Preface

The spirit of Nationalism which was gaining ground in India found a sudden expression in the form of resistance to foreign authority in the second half of 19th Century. There was a mass struggle to unfurl the banner of independence and to herald a brighter tomorrow. Orissa had its quota of contribution to this national cause. While participating in the mass movements of the freedom struggle, the people of Orissa had to agitate for long years to establish their separate administrative and political identity. Cuttack, by virtue of being the metropolis of Orissa division had the privilege to dominate over and spearhead the political activities of the sub-state. As such Cuttack played a crucial role during the years of the struggle for freedom. It was a beehive of political activities and a radiating centre of the policies and programmes of the movement. When freedom came at-last, it continued to be the nerve centre of the state in all its varied sphere - social, cultural, political and economic. It was the leader, the path breaker in every sense of the term.

But till now no sincere work has been done by any scholar on this aspect of the History of Cuttack. The attempts made by Dr. H.K. Mahatab (History of the freedom Movement in Orissa), Jagannath Patnaik (Odisare Swadhinata Andolana), Kishore Mohan Patra (Orissa State Legislature and Freedom Struggle 1912 – 1947), have not placed in proper perspective the movement for freedom in Cuttack. Even the distinguished publication of "Cuttack one thousand years" edited by the Prof. K.S. Behera, Prof. Jagannath Patnaik, and Dr. H.C. Das do not deal exhaustively with the aspect
of the History of Cuttack. It is worth while to mention that such study in regional basis is being now taken up by different scholars.

Therefore an attempt has been made to bring to light the history of the freedom movement in Cuttack with the help of mostly original and unpublished records available in Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar, National Archives of India, New Delhi, Utkal Sahitya Samaj Library, Cuttack, Gopabandhu Library, Cuttack, National Library, Calcutta, and The Samaj and Prajatantra Library, Cuttack. The thesis has been enriched by first hand information on the period obtained through interview with the living freedom fighters of Orissa.

The British occupied Cuttack from a decadent Maratha power rather in an easy manner by the Treaty of Deogaon on 17th December 1803. There was no resistance worth the name and as if the Maratha handed over the coastal Orissa in a Golden Plate. After the occupation of Cuttack, while implementing their administrative policy they could not grasp the back ground of the peasant Militia as a section of the population of Orissa which had traditionally served in the Military and police forces in the Ganga and Gajapati dynasties, and with inadequate knowledge of peasants background the British began their experiments with land settlement as they had done in Bengal half a Century ago. Consequently, the first revolt against the British Orissa, the revolt of the peasants paiks of agriculturally a prosperous region around Khurda, has been discussed in the first chapter.
The second chapter deals with the growth of social and political consciousness in the later half of nineteenth century. Political consciousness was aroused in Cuttack partly due to the creation of a congenial atmosphere by the Missionary activities -- Spread of education, establishment of printing press, publication of periodicals, new trend in literature, and partly due to participation of Oriyas in the Congress activities, and agitation for the amalgamation of the Oriyas speaking tracts. And in each case Cuttack played no less important a role in preparing the ground for the growth of political consciousness in Orissa.

The Third Chapter deals with the formation of Utkal Union Conference under the aegis of Madhusudan Das, which identified itself with the hopes and aspiration of the Oriya speaking people. He made a firm bid to amalgamate Orissa comprising the whole length and breadth of Oriya Speaking regions. In the year 1903, the historic Utkal Sammilani was convened by Madhusudan. Among others it was attended by the native princes, lawyers, intellectuals and journalists. In this address to the conference, Madhusudan displayed a strong sense of patriotism by revealing the concealed glory of Orissan race.

In Nagpur session of Indian National Congress held in December 1920, the momentous resolution to launch the Non - Co-operation movement was adopted. A decision was also taken there to constitute a separate Congress Committee for Orissa. These historic session was attended by Gopabandhu Das, H.K. Mahatab, Jadumani Magaraj, Niranjan Pattnaik, Bhagirathi Mahapatra etc. all of them started from Cuttack. After their return, a decision
was taken regarding Non - Co-operation Movement and they appealed to the people to make this movement a tremendous success. Cuttack played no less eventful a role in the Non – Co-operation Movement and in the events following it. Their of course the curtain was not rung down on the role of Cuttack in the Non – Co-operation Movement. All these eventful movement have been dealt with in the fourth chapter.

The fifth chapter looks into the Civil Disobedience Movement in Cuttack that was tagged up with the whole of Orissa. The working committees of the Indian National Congress instructed all Provincial Congress Committees to protest vehemently against Salt Law. In the residence of Gopabandhu Chowdhury, a meeting of the members of the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee was held with Dr. Mahatab in chair. Some members expressed their opinion to join with Mahatma Gandhi in his Dandi March and not to do anything separately in Orissa. But Dr. Mahatab was known to have influenced the members to break the Salt Laws at Inchudi in the district of Balasore with Gopabandhu Chowdhury taking the lead. In this way as many as four batches of volunteers started from Cuttack and proceeded to Inchudi. Besides them some volunteers of other political associations like Louha Stambha Bahini of Cuttack and Patita Pabana Bahini of Puri proceeded from Cuttack to Inchudi. They brought salt from Inchudi and sold it in Cuttack market. In this way the echo of Civil Disobedience Movement spread from Cuttack to outlying Oriya speaking areas as well which had been politically integrated with other administrative units.
The sixth and final chapter goes with the Quit India Movement, Congress working Committee in its meeting at Wardha adopted the historic "Quit India Resolution" which initiated a new phase of the freedom struggle in the country. The British authorities made an elaborate plan to nip it in the bud. In the meantime the credit of the coalition ministry progressively declined. Such was a situation in Orissa before the outbreak of the historic August Rebellion 1942.

The Quit India Movement in Orissa started from Cuttack and immediately it took the shape of violence. The students of Ravenshaw College launched a strike, which was supported by the students of other institutions of the town. Some students set fire to the office room of the college and damaged the records and furniture. A few students were sent to jail. The students agitation in the town and other parts of the district lingered on for some time. In Jajpur and Kendrapara sub-division, violent activities took place in many areas. In this way Cuttack, playing a prominent role from 1903 – 1947 has glorified the history of Orissa and carved out a permanent niche in the historic edifice of the freedom movement. It has added a glorious feather to the cap of the movement.

For this work I depended upon the Original and mostly unpublished records available in the Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar & National Archives of India, New Delhi, I have also utilised relevant records and contemporary news papers in Utkal Sahitya Samaj Library, Cuttack,

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*Dilip Kumar Gour*