands. The courage he instilled in the hearts of the people showed in the Papadahandi Rising, 1942.

Laxmi Chandra Das took full responsibility of organising Individual Satyagraha in 1939. He was sentenced to imprisonment of one year while making a speech in a meeting. He was paving the ground and preparing the people for the ordeal of 1942. He successfully managed the Quit India Movement. Due to his efforts the largest numbers of Congress workers were made in Nawarangapur sub-division. Nawarangapur became the hub of the Congress activities. Even such important leaders like Radhakrushna Biswasray and Radhamohan Sahu took his advice and counsels. He got distributed pamphlets among the Congress workers and also the people. On the charge of destruction of two bridges at Jatabal and Saraguda he was accused and sentenced to imprisonment of two years and six months. He was kept behind the bars for a

long time during the 1942 Movement. His name was a terror to the British Government. He was not only a political fighter but also a social reformer. He was against Untouchability and wanted to abolish it. He was the first to take food in Muslims' houses. He also took food in the houses of the Adivasis and the Harijans.

The Report of F.F.P.Gill⁵, Superintendent of Police, Koraput district of 3rd March 1943 has given a succinct account of the freedom fighter Laxmi Chandra Das as follows :

Laxmi Chandra Das was a student of Jeypore H.E. Board school and discontinued his studies and took up Congress work. He was the Secretary of Nawarangapur Primary Congress Committee. This P.C.C. controls whole of the Nawarangapur Sub-division. He was also member of District Congress Committee and Provincial Congress Committee. He is most 'Dangerous'.

He was convicted with one R.I. and was fined Rs. 100 and i/d of 3 months R.I. (rigorous imprisonment) under D.I.Rules 38(5) for shouting antiwar slogan in 1941. After his release he pursued his former vocation and became more 'Aggressive'. He was responsible for most of Rebellious Activities of Nawarangapur Taluk during the 1942 Rebellion by his secret instigations, before he could be hunted out, arrested and convicted to 2 years R.I. for abetment of Dabugam P.S. case No.34/42 (Jatabal Bridge Cutting Case). He was also an abetor of the 'Papadahandi Firing Incident' (Maidalpur P.S. Case No. 55/42).

During 1942 Rebellion Laxmi Chandra Das slipped unnoticed and went into hiding in the interior, from where he instigated lawlessness and created considerable havoc. On 11-8-42 he went to interior to incite the hill people to rise against the Government in Rebellion. As a result of this all the interior communication in the north of Nawarangapur Taluk were paralysed for time, many roads and bridges were destroyed and attacks on Police Stations were staged and threatened. On 13.8.42 he visited Dabugam shandy and instigated to damage Soraguda Bridge and Jatabal Bridge and broke law. He is due for release from jail on 16-12-44.

Radhakrishna Biswasray⁶

Radhakrishna Biswasray was the one of the foremost the freedom fighters of Koraput region. Being inspired by the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi he left his Government service to join the National Movement. Gopanabdhuchoudhury advised him to work under Niranjana Patnaik, the most dedicated freedom fighter of Ganjam. He joined the Salt Satyagraha at Huma and was arrested at Berhampur. He was imprisoned in the Koraput jail without any trial from May to July 1930. With Dibakar Patnaik he was shifted to Central jail Vishakhapatnam where he met many top Congress leaders of India. The Gandhian philosophy got ingrained in his blood. He was released from jail after Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed.

Biswasray with his co-freedom fighters met Gandhiji at Vizianagaram. He started his work with Padayatra (walk on foot) all over the region from Gunupur to Motu and Umerkote to Pottangi. The Government was irritated by his activities and again he was arrested and sent to Rajmundry Jail where he remained till 20.12.1934. The National Congress Golden Jubilee meeting was held at Lucknow on 31.03.1936

and Biswasray attended this meeting. After his return the Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Indian National Congress was observed at Jeypore. During 1937-38 many Primary Congress Committees were constituted to popularise the activities of the Congress under his able leadership along with his two close associates Radha Mohan Sahu and Sadasiba Tripathy. In 1941 he was made President of Utkal Congress Committee. In the same year he participated in the Vani Satyagraha and was imprisoned in the Berhampur jail. As one of the top ranking leaders of Odisha he attended the Congress meeting at Bombay where Gandhiji announced the Mantra "Do or Die" on 09.08.1942 and started "Quit India Movement".

Harihar Mishra⁷

Harihar Misra was one of the great Odia revolutionaries of his time in the estate of Jeypore. He was born in 1886 in the Princely State of Boudh. He was an activist by birth. Although he was the eldest son of the royal priest he raised his voice against castism and rebelled against the tyranny of the Raja and his patron, the British Rulers. When the British Government issued a warrant of arrest, Harihar slipped out of Boudh in disguise. He had completed his school education and was also married by that time. He arrived at Kolkata to seek his fortune and worked as a cook in a Bengal family.

Then Harihar served under a renowned advocate who helped him in acquiring a legal practitioner's certificate. He stayed at Kolkata for about 12 years and then left for Cuttack where he met the top Odia leaders like Madhusudan Das, Krishna Chandra Gajapati and Gopabandhu Das who were in need of a young enthusiastic and efficient person to extend the activities of Utkal Samilani in the Estate of Jeypore. He reached Jeypore and with the help of a school teacher Gorachand Samantray he met the Maharaja of Jeypore Sri Vikram Dev Verma. With a short period of time he was accepted as a close associate. Under the able leadership of Harihar, the activities of Utkal Samilani reached the grass root level of the Estate.

Radha Mohan Sahu⁸

Radha Mohan Sahu, a dedicated leader of the Freedom Movement in Koraput was born at Jeypore town on the 4th October 1902. In 1934 he joined National Congress and took active part in this movement with Radhakrishna Biswasray and Sadasiva Tripathy. After the formation of the new State of Odisha in 1936 Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee was formed. Radha Mohan was appointed as Secretary of the District Congress Committee. He walked in the dense forest of this tribal region and propagated the message of Mahatma Gandhi. He organized village people against the oppression and atrocity by the Government officials and Sahukars.

He motivated people to boycott the foreign articles. Even the Bondas and Koyas of Malkangiri area started spinning and weaving Khadi. He formed Primary Congress committees in villages. Laxman Naik was very close to him. In 1939 Gandhiji started Satyagraha and campaigns that followed throughout India vehemently opposing the British Government. Radha Mohan was arrested for launching a campaign in Koraput region and was imprisoned in Berhampur jail from December 1940 to November 1941. Radha

Mohan was again arrested on 10th August 1942. After 3 years on 20th August 1945 he was released from Berhampur jail.

Laxmi Panda⁹

Laxmi (Indira) Rath was one of the youngest members of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose's India National Army. Laxmi Rath was born sometime in 1930 in Rangoon where her parents were engaged in the Railways. Her parents were residents of Jeypore of Koraput district and migrated to Burma to earn their livelihood. When the Japanese overran parts of Burma in 1942, British air bombardments became a daily routine. Both her parents were killed in a British air raid. The young Laxmi Rath and her even younger brother were orphaned. The determination to avenge the death of her parents made her go to the nearby I.N.A. (Indian National Army) Camp where she begged for enrolment. Laxmi was hardly fourteen years old, and was refused by the Camp commanders. However because of strong determination on the part of the young girl ultimately she was taken in the Rani Jhansi Regiment under Captain Lakshmi Sehgal. She was injured by shrapnel, the scars of which she still carried till her death. Laxmi was right by the side of Netaji up till the time he gave the call for disbandment of the I.N.A.

After the surrender of Singapore, the arrested members of the Indian National Army were classed as 'white', 'black', or 'grey' according to the perceived innocence or culpability of their motives. Laxmi Panda had been classified as white, meaning that she was a hardcore war criminal. Even the British Secret Service agents were baffled by this petite teenaged girl who had wielded .303 Lee Enfield rifles. They let her go free; as they did not arrest persons who were less than 16 years of age. Finding no one of her kin there in Burma, the young girl made her way back to Odisha, the home of her parents, a place that she had never seen, but only heard of. She married another I.N.A. veteran Khageswar Panda of Hinjilikatu of Ganjam district in 1951 and since then she was known as Laxmi Panda. The President of India conferred the Rashtriya Swatantra Sainik Samman (National Honour) on her on the 25th of September 2008. However she did not live long enough after that. Just two weeks later on the 7th October, 2008, she breathed her last. Laxmi Panda was given a State funeral by Government of Odisha.

Baga Pujari¹⁰

Baga Pujari was born in Bada Bherendi village in present Nawarangapur District. From 1937 the village became a Center of the Freedom Movement. For his leading role in the Quit India Movement of 1942 he was arrested and tried. He was sentenced to imprisonment for four months and fined Rs. 30 or an extra month of jail in the case of non payment of fine. He was kept in Nawarangapur jail for a week November 14 to 21 November and then shifted to Koraput jail. He became a victim of a severe disease due to the inhospitable condition and very substandard food of the jail and died on 2 October 1943.

Mallu Santa¹¹

Mallu Santa, one of the leading tribal leaders who joined the National Movement as a member of Indian

National Congress was born in 1922. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1939 and organized people in remote tribal areas to revolt against the British Rulers. He was imprisoned for 6 months in 1940 and again for 2 years in 1942 for taking active part in Freedom Movement.

Dullabh Hantal¹²

Dullabh was born in a tribe named as Konda Dora. The Konda Doras are said to be a section of the great Konda tribe. He belonged to a rich family. His father Sri Chaitanya Hantala by profession was a cultivator who maintained the traditional cultivation of ancestors and the tribe. The name of his mother was Dhane Hantala.

It was an afternoon, some of the British officers with policemen of Padua, Nandapur and Semiliguda police stations halted under a banyan tree near the field on the bank of a river. They let their horses drink water in the river. Young Dullabh was attracted towards horses and tried to ride one by sitting on the back of it. When the police people learnt the daring feat of the tribal youth they charged him with the lathi, humiliated him before the people, arrested him and sent to Padua Jail. After seven days of imprisonment he was released from the jail.

Such activities of the white people hurt his heart. After returning to his village Dullabh made discussions with his friends and came to know about the ruthless behavior of the officials of the British Government, the prevailing practices of the bethi and economic exploitation. All those created in him hatred towards the British. He took the leadership of his locality. He gathered the people and inspired them by asking, what legal or moral right did the British have to take away by force the hard-earned food grains or the domestic animals belonging to the villagers? He thought that they were the root of all troubles, the cause of their sufferings.

Dullabh made his mind to launch a revolt against those sorts of persecution. He wanted the tribal's to get rid of the superstitions deeply rooted in their customs. He tried to convince them that these customs and traditions had been cunningly designed by the oppressive ruling class. The villagers had to be infused with courage and organized in order to be able to protest. While going to different weekly markets (Hats). For his business, he convinced some of his friends about these questions. Among the friends the prominent were Bhagwan Khemundu of Nandapur and Mallu Saunta of in Potangi. All these activities of Dullabh drew the attention of the police. He was arrested and imprisoned by the Semiliguda police twice.

Radha Krishna Biswas Ray, the prominent Congress leader came to know that Dullabh was organizing activities in the areas of Sunabeda, Semiliguda, Nandapur, Dumuriput. Radha Krishna Biswas Ray came with such eminent people as Radha Mohan Sahu, Sadashiv Tripathy, Kapil Patro, Balabhadra Pujari to Dullabh who enquired about the National Movement and its programs launched by Mahatma Gandhi. Dullabh was attracted towards those activities. He thought that his long cherished desire to see independent India free from the British rule would be fulfilled and he jumped into the mainstream of the National Movement.

To promote and spread the Congress plans, he attended several meetings of the Congress held in different places in Koraput under the leadership of Gopabandhu Chaudhary a prominent Congress leader of Orissa, Dullabh made friendship with Lashman Nayak, Bhagwan Khemundu, Mallu Saunta, Dhanias Gadnayak, Biswanath Chaudhary, Amdur Galari, Ratha kumar, Prabhakara Patro, Kumudini Patro, Rama Chandra Nayak, Ballabha Khara, Madhu Pangji etc., to fight against inhuman practices like bonded labor and to free the mother country from shackles. He moved from one Hat to another with his friends and spread the message of Congress among the peoples.

Dullabh wholeheartedly supported Saheed Lakshman Nayak in his riots against the British authority. He participated in the Mathili firing of 21st day of August, 1942 in a Friday in the month of Shravan. He was inspired by the words of Lakshman i.e, "Brethren, Gandhi, the great, has given a call to us to make the British to quit India today. The old Raja of Jeypore is dead. Everything - the villages, forest and fields now belong to us. The practice of bonded labor and corvee no longer exists. There is now no tax for felling trees. We own this land's flora and fauna. The police stations, revenue office and all other various offices now belong to us". Dullabh was one among the participants of Papadahandi firings.

Dullabh fought for the cause of Koraput. He was one out of the three members nominated to the National Congress Committee, other two members were GaddharJhola and Nilakandha Sahu. He was well-versed with the ideology of the Bhoodan Movement of Vinobaji. By coming in contact with Gopabandhu Chaudhary Smt. Malati Devi, Smt. Ramadevi and Biswanath Chaudhary he took the leadership of the Movement in Nuaput area under Semiliguda police station. For all-round development of the district of Koraput he supported Sri Biju Pattnayak to establish the MIG factory at Sunabeda. He donated 30 acres of land at Sunabeda to Government for establish the Ashrama school and Sevaka Talim Kendra. He was a living symbol of selflessness. In 1969 he founded a local party named 'Bira Oriya' to fight for the cause of Harijans. Since the days of Gandhiji he had been fighting against untouchability. He was in favour of the entry of Harijans into the temple.

Dullabh's role in the Freedom Struggle, patriotism, fearlessness, sincerity of purpose won for him the Freedom Fighter's copper plate award from the Government of India on 15th August 1972.. The eventful carrier of Dullabh came to an end on 9th October 2000 at the age of 106 at his place of Sunabeda. He has justified the meaning of his name Dullabh- "a rare personality" of the District.

Sadasiv Tripathy¹³

Sadasiv Tripathy was a renowned Freedom Fighter of nawarangapur area. While he was a teacher at Jeypore he came in contact with R.K Biswasray and Radhamohan Sahu, the President and Secretary of Koraput District Congress Committee respectively. He became a Congree Member and started his political career in 1937. He was elected to Odisha Legislative Assembly in the newly formed Odisha State Provincial Government. He was a good organiser. He organised a camp of Congress workers numbering about 350 for their training for three months at Nuaput near Jeypore. He made Individual Satyagraha in 1941 and was arretted and jailed at Berhampur for one year. Again he joined in the Quit India Movement

on 11 September 1942. He was arrested and sentenced to three years imprisonment in Berhampur jail. When India became independent he was elected to Odisha Assembly consequetively four times in 1952, 1957, 1961 and 1967. He became a Minister for 12 years. He became Chief Minister for two years from 1975 to 1977. The Governor of Odisha M.C Bhandare has written (March 22, 2010)

Dr. Sadasiva Tripathy was an eminent freedom fighter who believed in transparency in administration and value based politics. As Chief Miister his significant contribution to the development of farmers and farm sectors and the marginalised will be ever remembered.

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Amco Simco: The other Jallianwala Bagh

Pragnya Patnaik

The day was 25 April 1929. The wounds of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre that took place on a similar day in April, twenty years ago were still fresh in the minds and hearts of Indians. No one even in their wildest dreams would have imagined that history would repeat itself, this time in the tribal belt of Sundergarh, a land about 1800 kilometers away from Amritsar. The massacre of unarmed tribals at the Amco Simco village in Sundergarh, Odisha remains one of the bloodiest episodes of the Indian freedom struggle. Sadly, not many are aware of this tale of unmatched bravery and heinous betrayal.

The erstwhile Gangpur state which is now a part of Sundergarh district had a large population from the Munda tribe. The Mundas and Oraons of the state were dissatisfied with the revenue system and revolted against the rulers. They protested against the Bethi and Begar system, according to which they had to render services to their Gountias, free of cost. They also protested to regain their Khuntkatti rights, a system where the tribals had the right to the land they cultivated. Initially the Mundas of Dahijira village stopped paying the rent. They also filed petitions before the viceroy against the unreasonable tax imposition. In due course the agitation spread throughout the Gangpur state. The tribals had found a leader in Nirmal Munda, a World War-I veteran and freedom fighter. In 1938 the Mundas started the no-rent campaign under the leadership of Nirmal.

It now became impossible for the state to collect taxes. To bring the uprising under control, arrest warrants were issued against the protestors. Nirmal Munda, became the prime target. Several initiatives were taken by the British officials to convince the people to pay the rent, but nothing seemed to be working. The queen of Gangpur Regent Rani Saheb, Janaki Ratna Devi, toured the kingdom, explaining the policies of the Darbar to the tribal people and persuading them to pay the rent. When the persuasive measures failed, the situation was dealt with more aggressively.

They decided that the rent and arrears had to be collected at any cost from the peasants. Lands were confiscated, cases were renewed, and new cases were filed against the locals. But the agitation under Nirmal Munda's leadership refused to die down. When nothing seemed to work, the queen approached the Political Agent at Sambalpur, and the duo hatched a plot to put an end to this revolt. A word was deliberately spread out about the viceroy accepting the demands of tribals. It was also declared that the queen would come to the Amco Simco village, to share this good news. The naive tribals found no reason to doubt their queen.

About 3000 tribal peasants had gathered at Amco Simco on that fateful day. Much to everyone's shock, the queen arrived with the Assistant Political Agent Lt. E. W. Marger and two platoons of police. They had come with an intention of arresting Nirmal Munda, their leader, and not for sharing any good news as they had informed. When the queen asked 'Who is Nirmal Munda?' people grew more and more suspicious. Several voices in the crowd went up claiming "I am Nirmal Munda," adding to the confusion of the forces. One Captain Bisco, entered Nirmal

Munda's house, hoping to find him there. But while trying to do so, his hat fell off due to the low height of the roof. Bisco mistook this for an attack by the Mundas following him, and ordered the troops to open fire.

According to official reports, 39 people were killed and 50 injured in the firing that lasted for about two to three minutes. But as per unofficial reports about 300 people were killed that fateful day. Several bodies were placed in military vehicles wrapped in tarpaulin, and thrown into the lime kiln of Bisra Stone lime factory at Biramitrapur. Others were given a mass burial at Brahmanmara in Biramitrapur. The Amco Simco incident put an end to this major tribal, agrarian uprising. The incident was brought to prominence by Dhananjaya Mohanty, a freedom fighter from the Gangpur state, who shared the news with Gandhi. Dayanand Satpathy, a freedom fighter from Sambalpur, wanted to visit the site but was stopped from entering the state. Jawaharlal Nehru and Pandit Lakshminarayan Mishra also wanted to visit Amco Simco, but they were denied by the Police. Nehru even wanted to start Satyagraha against the killings but was advised against the same by Mahatma Gandhi, who said it would be unwise to start the movement in a Garhjat state.

Nirmal Munda was arrested and sentenced to six years of imprisonment in Sambalpur and Sundergarh but was released on 15th August 1947. He was later elected to the second Odisha Legislative Assembly. Munda was accorded the status of a freedom fighter when the erstwhile Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi awarded him the Tamrapatra in 1972. Most martyrs of the incident are yet to be recognized as freedom fighters. The Odisha Government has accorded a tourist site status to Amco Simco. This saga of ultimate sacrifice however remains largely unknown to most in the country.

NIMAPADA A PLATFORM OF EXPERIMENT OF TRUE SATYAGRAH

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Nimapada witnessed a number of freedom movements starting from Paika Rebellion in 1917 to Quit India Movement in 1942. Nimapada is a small town situated in the centre of golden triangle - Sankha Kshetra Puri- Chakra Kshetra Bhubaneswar and Padma Kshetra Konark and rich in art, culture, agriculture & business. But it is famous for its unsung Satyagrahis who valiantly sacrificed their lives and property for the freedom of our motherland.

British occupied Odisha in 1803. But the defective land revenue system and administrative vagaries of British rule caused discontentment among the people. As a result, freedom struggle started in different parts of the province in the form of armed resistance, protest and rebellion against the alien authorities. The armed rebellion by the Paiks took place in 1817 under the leadership of Buxi Jagabandhu, the military Commander of the Raja of Khurda. While the rebellion started from Banapur and Khurda, it quickly spread to other parts of Odisha like Puri, Pipili, Nimapada Cuttack, and several remote villages, including Kanika, Kujang, and Pattamundai.

Under the leadership of Karunakar Sardar the Paika rebellion took shape in Nimapada. The Paikas attacked British symbols of power, blazed police stations, administrative offices, damaged postal and communication system during their march. However the British government captured some of the Paika leaders and some hid themselves in jungles. This was the only armed rebellion originated at Nimapada. After that the Nimapada was the field of experiment of true Satyagrah. Of course as the youngest revolutionary leader, Mohan Das burned British flag – Union Jack on the road in a big crowd for which he was arrested by British Police at the age of 18 years. It was probably the first projection of the war of Nimapada against the British rule.

Pandit Gopabandhu Dash started Bana Vidyalay – a kind of Open School at Sakhigopal in 1909 which was viewed as a revolutionary centre that worked against the authorities. It was considered to be a 'National School' as it infused its students with the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. Mohan Das, and Ghana Dash, the two revolutionary young men from Nimapada had chosen to be the students of Bana Vidyalay. Utkalamani Gopabandhu was a true Satyagrahi who was deeply influenced by ideology of Mahatma Gandhi. The inspiration Gandhiji drew from Gopabandhu Das and the confidence and optimism he displayed to attain Swaraj within a year after seeing Utkalmani's sacrifices and suffering for the cause of Swaraj testified to the remarkable saga of his selfless service to people, society and nation.

Gopabandhu Das' decision to survive only on rice and dal after the noncooperation movement stunned Mahatma Gandhi. When Gandhiji asked him "...whether this poor diet would not affect his health", Gopabandhu Das replied, "Should we not submit to this privation for the sake of Swaraj?" This kind of Sacrifice changed the mindset of all his students who studied in Bana Vidyalay. Heaping high praise on Utkalamani Gopabandhu Das, Mahatma Gandhi once said that "if there were 100 such people in the country, Swaraj would be certain over a period of one year".

Highly influenced by his Guru Pandit Gopabandhu, Mohand Das had thrown his Paita – the Sacred thread (which recognized him as a Bramhin), thrown his shoes and till the end of his life he walked with his necked feet. He even sacrificed all his money, gold ornaments of his wife, belongings under the lotus feet of Guru Gopabandhu and this resources was used for the relief work for the flood suffering people. He became a true Satyagrahi and led a number of peoples movement with the ideals of truth, nonviolence, peace and Sacrifice.

As Gandhiji said, Satyagraha is literally holding on to Truth and it means, therefore, Truth-force. Truth is soul or spirit. It is, therefore, known as soul force. It excludes the use of violence because man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth and, therefore, not competent to punish. The word was coined in South Africa to distinguish the non-violent resistance of the Indians of South Africa from the contemporary 'passive resistance' of the suffragettes and others. It is not conceived as a weapon of the weak.

Non Cooperation Movement, the first mass Satyagrah movement was started in year 1920 by Gandhi to boycott British rules and to implement Poorna Swaraj in India. It represented the beginning of a new chapter in the struggle for Indian independence. Mohan Das, Jagabandhu Singh, Krushna Chandra Ray, Gangadhar Mohanty, Banamali Das, Banchanidhi Sitha etc. of Nimapada joined the movement and the main thrust was to boycott cloth and other produce exported from England. Each one of them encountered several British brutality and had a story of sufferings. They were the protagonist of Satyagrah in Nimapada. Learning from the movement, Mohan Das started a Mukti Ashram at Keutatota to teach the people to practice Satyagrah in true spirit.

In 1921, in the Chakradharpur Utkal Sammilani Jagabandhu Singh of Nimapada proposed to pass a resolution for Utkal Sammilani to be merged in Indian National Congress so that INC can demand for Odisha to be declared as a special province on the basis of language. With the support of Gopabandhu Das the resolution was passed. As a result, first of its kind, Odisha took birth in 1936 as a Special province on the basis of language. This was a great success of Jagabandhu Singh and Gopabandhu during freedom struggle and a real gift to India.

In 1924-25, a majority of people of Singhbhum were Odia. So to make Singhbhum as part of Odisha province, Odisha Congress leaders decided Mohan Dash to take lead on behalf of National Congress in Singhbhum. So Mohan Dash, the youngest leader of Congress started teaching the people about the essence of Satyagrah and raised people's voice to be part of Odisha. Of course due to some conspiracy at national level Singhbhum became a part of Bihar province.

In 1925, Mohan Das of Nimapada took lead of labour movement at many places in Odisha especially in undivided Puri district. Civil Disobedience Movement started on 12th March 1930 when Gandhiji's disobeyed the salt law. Civil disobedience is the active, professed refusal of a [citizen](#) to obey certain [laws](#), demands, orders or commands of a [government](#). Under the leadership of Mohan Das a 60 k.m. long salt march was organized which started with thousands of Satyagrahis from Sakhigopal and reached at Kuhudi of Astarang via Nimapada, Charichhak and Kakatpur. During the march, hundreds of Satyagrahis were injured in British police lathi charge and many of them were arrested.

By its very nature, non-co-operation is even open to children of understanding and can be safely practiced by the masses. Civil Disobedience presupposes the habit of willing obedience to laws without fear of their sanctions. It can, therefore, be practiced only as a last resort and by a select few in the first instance at any

rate. Non-co-operation, too, like Civil Disobedience is a branch of Satyagraha which includes all non-violent resistance for the vindication of Truth. (Young India, 23-3-'21, p. 90). To include the children into Satyagrah, Mohan Das and Padma Charan Samantsinghar, the leader of Quit India Movement created Banarsena, the children Satyagrahis who fought against British police. Hundreds of adolescent children joined in the movement in Nimapada who were specially trained on the principle of Satyagrah and nonviolence. Their powers were used to keep coordination among the freedom fighters and to communicate messages on the movement. Even Mohan Das and Ghan Das, joined the movement as children. They used to visit from door to door to collect donations in cash and kind for the movement. This was an exemplary in Odisha, as a result at many places the Congress leaders started creating Banarsena.

Finally British government arrested the prominent Congress leaders like Mohan Das, Pandit Nilakanth Dash, Jagannath Rath, Krupasindhu Hota etc. as a result the Civil Disobedience movement was stopped in Odisha in June. Mohan Das was declared as a dangerous leader and was arrested by British police.

Peasant movement in Nimapada was an exemplary form of people's movement in Odisha. Thousands of farmers and agriculture labourers joined the movement demanding justice for the farmers. The Kisan Sabha movement started in Bihar under the leadership of Sahajanand Saraswati in order to mobilize peasants and generate their grievances against the Zamindari attacks on their occupancy rights, and thus sparking the farmers' movements in India. In 1934 Sahajanandji came to Odisha and started the movement. In early 1935 the Utkala Provincial Krushak Sangha was formed under the veteran leadership of Malati Choudhury, S. N. Dwivedy, Naba Krushna Choudhuri, Pranath Pattanaik, Bhagabati Panigrahi, Mohan Das etc.

Probably first of its kind, in 1935, Mohan Das called upon a Krusak Sabha at Keutatota of Nimapada where over 15000 Krushaks from different parts of Odisha participated. The eminent freedom fighter and poet Sachi Routray presided over the meeting. The Krusak Sabha was a grand success because they all reached Keutatota when there was no road transportation. They all listened silently to the prominent leaders like Mohan Das and others without any sound system which gives an idea of the power of Satyagrah in Nimapada. To train the farmers, labourers and common people, the essence of Satyagrah, Mohan Das started Mukti Ashram at Keutatota and continued his training till he was arrested during Quit India movement as a result the peasants were ready to fight for their rights and demand freedom from British rule and from the exploitation of Zamidars.

Sacrifice is the centre of Satyagrah which was the guiding principle of Satyagrahis of Nimapada. Jadumani Mishra, a farmer of Bhatbandha went to the movement on the call of Mohan Das leaving alone his sick daughter who was suffering from high fever. When he came back his daughter was died and was found in the funeral ground. Overwhelmed with Deshprem, he said, I could sacrifice all my children for the freedom of my motherland.

In 1940 the Individual Satyagrah was started to protest British's unilateral declaration that India joined the World War-II. Gandhiji said, this Satyagrah didn't aim to seek independence but to affirm the right of speech. The non-violence was set as the centerpiece of Individual Satyagraha. This was done by carefully selecting the Satyagrahis. At Nimapada, Mohan Das and Jadumani Mishra were arrested and were sent to Jail when they spoke against the war.

The Quit India Movement was launched at the Bombay session of the [All India Congress Committee](#) by

[Mahatma Gandhi](#) on 9th August 1942, demanding an end to [British rule in India](#). Gandhi made a call to 'Do or Die'. Gandhi called "An Orderly British Withdrawal" from India. Even though it was at war, Britain was prepared to act. Almost the entire leadership of the [Indian National Congress](#) was imprisoned without trial within hours of Gandhi's speech. The dangerous leader Mohan Das was arrested and Nimapada became leaderless. Hence all the freedom fighters trained by him approached Sulakhyana Mali Jema of Manijanga to dedicate her son Padma Charan Samantsinghar to take lead in Nimapada.

On Sept. 16, hundreds of Satyagrahis including Bhabani Pattanayak, Loknath Senapati, Baikuntha Senapati, Krushan Behera, Laxman Barik, Banchanidhi Sitha, Alekha Patra, Narahari Sahu marched towards Nimapada Police station and tried to convince police personnel to join Satyagrah movement. But British police started firing to the nonviolent Satyagrahis. When one took a bullet another spread his chest to take the bullet. Utchhab Mallik, a peasant Satyagrahi was shot dead. 20 Satyagrahis were injured by bullets and many of them were injured by police lathi. 35 of them were arrested and were put into the jail. The body of Utchhab was not handed over to his family rather it was grounded on the sea shore after postmortem. His body was eaten by the dogs on the next day. The injured Satyagrahis wrote Bande Matarm at hazat and all places of police station with their blood.

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