CHAPTER - III

Utkal Union Conference
and Madhusudan Das
In the later half of the 19th century the elite of Orissa had become politically quite conscious. They formed different political associations to spearhead their demands. The most prominent among them were the Utkal Sabha at Cuttack, the national Society at Balasore, and Utkal Hitaishini Samaj at Parlakhemundi. Under the auspicious of these associations, various questions relating to Socio-political, Economic and public interest were discussed.¹ The Indian National Congress fully supported and recognised their activities and requested them to send their representatives to the annual session of the congress.²

The earliest political association of them was the Utkal Sabha which was established on 16th August 1882 at Cuttack to spearhead the political activities of the people. The first meeting of the Utkal Sabha was held in the premises of Cuttack Printing Company and was presided over by Madhusudan Das.³

Madhusudan Das (1848-1934) -- A Short Biographical Sketch

The era of renaissance in Orissa was led by Madhusudan Das who was born in erstwhile landed aristocracy in Cuttack district. He was the first graduate, first post-graduate and first law graduate from Orissa. He was a distinguished lawyers, a literary figure, a celebrated, politician who made

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¹ Utkal Dipika, 20, January 1886
³ S.N Das, Deshaprana Madhusudan (in Oriya, Cuttack 1975), P. 161.
profound contribution in the field of journalism. He promoted industry in Orissa. He represented Orissa in Bengal Legislative Council as Minister of the Bihar – Orissa Government. Madhusudan Das's life history synchronised with the history of Orissa. He was duly conferred the title of “Utkala Gaurava” (Pride of Orissa) and also known as “Kula Briddha” (Grand old man), for his distinct contribution to Orissan public life and selfless dedication.4

For a student of history it is a misnomer to use the adjective “linguistic” with the term nationalism. Language itself constitutes a principal element of nationalism. However, "linguistic' may be added to Madhusudan's nationalism since he laid total emphasis on linguistic amalgamation of a people who were living in a State facing identity crisis. In his youth, Madhusudan witnessed the great historical incident of Italian Unification and German Unification. According to Madhusudan, language was a significant factor to bind the people cohesively. It provided basis for emotional integration. Culture developed organically with language Madhusudan was born in distinct historical circumstances in Orissa. He had to work hard in mobilising the issue of Orissan nationalism on a linguistic basis.5

Linguistic nationalism of Madhusudan was certainly parochial in Indian context since Orissa was a part and parcel of a greater and richer Aryan

4 B. Mahapatra, Madhusudan Das and his times (Unpublished thesis Sambalpur University), P. 36
5 N.K. Sahu & P.K. Mishra (ed.) Madhusudan Das, the legislature (Ranchi 1980), P. 116
nationalism. However, oneness of Aryan or Indian Culture did not reject
the local sentiments, tradition and language. According to Madhusudan,
Indian nationalism symbolised the values of every denomination. Indian
culture is rich because of its potentiality to absorb and assimilate different
heterogeneous tendencies. It provided a vast scope for free growth of
varieties of traditions and languages. Madhusudan recalled the great
contribution of the Orissans for enriching the Indian Culture.6

Before Punjab, Orissa was the last state to come under the spell of
East India Company in the year 1803. The people of Orissa did not bow their
head in cold blood. They valiantly fought against the alien misrule and tyranny
of the East India Company. This was explicit in “Paika Bidroha” under the
leadership of Baxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar and the mutiny led by Veer
Surendra Sai in Sambapur. Nineteenth Century was the period of distortion
and decline of Oriya speaking people. Orissa was consolidated for the first
time under the strong regime of Gajapati of Puri, where empire stretched from
Ganga to Godavari. Under British Rule, Orissa disintegrated to pieces.7
Sambalpur was included in Central Province. Ganjam was merged into
Madras Province. According to the then Government statistics though the
number of Oriya speaking people was not less than ten millions, this was
horizontally and vertically divide by the Company administration. Besides, the
administration assaulted every aspect of Orissan life – religious, cultural,

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economic and so on. British government did this because in their outlook, education and the standard of living, the Oriya people were by and large medieval.⁸

Madhusudan said that "Orissa was a colony of a colony". As a compared to the rest of the country, Orissan problems were bent upon to cause extinction of the Orissa culture and language. Bengali gentleman Bhatacharya went to the extent of writing a volume entitled "Oriya Ekta Bhasa Nae" (Oriya is not a language). He argued that a very small number of people used to speak in Oriya. In reply to this Madhusudan questioned if Dutch was not a recognised language of Europe. On the same ground the people of Bengal had been enjoying more advantage in the filed of administration. St. William Fort was the capital of the Central Government as well as the Bengal province.⁹ As a result Orissa was half a century back in comparison to its counterparts elsewhere in every aspect of life. Bengali apathy due to imperialism choked the imagination of the Oriya people.¹⁰

In 1895, the then Chief Commissioner of Sambalpur division, Sir A. Fraser, ordered that in place of Oriya Hindi must become the official language of Sambalpur division. In such a historical calamity Madhusudan came to the front to hold the beacon of linguistic nationalism in Orissa. He did not aim at

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⁹ Surendra Mohanty, Madhusudan Das, (New Delhi, 1978), P. 14
fighting with the fellow Bengalis, but wanted to prevent their unwanted onslaught and to assert the claim of Oriya speaking people to respectability. He put forth a demand before the British government for amalgamation of Oriya speaking areas within the framework of a single administration.

In his objective to fight the British, Madhusudan felt it necessary to get higher education in English. Only thus he could gain confidence to debate with his counterparts on equal footing. In a circumstance of financial hardship and local social intransigence against himself, left Calcutta. Several highly educated elites' eye-brows were raised against his activities. This, however, is the experience of every person who makes a novel bid. Earlier, Ram Mohan Roy had made similar effort and suffered a lot.

However, the phrases 'militant nationalism' and 'revivalism' may not be appropriately applied in case of Madhusudan who drew inspiration out of the glorious past of Orissa. He reminded the youths of the great heritage of Kharabela, Langula Narasingha Dev and other luminaries shining on the map of Orissan history. He advised the youth to build up the future of Orissa on the basis of the past. He was sure of the existence of rich potentiality of

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10 Surendra Mahanty, Op. Cit., P. 18
12 N.K. Das. Utkalagauraba Madhusudan, P. 60.
13 Two Bachelor of Arts. The Oriya Movement (Ganjam 1919), P. 15.
Orissan culture. Accordingly, his thought process was determined by his mother’s frequent reference to “Apana Mahata aperakhi” (keep your prestige yourself). At a time when the people were suffering an identity crisis, and inferiority complex, Madhusudan appealed to Orissan prestige.¹⁶

Madhusudan’s definition of Oriya was not parochial. Madhusudan said, “Irrespective of Hindu, Muslim and Christian and irrespective of language one speaks, one may be an Oriya, for whom this land is a cradle in his adolescence, land of duty in his youth, land of rest during old age and soil of eternal peace after death”. According to him, anybody who lived in Orissa and embraced her collective life is an Orissan. Madhusudan’s concept of linguistic nationalism did not exclude any minority community. In a conversation with Gauri Shankar Roy, he clarified his stand that it was better to say that Oriyas were for Orissa rather than to say Orissa for Oriyas.¹⁷

As the President of the “Utkal Sabha” Madhusudan was determined to elevate the Oriya language and literature, its art and culture on one hand and to amalgamate the Oriya speaking tracts on the other, corroborating the view of Madhusudan, Lord Curzon said in the British House of Lords that the natural entity of Orissa had been artificially disintegrated and the people were being forced to accept other languages. These arbitrary acts were criticised severely. Madhusudan believed that language was not only the means of

¹⁶ Ibid. P. 60.
communication, but it was the means of expression of a nation (Jaati). The voice of force of nation is silenced by exposing the people in a state of degeneration.\(^\text{18}\)

Madhusudan's claim was acclaimed by Lord Curzon, the then viceroy. Subsequently it found sympathetic consideration in the Montague Chelmsford Reform (1919) and Simon Commission Report (1927). Ultimately it materialised under the government of India Act, 1935. With effect from 1st April 1936, a separate Governor's Province of Orissa was established. Orissa was born as the first linguistic province. This was confirmed by the State Reorganisation Commission (1956) in independent India which organised the states on the basis of language.\(^\text{19}\)

In the third session of Indian National Congress held at Madras in the year 1887, Madhusudan put forth the cause of amalgamation of Orissa. He narrated the plight of the people who were put under different administrative units.\(^\text{20}\) But the matter was turned to deaf ears. True to his Indian spirit, Madhusudan persuaded his Orissan colleague Gauri Shankar Roy to merge the Utkal Sabha in Indian National Congress in view of a border national interest. Madhusudan's linguistic nationalism was propagated in consideration of a district problem Orissa was facing. His plea was not un-Indian, nor anti

\(^{18}\) Ibid. P. 188

\(^{19}\) Proceedings of Utkal Union Conference, 1903 – 1915.

- Bengali, nor based on any such feeling of animosity.\textsuperscript{21} He wanted to save Orissan people, its language and culture. To achieve this end, he had to oppose Bengali's stand in administration, their dominance over language factor and so on. At the same time he had cordial relations with prominent Bengali personalities like Surendranath Banerjee and Gangaram Mukherjee the father of great Ashutosh Mukherjee.\textsuperscript{22}

In 1927, Mahatma Gandhi supported Madhusudan's point when he wrote that the condition of Orissa was so much deteriorated that for him Orissa improved meant India improved.\textsuperscript{23}

In 1927, Madhusudan again repeated the cause of Orissa. Now again, the same drama of Madras Congress was enacted. The vested interests were determined to put aside his move altogether as if Madhusudan was going to secede from the mainstream of Indian national life. It was argued that the provincial or regional matters ought not to find support from the platform of the Indian National Congress. Madhusudan was disgusted with the attitude of Congress for Orissa's cause. Therefore, he decided to sever his relations from this organisation which he had nursed so lovingly in Orissa.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{22} S.N. Das. Op. Cit. P. 77
\textsuperscript{24} Utkal Dipika. 25.4.1903.
Madhusudan's dissociation from Congress did not detract him from the feeling of nationalism. He asked the famous poet Radhanath Roy to compose a poem for the inauguration of the Utkal Conference. During his conversation with the poet, he expressed his desire in these words: "I want the veneration of mother Orissa as if she is the incarnation of Mother India. Where is Utkal apart from India? Mother Orissa is Mother India in miniature. If we forget Mother India for the sake of Mother Utkal, it will not be conducive to our national life." Madhusudan found that there was nothing contradictory in holding the concept of Mother India simultaneously with the concept of Mother Utkal. When interrogated, he cited the example of Bankim Chandra's song "Vande Mataram", which had created the fervour of nationalism in Bengal, and simultaneously in the whole of India. So Madhusudan asked Radhanath Roy to compose one patriotic song in Sanskrit for the Conference, so that it could have all India appeal.  

Madhusudan could not become "Bharat Gaurav" because of the misrepresentation of his stand, though his contemporary in Bengal, Chittaranjan Das became, "Desh Bandhu". His ill-luck along with Orissa's linguistic basis. Had he not left Congress, he could have been its national President. Viewing from the viewpoint of impartial history, he had nothing to

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25 Ibid. 10.1.1903.
do with provincialism in a narrow sense. Madhusudan should not be accused of parochial linguistic nationalism.26

Utkal Sabha was Constituted by Choudhuri Kasinath Das, with Haji Muhammad Rahman Musa, Gouri Shankar Ray as first President and Secretary respectively. It emerged as the nucleus organisation of the subsequent political activities in Orissa.

**Utkal Sabha**

On 3 March 1886, a public meeting was held at Cuttack under the auspices of the Utkal Sabha which discussed the resolutions adopted by the congress in its first session at Bombay. The leading members also decided to petition the Government to introduce liberal reforms for reconstituting the legislative councils in order to bring the real representatives of the Indian people into those bodies.27 Utkal Sabha decided to send representatives regularly to the Indian National Congress. It's prominent representatives to attend the annual session of Indian National Congress were Madhusudan Das, Jagmohan Roy, Janki Nath Bose, Lal Bihari Ghosh, Samson Rout, Munshi Ekamra Ali, Nimai Charan Mitra and Gourishankar Ray.28 Not only Utkal Sabha was active in participating in the congress activities, but also

26 Ibid 12.8.1904
27 Utkal Dipika, 2, January 1904.
28 P. Mukherjee, History of Orissa in the 19th Century (Cuttack, 1964), P.P. 445-8
discussed current political issues of the country in its session and sent suggestions to Government on political matters.\(^2^9\) Thus a conducive atmosphere was created under the banner of Utkal Sabha to imbibe the spirit of nationalism among the Oriyas.\(^3^0\) Three factors directly were responsible for this.

1. Participation of Oriyas in the session of Indian National Congress.

2. Protest against the agitation of some Bengalis for the elimination of Oriya language.

3. Agitation for the amalgamation of the Oriya speaking tract with Orissa with a view to make it a separate province.\(^3^1\)

The Indian national Congress got more and more popular response and the people from all walks of life came forward to participate in the Congress movement.\(^3^2\) The delegates from Orissa during the first two decades of its existence mostly belonged to elite class people.\(^3^3\) It grew in strength gradually and generated anti-British awakening. Congress Movement in Orissa in early decades had no popular response nor the Oriya delegates

\(^2^9\) K.M. Patra, Orissa Sate Legislature & freedom Struggle (New Delhi 1979), P. 13.

\(^3^0\) Ibid, P.P. 14 - 16

\(^3^1\) S. Patnaik, Sambad Patraru Odisara Katha (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1966).

\(^3^2\) Nila Kantha Das, Nilakantha Granthavali Vol. I, (Oriya, Cuttack 1963 P.P. 41-42)
had independent political role in the congress.\textsuperscript{34} The main reasons was, the Congress was concerned more with national problem rather than regional one.

Congress movement did not respond to the aspiration of Oriyas living in various administrative units or Presidencies for their amalgamation, the Congress leaders of Orissa, especially Madhusudan and Gouri Shankar who were early Champions of the Congress became more concerned about the problems of Oriyas.\textsuperscript{35} Therefore Utkal Sabha did not consider it worthwhile to sent more representatives to the Congress Session. No Oriya delegates ever took part in the proceedings of the Congress, not even in December 1903 when the resolution opposing the exclusion was passed.\textsuperscript{36} Oriya delegates always remained silent spectators in the national Congregation.

Madhusudan Severed his connective with the congress.\textsuperscript{37}

Miss S. Das, adopted daughter of Madhusudan Das explains her father's reaction as follows:

"In 1902 my father and late Surendra Nath Banerjee had a great discussion about the difficult problems of Orissa, in the Grand Hotel Calcutta.

\textsuperscript{33} NAI, New Delhi, Proceedings of the Indian National Congress (Microfilmed, 1906) Rect., No. 4.
\textsuperscript{34} P. Sitaramaya, History of India National Congress, Vol I (Bombay, 1946), P. 43.
\textsuperscript{35} H.K. Mahatab, Freedom Movement in Orissa, Vol - IV, P. 75.
\textsuperscript{36} Utkal Dipika, 4 January, 1903"
My father wanted that the Indian National Congress should take up the question of Orissa, that the Oriya speaking tracts should be amalgamated as a province. But Surendra Nath was not in favour of taking up provincial question in Congress and therefore my father parted from the National Congress.\textsuperscript{38}

Members of other regions greatly outnumbered the Oriyas in the Congress organisation.\textsuperscript{39} After discussion with them, Madhusudan perhaps came to a conclusion that the Oriya amalgamation issue which meant loss of area and population to the adjoining provinces would not be looked upon with the sympathy by them.\textsuperscript{40} Oriya delegates argue:

"If the partition of Bengal was condemned on the basic of nationalist feeding, the same view should have uniformly applied to the unification of Oriya tract as well. The opposition of separation of Ganjam from Madras was according to them the result of the influence of anti-Oriya elements within the Congress.\textsuperscript{41}

Realising the failure of getting the Oriya problems solved through the National Congress, Madhusudan and a group of associates resolved to set up

\textsuperscript{37} Asha, 18 August 1904.
\textsuperscript{38} Proceedings of the Utkal Sammilani (1903 – 1915), P. 17.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid. P. 18.
\textsuperscript{40} N. Mahanty, Oriya Nationalism Quest for a United Orissa (1866 – 1936) (New Delhi 1982), P. 54.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid. P. 55.
a provincial forum and conducted their first successful experiments at Ganjam Conference in April 1903. The objective of this provincial forum was to fight against the anti Oriya language policy in different parts of Oriya speaking tract created a favourable atmosphere for a united struggle for the amalgamation of all Oriya speaking tracts. Since Ganjam Conference was an unprecedented success, Madhusudan organised a conference of the representatives of all oriya speaking people working in different provinces on December 30th, 1903 at Cuttack. It was the historic gathering of "Utkal Seminars" or Utkal union Conference.

The Utkal Union Conference under the aegis of Madhusudan Das identified itself with the hopes and aspiration of the Oriya speaking people. It provided the people with a platform and was by and large instrumental in arousing response from various groups in the society that strengthened the nationalistic movement. Being the undisputed leader of the Oriya movement, he gave a concrete shape to the idea of forming an association of the Oriya speaking people of Coastal Orissa, Western Orissa, princely states and other outlying region under the administration of Bengal, Madras and Central

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42 C. Mahapatra, Odisara Patra Patrika, P. 18.
43 H.K. Mahatab, Dasabarsara Odissa. (Oriya, Cuttack 1977)
44 P.K. Mishra, History of Orissa, Sambalpur 1990
province. So as to provide a common platform to the scattered race and foster close fraternity among its members.\footnote{P.K. Mishra, & Samal J.K., Comprehensive History and culture of Orissa, 1997. P. 228.}

Madhusudan was pained to find that Oriya did not have a political identity of her own. Such identity became the goal of his life.\footnote{P.K. Mishra, History of Orissa P. 310-11.} The year 1903, constitutes an important landmark in the annals of Orissa. The year witnessed a new development for unification of the Oriya speaking tracts under one administration known as Oriya 'Movement. The agitation started in this year was carried on for a long period of thirty three years until a separate province of Orissa was created in 1936. Thus the present Orissa as a territorial and political unit in the independent India owes its existence to the movement which was started in 1903 under the banner of Utkal Sammilani.\footnote{Utkal Dipika, 21 February 1903.}

Early in January 1903, a small group of enthusiastic Oriyas assembled in the town of Rambha on the shore of Chilika lake. Encouraged by the Raja of Khallikote they decided to establish the Gajam National Conference\footnote{Two Bachelor of Arts, The Oriya Movement (Ganjam, 1919) P. 20.} Its first meeting was held in April 1903 in the town of Berhampur and was presided over by Babu Shyam Sundar Rajguru. Many representatives from the Oriya speaking tracts in different provinces were invited to attend the meeting. Madhusudan Das, Biswanath Kar, Nanda Kishroe Bal, Fakir Mohan
Senapati, Ram Chandra Das, Loknath Vidyadhar, Gopabandhu Das etc. were the principal delegates from outside Ganjam. Such a gathering, assembling for the first time, gave expression to the common desire of the Oriya people to be amalgamated under a single administration. It prepared the ground for the meeting of a much bigger assembly of the Oriya people towards the end of the year and for the establishment of a permanent "National" Organisation to champion the cause of the people on this vital issue.\(^50\)

Soon after this session, the Utkal Sabha of Cuttack summoned a public meeting under the Chairmanship of Madhu Sudan Das in which it was decided to send a memorandum to the Governor General requesting him to unite the Oriya speaking areas under one administration or to create it into a Chief Commissionership. Madhusudan Das, Ramshankar Ray, Gokulananda Choudhury together with Rev Howells and Rev G.H. Whites were entrusted with drafting a memorandum to be submitted to the Governor General of India.

Madhusudan Das noticed in these meetings and other similar conferences, a basic identity with his views but he was doubtful if these congregation, so narrow in their scope would be able to translate his blue –

\(^{50}\) K.M. Patram Op. Cit. P. 197.
print of ideas into a concrete shape. He had actually envisaged a much wider forum embracing a large number of motivated people.\textsuperscript{51}

He, therefore, convened a meeting at the Kanika Courtyard on October 25, 1903\textsuperscript{52} at which it was decided to meet during the ensuring Christmas Vacation. December 30\textsuperscript{th} and 31 were the dates chosen unanimously. An executives committee was constituted with Raja of Kanika as President, Mr. Madhusudan Das as Secretary and Jayaram Das, Samsen Rout, Gopal Praharaj and Abhiram Bhanja as Joint Secretaries was formed to carry on the preparatory works for the conference.\textsuperscript{53} Finally the representatives of the Oriya speaking tracts of Ganjam, Sambalpur, Midnapore, and such other outlying territories met in a conference at Cuttac on 30 – 31 December 1903. It was presided over by Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanjadeo and was attended by a number of ruling princes, Zamidars and Government Servants from Balasore, Cuttack and Puri.\textsuperscript{54} The delegates from the outlying tracts number was 335. There were ten delegates from Midnapore, twenty five from Sambalpur and three hundred from Ganjam. It was a proof of the nascent spirit of national consciousness in the outlying tracts.\textsuperscript{55} It was the historic gathering of "Utkal Sammilani" or Utkawl Union Conference which

\textsuperscript{51} Nibedita Mahanty, Op. Cit. P. 53
\textsuperscript{53} Utkal Dipika. 31.10.1903.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid 2.1.1904
\textsuperscript{55} Purusottam Kar., India National Congress & Orissa, (Cuttack 1987). P. 52.
spearheaded the Oriya movement till the formation of a separate province in 1936.

The proceeding of the conference were conducted in Oriya. Thus, while welcoming all those domiciled in Orissa as members of the Utkal Union Conference, princes and the common men from all Oriya speaking tracts, officials and non-officials irrespective of their social status, at the inaugural session, it was made very clear that:

"Speakers will please note that all discussions on political and religious subjects and criticisms of the action of the government and government officials are strictly prohibited." 56

In his presidential address Sreeram Chandra Bhanja Deo, the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj made the objectives of the Utkal Union Conference quite clear. He emphatically spoke on the necessity of Union among Oriya speaking people and their educational, economic, industrial and social developments. He congratulated the people of Sambalpur for their victory on the language issue and the people of Ganjam for starting the Ganjam National Conference. 57

The main aim of the Conference was to spearhead the Oriya Movement for the amalgamation of the outlying Oriya tracts under one

56 Utkal Dipika, 2 January 1904.
Government. It discussed many Social, cultural, political and economical problems relating to the Oriyas and adopted six resolutions.\textsuperscript{58}

They were

1. That this conference, representing the people of the Oriya speaking tracts under the Bengal, Madras and the Central Provinces Governments, respectfully record their deep and sincere feelings of gratitude to his excellency, the Viceroy and Governor – General of India for his beneficent proposal for the administrative union of the whole Oriya speaking tracts and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the private secretary for communication to his excellency.

2. That the sincere thanks of this conference be conveyed to his honour the lieutenant Governor of Bengal for having restored the use of the Oriya language as the Court language in Sambalpur, while his honour was at the head of the Central provinces administration and that a copy of the resolution be communicated through the Private Secretary to his honour the lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

3. That this conference emphasises the desirability of fostering and strengthening friendly relations between the Utkaliyas and the other peoples and nations with whom they are in contact.

\textsuperscript{57} Proceeding of the U.U.C. Published in the Utkal Dipika, 2 January 1904; & Odia “O” Navasambad, 6 January 1904.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
4. That a Central committee consisting of some members be formed for the purpose of carefully educating public opinion concerning measures, which may be regarded as expedient for the introduction of salutary social reforms among the Utkaliyas in response to the need of the present times and that an account of the work done by the committee during the year be printed and laid before the Utkal Union Conference at their next annual sitting.

5. That this conference recognises the necessity of organised measures for the improvement of Oriya literature and language and with a view to that end appoint a standing Committee consisting of some gentlemen, who acting in co-operation with the Utkal Sahitya Samaj of Cuttack, will adopt measures calculated to secure the above mentioned object and that an account of the work done by standing committee during the year be printed and laid before Utkal Union Conference at their next annual sitting.

6. That with a view to the material improvement of the Utkaliyas, a Central Committee consisting of some gentlemen be formed for the purpose of improving agricultural and industrial condition of the Oriya speaking tracts and for utilising the natural products there of, and that steps be taken to have the Silponnati Sabha of Cuttack affiliated to this conference and that arrangements be made for holding an annual exhibition of agricultural, industrial and natural products in connection with this conference, and that an account of the work done by the
Central Committee during the year be printed and laid before the Utkal Union Conference at their next annual sitting.

It was also resolved to emphasise the necessity of fostering and strengthening the friendly relation between the Oriyas and the neighbouring peoples. A number of committees for implementing the resolutions were formed and they were to send their reports to the second session of the conference.

Depicting the picture of this conference the Amrit Bazar Patrika wrote:

"The most striking of these is that this is the first time that a large number of Indian Chiefs, Rajas, Zamidar and the gentry of an Indian province were found assembled together for the purpose of improving their material condition by mutual help. In Orissa, the princes were brought together with the aristocracy, the gentry and the poor. Not only do the princes and the people in the province speak the same language but they are all bound by the same ties of religion, custom, usages and associations. The whole movement was thus actuated by one feeling of nationality, its main object being to unite all the Oriya speaking people into one race".

59 Utkal Dipika, 10 January 1904.
60 Amrit Bazar Patrika, 9 January 1904.
61 Amrit Bazar Patrika, 9 January 1904.
From 1903 to 1920, the Utkal Union Conference held as many as sixteen sessions\(^{62}\) in different places of Oriya speaking tracts. Apart from several resolutions it formulated policies and constitution for the conference which speaks its aims and objectives.\(^{63}\)

(a) To establish unity and bring uniform progress of "Natural Orissa' the members will pledge to undertake that

I) Each district shall have District conference committee;

II) Membership of the district committee shall be opened to the native of the district and

III) Each member shall subscribe Rs. 3/- annually.

(b) District committee shall establish local committee at various places of the district to propagate and execute the aims and objectives of the conference, establish branch Committee and supervise their works and ventilate the grievances of the district before the authorities.

(c) The Executive Council of the conference had the following duties to do:

I) To execute the resolutions of the conference.

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\(^{62}\) Utkal Dipika, 14 March 1904.

\(^{63}\) Proceedings of the UUC (OSA) P. 14.
II) To discuss any law or circular meant for natural Orissa.

III) To place before the authorities, the problems and grievances pertaining to natural Orissa or any particular region;

IV) Improvement of Oriya literature and

V) To convene extra ordinary session of the conference and determines its venue.

Progress of the Utkal Union Conference

The First Session of the Utkal Union Conference was held on 30th and 31st of December at the IDGA ground at Cuttack with a wave of enthusiasm among the people of Oriya speaking areas. The ruling chiefs of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Thalcher, Dhenkanal, Athagarh, Madhupur, Khalikote, Kanika and Jeypur attended the conference. Maharaja of Mayurbhanj presided over the meeting.64

After the speech of the president it was agreed that the conference would meet annually. It was decided to adopt a pink turban as a symbol of the

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64 Oriya O Naba Sambad, 20 January, 1904.
Oriyas. A few patriotic songs were chosen to be sung at the beginning of every Utkal Union Conference.65

The speakers stressed on cordial and brotherly relation of Oriyas with others. The conference agreed to make proper arrangements so that deserving meritorious Oriya students could be sent abroad for receiving higher education and be provided with other facilities.66 Madhusudan Das, who played an impressive rolé in organising the conference was conferred with the title of CIE on the New Year's Day of 1904. The news created a feeling of joy throughout Orissa, particularly in the context of his leadership in the movement for amalgamation of the Oriya speaking tracts.67

The Second Session of the Utkal Union Conference was held at Cuttack on 28th December 1904 under Presidentship of Raja Madan Mohan Singh of Dharkot. Among others twenty delegates from Ganjam two hundred from Puri, twenty from Balasore, two from Midnapur and two from Kharsuan attended the meeting.68 Among the dignitaries and prominent persons were the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj and the Rajas of Madhupur, Kanika, Sukinda, Hindol, Keonjhar. In this session, interest towards the students was renewed

65 Ehi Sammilani Jati Prana Sindhu Koti Prana Bindu dhare Tora Prana bindu Misai de bhai dein padi sindhu nire N.K. Das, Madhusudan Odia Gita O Baktruta (Cuttack, 1936) P. 91.
and the conference demanded a Girl's School at Cuttack and pressed for a scholarship for B.Sc classes to be instituted in the memory of Samanta Chandra Sekhar. The "Young Utkal Association" which was formed simultaneously with the Utkal Union Conference for the interest of the students was declared a part of conference too. In the meantime much propaganda work was going on in different parts of Orissa and the common elite class got greatly influenced by the aim and objectives of the conference. Consequent upon the vigorous propaganda, 381 branches were established in Orissa, within just two years of its establishment.

Risley Circular

Only one year after the formation of the Utkal Union Conference, Government of India issued a circular which is known as Risley Circular. This circular issued in 1904 indicated some solution of the Oriya problems for the first time. The government of India announced that they were disposed to unite the whole of Oriya speaking people, both hill and plain under one administration. The Circular suggested to unite Oriya speaking tract of Sambalpur and the feudatory states of Kalahandi, Patna, Sonepur, Rairakhol, Bamra and the Ganjam district. Only after this circular, the district of Sambalpur and other Oriya feudatory states were included in Orissa Division.

69 Ibid
70 Purusottam Kar, Op. Cit. P. 64
71 Ibid
But Ganjam and Vizag Agency could not be included due to the objection of the Madras Government.\textsuperscript{73}

The Third Session of Utkal Sammilani was held at Balasore on 13, 14 April 1906 after the amalgamation of Sambalpur with Orissa division. The Conference was well attended by about 1500 delegates. A resolution thanking the government of India for the amalgamation of Sambalpur with Orissa division was passed in the meeting and the members hoped that Ganjam, Singhbhum and Midnapur would soon be included with Orissa. Deliberation in the meeting reiterated the development of agriculture and cottage industries.\textsuperscript{74}

It was decided to set up a committee to arrange free education and training for the children of weavers and farmers. Due emphasis was also given to set up an Engineering School at Cuttack for the spread of Technical Education in Orissa.\textsuperscript{75}

The Fourth Session of Utkal Sammilani was held in Berhampur in the same year December. The most significant of this conference was that for the first time the Sammilani was held in one of the outlying areas. The session was under the Presidentship of the Raja of Kanika and its Chairman was the Raja of Bokakhemidi. About 105 delegates from all over Orissa attended the

\textsuperscript{72} Utkal Dipika, 2.1.1905
\textsuperscript{74} Two Bachelors of Arts, The Oriya Movement P. 21.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid
conference. As was expected, it generated great excitement among the people of Ganjam and needless to say, it contributed to the intensification of activities of the amalgamation movement in Ganjam. The conference passed a resolution for the improvement of female education in the state, to establish unity among the entire Oriya population distributed over different provinces, and to work for the all round development of the Orielas. It came to notice that many branch associations had disappeared and many others were somehow plodding on without much action. It was felt that, unless some fund was raised and set aside for the propagation work and specific persons took charge of it, the Utkal Sammilani may collapse.

SWADESHI MOVEMENT IN CUTTACK

The Indian National Congress took a dramatic turn with the partition of Bengal. It was a challenge to the Bengali Nationalists. It produced a widespread discontent among the people which resulted in the emergence of Militant nationalism. It marked the beginning of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal which soon spread to the other part of the country too. The Swadeshi Movement aimed at boycotting British goods. Indians were required to use only indigenous or Swadeshi goods and as such Swadeshi and boycott were inter linked. On account of her close proximity to Bengal, the Swadeshi

76 Utka Dipika, 2nd February 1905
77 Ibid
78 Utka Dipika, 2nd January 1904.
Movement had its echo in different parts of Orissa. In response of partition agitation a big public meeting was held at Cuttack on August 20, 1905 under the Presidentship of Janakinath Bose. Biswanath Kar and others explained to the people the significance of Boycott and Swadeshi. Madhusudan Das toured the entire province and addressed huge meeting in order to propagate the message of Swadeshi. He gave a clarion call and urged the people of Orissa to boycott foreign goods especially the Manchester made cloth and Liverpool salt and take solemn vow to use Swadeshi goods only.

The Swadeshi ideas spread quickly to other parts of Orissa also. A large number of public meetings were organised in different parts of Cuttack and the people from all walks of life along with the Zamidar and advocates joined the meeting with great enthusiasm. Thus the Swadeshi Movement went on in full swing. Everywhere the student community joined the movement with great zeal. Agitators from Bengal came to Cuttack and encouraged the student of Orissa, gave an added impetus to the Movement. "Bande Matram" was adopted as the soul stirring slogan. Swadeshi ideas were also popularised by vernacular news papers. In Cuttack, 16th October,

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81 Ibid.
83 Ibid. 1910, P.P.. 322-3.
1905 was also observed as the day of solemn pledge and protest against partition plan. Utkal Union Conference, Raja, Maharaja, Zamidar and the people of well to do class of some part of Orissa encouraged and patronised these indigenous products whose use was regarded as a patriotic duty. The Swadeshi fervour inspired some chiefs of Orissa to instruct their family priest to use Molases instead of sugar in preparation of Bhogo and to garb the palace deities with handloom product.84

Being influenced by this movement and with a view of promoting the economic condition of Oriyas, Madhusudan Das founded the famous filigree work in the city of Cuttack. He also established a Tannery at Cuttack which of course was to be closed after some years for the loss it sustained. Madhusudan Das also created among the inhabitants of Orissa including Cuttack a great love for the hand made clothes. He made it so popular that people used to call any handloom cloth as "Madhubabu Luga" (Cloth).85

The address of extremist leader Bipin Ch. Pal, in Cuttack on Swadeshi and national education on 10th April, 1907 stirred the patriotic emotion of the people further.

Gopabandhu Das, inspired by the nationalist ideas made the bold venture in establishing an ideal school called Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya at

Sakhigopal on 12 August 1909. The institution rose to eminence when some brilliant luminaries like Pandit Nilakantha Das, Acharya Harihar Das, Pandit Godavarish Mishra and Pandit Krupasindhu Mishra came to serve being inspired by rare patriotic zeal. Satyabadi school under the leadership of Gopabandhu emerged as a symbol of "Nascent national spirit" of the province had enlightened many young mind in the province and helped to mould national consciousness to a great extent.

After the Surat split in 1907, the Swadeshi Movement lost its vigour. But very soon, the revolutionary impulses of many Patriotic Indians found expression in "revolutionary terrorism", which added a new dimension to the Indian national Movement.

Even after the failure of Swadeshi Movement the agitation for the creation of a separate state incorporating the outlying Oriya speaking territories continued with vigour under the banner of Utkal Sammilani.

The Fifth & Sixth Sessions of Utkal Sammilani were held in April in Puri in 1908 and in December again in Cuttack. In both the sessions emphasis was once more laid on female education, Growth of Technical education in Orissa and opening of law college at Cuttack. Sammilani thanked

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87 Ibid.
88 Amrit Bazar Patrika, 24th January 1909.
Madhusudan Das for his work in England for the cause of Oriyas. It also decided to set up a committee for the improvement of the condition of the people of famine stricken areas. The seventh session of the Utkal Sammilani was held on 30 – 31st December, 1910 at Cuttack under the presidentship of Raja Baikuntha Nath Dey. Here special gratitude was shown to Mr. Ravenshaw who had sent Rs. 1000/- for the education of the Oriya children. District committees were organised at Cuttack, Puri & Balasore. The conference devoted itself to advancement of Orissa in the spheres of education, trade, commerce and industries.  

**New Province of Bihar and Orissa – 1912**

After the partition of Bengal in 1905, there was a strong agitation against it throughout India with Calcutta as its centre. Calcutta was therefore not considered a safe place for the capital of India. The then Viceroy Lord Harding decided to shift the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. He wanted to separate Hindi and Oriya speaking people from Bengal along with it. This decision of Govt. of India was put into effect in 1912. Thus Bihar and Orissa province was formed in 1912. The Orissa division included in the new province comprised the district of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Sambalpur and Angul.  

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92 K.M. Patra, Orissa Under the East India Company (New Delhi, 1971) P. 290
Announcing the formation of the province of Bihar and Orissa, the Government of India observed that "Oriyas like Biharies have little in common with the Bengalis and we propose to leave Orissa with Bihar and Chhotanagpur. We believe that this arrangement will accord with popular sentiments in Orissa and will be welcomed to Bihar as presenting a sea board to the province" this decision however failed to satisfy the Oriya since it was apprehended that the interest of the Oriyas will not be safeguarded by Bihar. Besides, Oriya speaking people of Ganjam and Koraput were not included in Orissa division. Even if the British statesman expressed the opinion that there was no justification for joining Orissa with Bihar. It was an artificial union.

The amalgamation Movement intensified after the formation of Bihar and Orissa. It continued in full swing and meetings, resolutions, memorandums and addresses became a day to day affair. The claims of the Oriyas had been pressed by the Utkal union conference hereafter.

In April 1912 the Utkal Union Conference held its 8th Annual Session at Berhampur and resolved to make Ganjam the centre of national activity for the ensuing year. Among other resolutions the amalgamation question was given priority. On July 1912 a meeting was held at Cuttack under the

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93 P. Mukherjee, History of Orissa in the 19th Century, P. 421.
94 Ibid
95 Utkal Dipika, 18th September 1912
Presidentship of the Rajah of Kanika and it was decided to give separate representation in order to invite the attention of the Imperial Government. In 1913, a memorandum was presented to Lord Hardinge on his visit to Orissa. But the proposal to mention the question of amalgamation of the Oriya speaking areas was dropped from the memorandum at the direction of the Government.\textsuperscript{96}

The 9\textsuperscript{th} Session of the Utkal Union Conference met at Puri on 28 and 29 December 1913 with Madhusudan Das in the Chair. Nearly 100 delegates from Ganjam, Jeypore, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Balasore, Cuttack, feudatory states and from other Oriya-speaking areas attended the Conference.\textsuperscript{97} Besides the delegates, nearly 1500 people were present at the meeting. Among other proposals, the question of amalgamation of the Oriya speaking areas, introduction of Oriya language in the Court of Singhbhum, opening of an Engineering School and M.A and B.L. classes in Cuttack etc. were discussed. Government servants were asked to attend this conference as it was not a political gathering. The Oriyas of Calcutta, meeting in a conference, supported the resolutions of the Puri Session.\textsuperscript{98}

The Utkal Union Conference held its 10th Session at Parlakhimedi on 26 and 27 December 1914 with Sri Vikramdev Varma in the chair. The

\textsuperscript{96} Utkal Dipika, 2\textsuperscript{nd} March 1912.
\textsuperscript{97} Two Bachelors of Arts, The Oriya Movement P. 48
\textsuperscript{98} Asha, 9\textsuperscript{th} February 1914.
attendance was over 5,000. The Raja of Manjusa seconding the proposal for the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking areas said, "can you say that I am alive if you cut off my head and keep it at Ranchi, throw my trunk into the Bay of Bengal, and keep up my legs in the Madras hospital? This is the condition of our Utkal Mother who is lying dead being disfigured and separated from her body." This feeling and ideology influenced the people of Orissa tremendously. Gopabandhu as a young leader attended the conference and courageously asserted that Oriya speaking areas of Madras and Bengal should rather be amalgamated with the Central provinces and Berar and not with Bengal as suggested by Madhusudan Das, the veteran Oriya leader.

The conference held its 11th Session at Sambalpur on 27 and 28 December, 1915 with Laxminarayan Singh Deo, the Rajah of era of the Singhbhum district in the chair. Resolutions were adopted for the construction of the Khurda-Sambalpur Railway, separate University for the Oriya-speaking areas, introduction of Oriya in the states of Singhbhum, Phuljhaf, Padmapur and Chandrapur and representation of an Oriya member in the Imperial Council.

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99 Utkal Dipika, 23rd March 1914.
100 Asha, 25 May 1914.
101 Utkal Dipika, 12 April 1915
The Conference held its 12th Session at Balasore on 29 and 30 December 1916. In this conference the Rajah of Manjusa presided. The Executive Committee of the Conference appointed Ananta Mishra to preach the objects of this Session. A Committee of 7 members consisting of Madhusudan Das, the Rajah of Kanika, Harihar Panda, the Secretary of the Oriya Samaj, Ganjam, Braja Sundar Das, Gopabandhu Das, Sudam Charan Nayak and the Rajah of Sergaṛh was formed to work for the union of the Oriya-speaking areas throughout the year. The Oriya People's Association held its meetings at different places to voice the same demands. It also opened many branch organisations in the rural areas to create public opinion.\(^\text{102}\)

The Utkal Union Conference held its 13th Annual Session on 30 and 31 March 1918 at Cuttack with Fakir Mohan Senapati in the chair. A Standing Council of 65 members from Oriya-speaking areas was constituted to create public opinion. The Rajah of Kanika and Madhusudan Das were elected as its president and secretary respectively. A band of 52 national service volunteers were taken in and a National Fund was raised according to the decision of the Council.\(^\text{103}\)

Gopabandhu Das participated in the Conference with Acharya Harihar and chose to live with the student volunteers from the Satyabadi

\(^{102}\) Utkal Dipika, 31 January 1917
School. Pandit Nilakantha and Pandit Godavarish also remained with the students. They were members of the Subjects Committee. Gopabandhu's fiery speech in support of the resolution on the unification of the Oriya speaking regions stirred the audience. He sharply criticised the Government and asserted, "Many in India wait for the proposed reforms. Let us see if Government reforms or deforms (cheers). If there is no amalgamation of Oriya-speaking areas, whatever else may happen, I say, on my behalf, I shall have no more contact with the Government for the rest of my life." And he concluded his speech in moving tearful language which brought out his deep devotion to Mother Utkal. "Oh Utkal, my motherland: If the hope that I had cherished to see your beautiful shape with your head restored through the amalgamation of all the Oriya-speaking tracts is not realised in this life, I will sacrifice this humble life of mine in the worship of your headless and handless ugly figure." 

Then Gopabandhu was elected president of the next session of the Utkal Union Conference.

The Fourteenth Session of the Utkal Union Conference was held at Cuttack on 19 and 20 April 1919 with Pandit Gopabandhu Das in the chair. The amalgamation question was seriously discussed in the Conference.

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103 Proceeding of the UUC, P. 21.
105 Utkal Dipika, 7th October 1918.
Madhusudan Panigrahi, who proposed this resolution, insisted upon a vigorous agitation. He said that owing to the weakness and inactivity of the Oriyas, the Government had neglected them. Jagabandhu Singh who seconded this resolution called upon the Oriyas to sacrifice their life for the cause of the mother land. Sixty students of Satyabadi School along with some teachers participated in the Conference as Volunteers.¹⁰⁶

Gopabandhu wanted the foundation of nationalism to be truly laid through development of agriculture, industry, commerce, literature and education. He felt that all efforts at educating the people should be consolidated under a league. The Bhagabat Tungis should be revived. He valued education of women and he wanted them to be like Seeta and Savitri. "The problem of Language" he asserted 'is now a problem of life and death for us. It will of course be desirable to have one common language but so long as this has not been done, the Oriya cannot lose his individuality". Towards the end of his speech, he declared, "In a way this conference is the embodiment of our national spirit and manifestation of our national objectives. Its function is national development. Its principles are liberty, equality and fraternity and it is based on the foundation of self-sacrifice and religious faith. Its ideal is universality".

The 15th Annual Session of the Utkal Union Conference in December 1919 gave further strength to those who wanted to merge the provincial
organisation with the Indian National Congress. Chandra Sekhar Behera of Sambalpur, as president of this Session, supported Gopabandhu's stand at Puri. In this Session Gopabandhu's efforts also failed. Besides, the president of the Conference demanded the system of separate electorate for the Oriyas in the Imperial Legislative Council and the Legislative Council of Bengal Central Province, and Madras. This provision he insisted to continue until they were placed together under one administration.107

Gopabandhu the maker of Satyabadi epoch, tried to create a climate in favour of integration of Utkal Sammilani with the Congress by taking up the demand for a separate province of the Oriya-speaking regions with the national leaders and persuading Mahatma Gandhi to accept the idea of formation of provinces on the linguistic basis. A resolution on reorganisation of provinces on the linguistic basis was adopted at the Nagpur Session of the Congress attended by Gopabandhu. On return from Nagpur, Gopabandhu organised the Orissa provincial Congress Committee and with the approval of the National Leaders the Singhbhum District Congress Committee of Bihar became organisationally a branch of Orissa provincial Congress Committee.108

106 Utkal Dipika, 25th October 1918.
107 Asha, 28th April 1920.
108 Utkal Dipika, 2nd February 1920.
The 16th Session of the Utkal Union Conference held at Chakradharpur of Singhbhum District on the 30th December 1920 under the presidency of Sri Jagabandhu Singh. Due to Madhusudan Das's refusal Jagabandhu Singh of Puri was nominated as the President by the Reception Committee.

The Chakradharpur Session of the Utkal Union Conference was a personal triumph for Gopabandhu. The Satyabadi group succeeded in getting a Resolution passed to the effect that the Utkal Union Conference would adopt the Non-cooperation programme of the Congress and join the All-India Movement. The Movement launched by Madhusudan Das for the amalgamation of the Oriya speaking tracts was now suspended in favour of a mass movement for Swaraj led by the Satyabadi Group under Gopabandhu Das. Thus a new chapter in the history of the Freedom Movement in Orissa began and the age of moderation was over.