CHAPTER : II

THE ARCHITECTS OF THE SATYABADI EPOCH
Although Utkal occupied an honourable position in educational and cultural fields in ancient times, it did not make much headway during the Muslim, Maratha and English regimes. The main reasons for this are political instability in the country and lack of proper attention and encouragement for the all round development of the country.

The spread of Western education in Orissa in the second half of the 19th century facilitated the growth of the Oriya intelligentsia and ushered in a new age.\(^1\) The impact of the Western liberal education was gradually felt by the Oriyas after 1873, who now attended Schools in an increasing number.\(^2\) There was also another healthy trend. The Bengalis, who had domiciled in Orissa for long, identified themselves with the interest of the land of their adoption. Most of them kept away from the bitterness of the language controversy. In fact, some of them played a vital role in espousing the cause of the Oriya language and the Oriya community.\(^3\) Gouri Sankar Roy as a Journalist, Baikunthnath De as a Social worker, Ram Sankar Roy, and Radhanath Roy as writers ushered in an era of intellectual renaissance. There were other domiciled Bengalis too, such as Pyarimohan Acharya, Sitanath Roy, Dwarkanath Chakravarty, Nimai ballabh Vidyasagar and Krishna Prasad Choudhury. All these men constituted the emerging elite in Orissa.\(^4\)

To this new class belonged some English educated Oriyas too, such as Madhusudan Das, Gopal Ballabh Das, Govind Rath, Chaturbhuj Das, Nabin Chandra Sarangi, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Abhiram Bhanj, Nanda Kishore Bal, Biswanath Kar and Gopabandhu Das.\(^5\)
The associates of Gopabandhu Das constitute the Satyabadi Group. They are the real builders of the Satyabadi School and the architect of the Satyabadi Epoch. The gift of Satyabadi epoch to the renaissance in Orissa is inestimable. It has not only produced dedicated youngmen who have later adorned high positions in life but the teachers who had worked in this institution were also so much imbued up with nationalism, patriotism and flair for social service of Gopabandhu that they can be very well regarded as the Makers of modern Orissa.

The 'Big Five' amongst them, popularly known as Panchasakha or Five Comrades, were Pandit Gopabandhu Das, Pandit Nilakantha Das, Pandit Godavarish Mishra, Pandit Krupasindhu Mishra and Acharya Harihar Das. These five had constituted the core of the contemplated Universal Education League; but like the proverbial squirrel who gave its humble mite in building the bridge at Rameswaram for Sri Ramachandra of Ramayan fame, there were many others not as great as the big Five whose contributions for building up the Satyabadi School and through it, of Orissa are no less valuable. It is therefore necessary to have a little idea of the persons responsible for building up the Satyabadi tradition.

The elite class formed various socio-cultural associations in the districts of the Orissa Division, and in Ganjam district of the then Madras Presidency. Madhusudan Das, a brilliant lawyer with moderate political views provided leadership to the elite activities. He was the guide and 'Guru' of Pandit Gopabandhu Das, the founder of the Satyabadi epoch. He became the moving spirit in the public life of Orissa and the symbol of the new awakening. A man of great moral conviction, courage and strength of character, he was deeply influenced by
the philosophy of Edmund Burke and John Stuart Mill, besides the contemporary political movements in Italy and Germany which culminated in their unification. He was moved by the miseries of the Oriya people, who had for long suffered political injustice, economic backwardness and social stagnation. His training and temperament were suitable for a career of leadership which the emerging Oriya elite was looking for.

Madhusudan Das: The Pride of Orissa

Madhusudan Das, popularly known as Madhubabu or Madhu, Barrister was born on the 28th April, 1848 in an aristocratic family of the village Satyabhamapur of Cuttack district. His father Choudhury Raghunath Das was a legal practitioner by profession. His family had been reduced to poverty by the time of Madhusudan's birth. After passing the Entrance Examination from Cuttack High School in 1864, he served for sometime as an Assistant Teacher in the Balasore Zilla School and then as a Junior Clerk in the Registration Office.

At that time there was no college in Orissa. The nearest place where a man from Orissa could go for higher education was Calcutta which was not connected by railways. But Madhusudan Das was the first Oriya to obtain a Bachelor's degree in 1870 and a Master's degree in 1873 from the Calcutta University. During his study at Calcutta he embraced Christianity partly being influenced by missionary propaganda and partly with a view to receive missionary help for financing his education. He was also a private tutor to a boy who later became the Judge of the Calcutta High Court and the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University - the celebrated Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, who ever cherished veneration for the adorable personality of Madhusudan Das. Madhusudan took B. L. degree from the same University in
Madhusudan Das (1848 - 1934)
known as "the Grand Old man of Orissa" was the
Morning Star of Orissan Renaissance and an architect of modern Orissa
1878. He started legal practice in Calcutta. In 1881, Madhusudan returned to Cuttack and joined the Bar there and later he became the President of the Bar Library.

Madhusudan Das set himself to the task of organising public opinion by a strong association of like minded people. In this he was assisted by Gouri Sankar Roy, the renowned Editor of 'Utkal Dipika'. The two leaders converted the Utkal Sabha into a political Association in 1882.

In November 1885, during the visit of Sir Richard Thompson, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to Cuttack, Madhusudan presented him a memorial on behalf of the Orissa Association. The memorial contained a few demands of the Oriya people: extension of railways, spread of industries and industrial education, and amalgamation of Sambalpur and Ganjam districts with the Orissa Division.

On 17 November 1888, Madhusudan Das as President of the Orissa Association, placed before Sir Stewart Colvin Bayley, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, the grievances of Orissa in the form of an Address of Welcome. He suggested the amalgamation of all the Oriya-speaking tracts under the administration. Mr. Bayley dismissed the suggestion.

In 1903, Madhusudan Das founded the Utkal Union Conference. As a moderate politician like his contemporaries - Surendra Nath Banerjee and Gopal Krishna Gokhale - Madhusudan planned for waging a peaceful struggle through meetings, memorials and delegations for the unification of the Oriya-speaking tracts.

Another significant activity of Madhusudan was to organise an exhibition during the annual conferences. The exhibition had its high educative value, as several agricultural
products and manufactured articles were displayed there. Handloom for weaving, rice hauler, machines for tanning raw hides were exhibited to educate the public and develop in them an aptitude for mechanised industries.

The Utkal Sammilani or the Utkal Union Conference met annually and grew into a National Assembly of Oriyas under the personal care and guidance of Madhusudan. He spent money for this organisation. He drew the Zamindars and feudatory chiefs like Rajendra Narayan Bhanja Deo, the Raja of Kanika and Maharaja Shri Ram chandra Bhanja Deo of Mayurbhanj into the organisation. In 1907 Madhusudan went to England to convince the British rulers about the necessity of unification of the Oriya-speaking areas. Lord Curzon supported the cause of Oriya and consequently, Orissa was separated from Bengal and in 1912 the province of Bihar and Orissa was formed. But Madhusudan continued to carry on the Oriya Movement for the ultimate realisation of his mission.

Madhusudan was a brilliant parliamentarian. From 1896 to 1911, he was a Member of the Bengal Legislative Council for three consecutive terms. Thereafter he became a Member of Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council and Central Legislature for different terms. The welfare of the people was the sole motto of his life.

In 1913, he presided over the Ninth Session of the Utkal Union Conference held at Puri. Besides dealing with the problem of amalgamation of Oriya tracts, this Session demanded introduction of Oriya language in schools, courts and offices and establishment of an Engineering School in Orissa. In 1917 when Edwin Montague, the Secretary of State for India, came to
India to ascertain the political views of Indians, Madhusudan led a deputation and waited upon him. He demanded the merger of all Oriya-speaking areas in a Sub-province. In September 1918, Madhusudan presided over a Special Session of the Utkal Sammilani which was convened to review the Montague-Chelmsford Report. In his speech he demanded the creation of a separate state of Orissa. He criticised the British Government's policy of forcing Oriyas to remain in the province of Bihar and Orissa. He made the following comment in his presidential address in the Special Session: "The cow has no similarities with the tiger. The goat has no similarities with the cow. So the tiger and the goat can peacefully live together." In fact, the Oriyas had more differences with the Biharis than with the Bengalis.

In December, 1917, Madhusudan brought out a Weekly journal titled "The Oriya" for ventilating the grievances of the Oriyas. He told the people through this journal that it was vitally necessary to have economic independence before attaining political independence.

Under the Government of India Act 1919 Madhusudan became a Minister in charge of Local Self Government in the province of Bihar and Orissa, but resigned from the coveted office of Minister because of the Government's rejection of his proposal to work on an honorary basis.

Towards the end of 1918 Madhusudan retired from the Utkal Union Conference. But till the end of his life he continued to associate himself with the cause of Oriya nationalism. In 1928 he gave a memorandum to the Simon Commission for the amalgamation of the Oriya tracts. When the Orissa Boundary Committee arrived at Cuttack on 11 November 1931, Madhusudan even though an octogenarian by that time, received the Members
of this Committee at the Cuttack Railway Station early in the morning. He died on 4 February 1934, two years before the creation of the separate State of Orissa. Before his death the British Government had decided to give Orissa the status of a separate province, which was substantially due to his life long efforts.

Madhusudan was a pioneer among Oriyas in many fields. He was a pioneer nationalist in Orissa, a member of the Indian National Congress in the early phase. He dissociated himself from the National Congress as the Congress leaders like Surendra Nath Banerji did not allow him to raise the question of unification of Oriya tracts in its forum. While fighting for the cause of Orissa, he never lost the vision of mother India. He said in one of his speeches: "The mother Utkal (Orissa) is an incarnation of mother India. To do good to the mother Utkal is to do good to the mother India". Madhusudan was the pioneer of Industrialisation in Modern Orissa. He founded the Orissa Art Wares in 1897 and the Utkal Tannery in 1905. He was a staunch advocate of such social reforms as abolition of caste system and female education. He was selfless and honest in all his fibres. He himself wrote, "The chariot of the nation cannot move with self interest as the charioteer." He lived up to this ideal and died a poor man, even though he could have lived a princely life with the money he had earned.

Gopabandhu Das: The Jewel of Orissa

Pandit Gopabandhu Das, the founder of the Satyabadi School, was born in a small village 'Suando' in the Sakhigopal police station of district Puri situated on the banks of the holy river Bhargav which is at times considered as sacred as the Ganga in the north and the Godavari in the South, at sunrise
Gopabandhu Das (1877 - 1928) jewel of Utkal was a selfless leader and the father of nationalism in Orissa. He was the first and founder President of the Utkal Province Congress Committee.
The room at Suando where Gopabandhu was born
on Wednesday, the 9th October 1877. His father was Daitari Das and mother was Swarnamayee Devi. Gopabandhu came from a Brahmin family of Kaushika Genes. In the economic conditions of today, he may be classed as a poor man. The Brahmin community had been both conservative and progressive at the same time. They had a tendency to cling steadfastly to the old traditions at the same time because they constituted the top layer of the social hierarchy in Hindu society, they could afford to move courageously towards adoption of new ideas of life. Daitari was eager to see Gopabandhu educated on the new western model, but he could not tear himself away from the old traditions.

Gopabandhu on completion of his studies in the Upper Primary school was admitted to the Middle vernacular school at Rupdeipur situated at a distance of five miles from his village. Pandit Sadasiva Mishra of Bira Narasinghpur was the Head Pandit of the Rupdeipur Middle Vernacular School. On completion of his studies at Rupdeipur, Gopabandhu went over to Puri and joined the Puri Zilla School. While at Puri he was introduced to Sri Rama Chandra Das, a Muktar of Puri, whose love for the country and for the distressed humanity had infected the young and impressionable Gopabandhu.

In 1899 Gopabandhu after completing his Matriculation course joined the Ravenshaw College. During this period he had suffered much due to his father's death. Among his class-mates were Gopinath Das, Uma Charan Das, Tribikram Pujari and Haramohan Pattanaik, Suryamani Das and Jagabandhu Singh. After passing the B. A. examination he joined the Law and M.A. classes.

Association of Gopabandhu and Sashibhusan directed Gopabandhu's attention towards a new objective. Gopabandhu
realised that like members of the Bande Mataram Group in Bengal there should be a band of youngmen in Orissa who should put on saffron clothes like the members of the Ramkrishna Mission and go about the countryside spreading the message of Swadesi and revolution. Acharya Harihara Das, Pandit Nilakantha Das, Jagannath Mohapatra and Ananta Mishra had been in this group of mendicants for sometime. Braja Sundar Das was also in this group.

The proverb that 'Morning shows the day' has been amply proved in the life of Gopabandhu. While he was a student at Cuttack, the Utkal Sammilani was organised by Madhusudan Das, later well known as the Grand Oldman of Orissa. In 1903, Gopabandhu participated in the Utkal Sammilani at Parlakhimedi as a Student leader. On completion of his educational career, Gopabandhu was faced with a psychological conflict. But he was anxious to gain some experience of running an institution.

At first he began his service career as the Head Master at Nilagiri. In 1906, he left Nilagiri and set up his legal practice at Cuttack. Before Gopabandhu joined as Government Advocate at Baripada, he had his practice at Puri.

Love of mother land and literature (Oriya) was his passion since his School days. While he was a student in the Ravenshaw College, he formed the Central Young Utkal Association with the help of his friend Braja Sundar Das. This Association sent batches of volunteers to render service to the flood-affected people of Jajpur and Kendrapara areas in 1907.

It has been said that education was the first love of Gopabandhu. His whole outlook on this subject was of a different type. He was all the while conscious that without
spread of education in Orissa, Oriyas would not be able to stand on par with the people of other provinces of India.

Gopabandhu had no confidence in the British system of administration. He was worried to see that the youngmen of the country became luxurious, insolent and foreign-minded after getting modern education. He established the School at Satyabadi to bring about great change in the field of education. He also moved a resolution in the Bihar-Orissa Council to the effect that, open-air Schools should be set up and the Government should give recognition to such Schools. His thought provoking speech in this regard had drawn the attention of the scholars in India and England.

He was not merely the founder of the School in the conventional sense of the term, he was also the life and soul of its existence. In this noble institution he got the cooperation of his highly qualified and selfless associates - Pandit Nilakantha Das, Pandit Godavarish Mishra, Pandit Krupasindhu Mishra and Acharya Harihara Das. All of them joined this school as teachers giving up the lure of Government service. The teachers of this school dedicated themselves to build up their students into ideal citizens and to dispel social superstitions and prejudices from the surrounding villages which were mostly inhabited by the conservative Brahmins.

Eminent persons like Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, Sir Edward Gait, the Lt. Governor of Bihar and Orissa and Mahatma Gandhi visited this School and highly appreciated its educational system.

Gopabandhu is the ever-revered institution of the Oriya nation, an ever-flowing sacred stretch of water. His multifarious life can be judged from various point of view. He
can be characterised as a person devoted to public service, educationalist, political worker, leader, poet, editor, orator, one who reveals in sacrifice, legislator, lawyer, organiser, social reformer, affectionate person with great feelings and his life represents a glorious character in the annals of the Oriya nation. As a leader of the country Gopabandhu has given his well-thought out advice to the people of Orissa in the fields of social reform, literature, culture, religion and politics etc.

Gopabandhu felt the necessity of newspapers and journals for ventilating people's grievances as well as for educating them. From 1913 to 1919, he was editing the newspaper "Asha" which had been started at Berhampur, Ganjam by Sasibhusan Rath. In 1915 he brought out from the Satyabadi Press at Sakhigopal a monthly literary magazine entitled 'Satyabadi'. From this press in October 1919, he brought out a Weekly newspaper entitled the 'Samaja'. Explaining the objectives of this paper, Gopabandhu pointed out: "The 'Samaja' is published every week on Saturday from the Satyabadi Press. The situation of the country is discussed in it." The Samaja was subsequently published from Puri and finally from Cuttack. It became a daily newspaper in 1930. The Samaja played a very important role in spreading national consciousness among the people of Orissa. It continues to play an important role in the public life of Orissa till today.

He served as a Member of the Council for four years from 1917 to 1920 during which period he steadfastly fought for the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking areas lying scattered in the neighbouring Provinces. He pressed for permanent Flood control and Famine relief measures. He pleaded that the people in the
coastal areas should be given the right to manufacture salt free of duty for their own consumption. He wanted the Government to implement the principle of open-air education on the model of the Satyabadi School. His battle in the Legislature with Mr. Grunning, the then Commissioner of Orissa in March 1920 on the question of relief to the famine stricken people of Puri in 1919 and his systematic fight for permitting the people of the coastal area to manufacture salt free of duty form an epic story. About the revival of the Salt Industry in Orissa, Gopabandhu said in the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council on January 31, 1918:

"An experimental factory may be started over an area of 300 acres. It should be worked on Government monopoly system, which when found successful may be followed by other people to whom it may appeal as a private enterprise to work on the excise system. Private capitalists should, however, be encouraged from the beginning to undertake the work side by side with the Government factory, which may afterwards be leased out to private persons on such terms as may be then considered fair and necessary. By my suggestion of a Government factory I do not mean to establish the monopoly system. It should be only a small model factory to show to the private capitalists how the work ought to be done and managed economically and these private capitalists should be allowed to work on the excise system. As in many other fields of industry and agriculture, Government are working for the education of the people. I hope they will not hesitate to open the experimental factory which will in all probability have financial success besides its educational value."

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Members of The Famine Relief Committee, Puri, 1920
As a result of his endeavours, a Flood Enquiry Committee was appointed in 1922-23. Following the devastating flood in Orissa in 1928 another Flood Expert Committee was set up. The report of this committee led to the formation of other Expert Committee culminating in the construction of the Hirakud Dam. The people's Famine Relief Committee was formed with Gopabandhu as President and Sj. A. V. Thakkar as Secretary.

It was as a result of Gopabandhu's efforts in the Council as a legislator that M.A. classes in English and B. L. classes were started in the Ravenshaw College. An Engineering School at Cuttack and a Sanskrit College at Puri were established and provision for awarding free-studentship to the extent of 10% of the strength on the rolls in the schools and colleges was made. Pandit Gopabandhu was also a Member of the Senate and Syndicate of the Patna University.

Gopabandhu's role as a legislator was greatly valued even by his political opponents. He once declared on the floor of the Council, "I never urge any point of which I am not myself convinced; for I always believe that in public life as in all other spheres of activities, truth and sincerity are the only invincible forces which win." This truth and sincerity underlying all his statements appealed to all sections of the House.

One of the best tributes Gopabandhu received as a Parliamentarian was from Mr. Scott, Political Agent of the Orissa States and Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum. Once he told Gopabandhu, "Mr. Das, I have been in India for the last 17 years. I have heard the speeches of eminent Parliamentarians on the floor of the House of Commons, particularly I remember the speeches of Mr. A. J. Balfour one time Prime Minister of
England, and I can tell you, your speeches remind me of that greatman. As a Congressman you are now in the position of an enemy of British Imperialism, but I can tell you that we, European officers appreciate sincere and devoted patriots like you."

Since his student days Gopabandhu associated himself with the Utkal Union Conference which had been started in 1903 for bringing about the merger of the Oriya-speaking tracts. He presided over a meeting of the Utkal Union Conference at Cuttack in 1919. In 1919, there were great nationalist feelings all over the country because of the repressive Rowlatt Acts, Khilafat Movements and Jallianawalabag massacre. Gopabandhu wanted the Utkal Union Conference to identify itself with the mainstream of national consciousness. He told that the Utkal Union Conference was a part of India's National movement.

At the special Calcutta Session in September 1920, the Indian National Congress took a firm pledge for the attainment of Swaraj and adopted the policy of progressive Non-violent Non-cooperation. Gopabandhu Das and Jagabandhu Singh of Puri attended this Session, fully supporting the decision to launch the Non-cooperation Movement. Gopabandhu had formed a District Congress Committee at Puri.

As many as twenty-seven delegates including Gopabandhu attended the historic Congress Session at Nagpur in December 1920. Most of these delegates stayed at Chakradharpur to attend the 16th Annual Session of the Utkal Union Conference. This Session of the Utkal Union Conference was a personal triumph of 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. Thus a mass movement for Swaraj was led by the Satyabadi group under Gopabandhu Das.

According to Gandhi's programme of Non-cooperation Gopabandhu resigned from Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council. In pursuance of the decision of the Nagpur Congress for formation of the Provincial Congress Committee on linguistic basis, Gopabandhu organised the Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee, being himself the President. The 'Samaja' spread the message of non-cooperation through the nook and corner of Orissa. Gopabandhu founded Utkal Swarajya Sikshya Parishad for the promotion of National Education according to the programme of Non-cooperation. He converted his Satyabadi School into a National School. To maintain the national character of the Satyabadi School, Gopabandhu even spurned an offer of a grant of Rs.20,000/- by the Government.

At Gopabandhu's request Mahatma Gandhi visited Orissa in March 1921. Gopabandhu raised subscriptions for the 'Tilak Swaraj Fund' for building up the finances of the Congress. He tried to implement other items of Gandhi's constructive programme such as promotion of Khadar, village Panchayat and Prohibition.

On 13 August 1921, The 'Samaja' of which Gopabandhu was the Editor, published an article criticizing the police oppression upon a woman in the Begunia Police station of Puri district. The Government filed a criminal case against him, but Gopabandhu was honourably acquitted by the Court.

After this, Gopabandhu not only got himself associated with this agitation but also led this agitation in Orissa as its leader. In 1922, Gopabandhu published in the 'Samaja' the facts of atrocities committed on the people of Kanika and fixed
up his mind to make an enquiry into the atrocities. Gopabandhu was arrested at Puri on the 13th May, 1922. He was sentenced to two years imprisonment.

He was freed from the Jail in 1924. He was very much depressed to see the plight of the Satyabadi School. At this stage in the first session of All Orissa Provincial Conference held at Cuttack Dr. Prafulla Chandra Roy conferred upon him the title of 'Utkalmoni' (or Jewel of Orissa).

Gopabandhu got Mahatma Gandhi and Lalaji as his patrons in the last part of his life. He was determined with their help to take up the Charakha programme, flood relief, establishment of Bidhabashram, service to the untouchables and organisation of village (Grama Sangathan) etc. in Orissa.

The year 1925 saw one of the worst floods that ever visited the Puri district. When his son was lying seriously ill in a rented house at Puri, Gopabandhu was there by his side but at that time he received a report that some villages in the interior of the district had been affected by floods and immediate arrangements should be made for providing relief. At this Gopabandhu became ready to start for the affected area. But as the condition of his ailing son was causing anxiety, his friends and relatives advised him not to leave Puri. At this Gopabandhu said: "There are so many to look after him. What more can I do? But there are so many people crying for succor in the afflicted areas and it is my duty to go there. Lord Jagannath is here to take care of the boy." So saying he left for the flood affected area. Pandit Gopabandhu accompanied by Acharya Harihara and a number of volunteers moved from village to village wading through flood water and mud and at times by boat bringing relief to thousands of starving people. When
after some days he came back to Puri he learnt that his son had died two days earlier. This cruel blow snapped the link which tied him to his household and after this Gopabandhu literally spent himself in the service of the poor and the distressed. Then he organised a public meeting where he described miserable condition of the flood stricken people and appealed for generous help. The Mahant Maharaj of Emar Math, who presided over this meeting, donated a sum of two thousand rupees.

In 1926, the three districts of Puri, Cuttack, and Balasore were again affected by devastating floods. Gopabandhu was then spreading the message of Khadi and organising spinning and weaving centres in the district of Ganjam which had long reputation for handspun silk and cotton cloth. On receiving calls from the coastal districts, he returned to serve the affected people.

On the 12th August 1927, the Orissa Flood Relief Committee was formed at a public meeting held at Cuttack Town Hall. Gopabandhu was appointed as the General Secretary of the Committee. He himself moved from village to village supervising relief work and distributing food and clothing among the distressed people. Medicines were distributed among the sick and steps were taken for their treatment at many places. All these drew the sympathetic attention of the people all over India and contributions began to pour in for the relief work.

Gopabandhu's service in the cause of the flood and famine-affected people is unforgettable. At his instance late Rev. C. F. Andrews visited the flood-affected areas in 1925 along with A. B. Thakkar, popularly known as 'Thakkar Bapa'. Gopabandhu's friendship with Thakkar Bapa and Rev. C. F. Andrews
was so deep that in almost all the social and educational works he used to consult them.

C. F. Andrews, describing an event during the flood of 1925 in Orissa, records: "That night was a memorable one for me. Darkness had already come long before we had reached our destination and the night was so black that the boatman refused to go any further. We were nearly capsized again and again, while trying to make for the bank in the pitch dark night. At last we reached the shore and passed the night in a shed. We passed a restless night and went on again the next day Gopabandhu's endurance was quite inexhaustible. His pity for the villagers was a beautiful thing to witness. The little children, the poor women, the dumb cattle, all continually won his sympathy and love. He seemed never to be able to leave them. In character, he was, one of the most lovable and simple men I have ever known. He had absolutely no thought of self when he was helping or serving others. His whole spiritual strength quite evidently and plainly proceeded from his supreme devotion to God. Every morning and evening he kept his worship intact and said his prayers without a break, whatever was happening."  

On the 12th June 1928 the victory of the Satyagraha Movement of Sardar Vallabhai Patel was to be celebrated all over the country. Gopabandhu had earlier appealed to his countrymen through the 'Samaja' to hold processions and meetings on the occasion and collect funds in aid of the peasants of Bardoli. He had sent his workers to Puri to organise a meeting which he had planned to address. But his fever did not allow him to go to Puri.
In June 1928 Gopabandhu went to Calcutta being invited to work for the Naisa Vidyalaya (Night School) and Labour Union there. He fell seriously ill there. His illness continued and he returned. He dictated his last will regarding his family matters and the 'Samaja' on the 17th June afternoon and breathed his last at 7 o'clock in the evening of the same day. He was cremated in the Vakul Van near the Sakhigopal temple.

On the sad and premature death of Pandit Gopabandhu Das, Mahatma Gandhi made the following observation:

"Pandit Gopabandhu Das was one of the noblest among the sons of Orissa, the land of sorrows and tears. Gopabandhu Babu had given his all to Orissa. I heard of him and his sterling character and steadfastness when Sjt. Amritlal Thakkar was sent to Orissa in 1919 to distribute relief to the famine-stricken. Sjt. Thakkar used to write to me how Gopabandhu Babu braved inconvenience and disease in struggling to help the helpless. He gave up his practice and his membership of the Legislative Council during the Non-cooperation days and never wavered. What was more for him was to stake the existence of his dearest creation, the Satyabadi School. He braved the taunts of some of his closest friends and persisted to his eternal honour in what they considered to be his folly. His one ambition in life was to see dismembered Utkal united and happy. He had lately become a Member of Lala Lajpat Rai's Society and was planning to make Khadi an efficient vehicle for the economic relief of poverty and flood stricken Orissa. The country is the poorer for the death of Pandit Gopabandhu Das."

Born in an orthodox Brahmin family, Gopabandhu started life with basic comprehension of classical values of Indian civilisation. His knowledge of Sanskrit enabled him to
appreciate the Indian cultural heritage. Early in his life he was a regular student of Oriya Bhagabat of Shri Jagannath Das and later took to Gita as his spiritual companion. He was a devout Hindu and he had deep faith in the fundamental unity of Hindu culture and civilisation in spite of its diversities.

Gopabandhu denounced the social system based on inequality, injustice and exploitation of man by man. He was against untouchability and permanent degradation of a class in society. Of him, Dr. Mansinha writes, "A blue-bodied Brahmin, he had given up his caste-prejudices and fathered untouchable boys long before Gandhiji's Harijan Movement was even heard of. He always had a non-Brahmin for his cook." In the hostels of the Satyabadi School, the inmates, the children of the caste Hindus and untouchables, lived and dined together. Gopabandhu called for change in attitude towards 'the neglected castes' to accept them as equals and to work for their upliftment with love. He advocated equality of all men, championed the dignity of man, called for the establishment of society based on love and mutual respect.

In recognition of his spirit of social service, Gopabandhu was appointed as the Secretary of the Leper Asylum. He went about collecting funds for the improvement of the Asylum and himself liberally contributed money for the purpose. He was also nominated a Member of the Municipal Council and made one of the Members of the Board of Trustees of the Temple of Sakhigopal. The Brahmin Samiti Hostel, founded by his preceptor Ramachandra Das, became a centre of cultural activities of students under his direction. A gymnasium, and an orphanage were established by him.
In fact Pandit Gopabandhu was a simple and unpretentious personality. To lead a simple and controlled or restrained life was the speciality of his character. It will not be exaggerated to say that great patriots like him are rare in history. Faith in God was another trait of his character. Freedom of the country and service to the poor and down-trodden were the two goals of his life. Judged from all these aspects he was not only the friend or 'mani' of Orissa and India, but also of the whole world.

The late Pandit Gopabandhu Das of Orissa was literally a prince among men. He lives today in the hearts of the Oriya people. They cherish his memory with love and affection. He was the uncrowned king of Orissa.

**Pandit Nilakantha Das**

Pandit Nilakantha the thinker, poet, teacher, public leader and eminent freedom fighter - played an important role in the new awakening of modern Orissa. His life is as creative as a Mahakavya, as impressive as a 'Nitisashtra' and as thrilling as a fairy tale. Pandit Nilakantha was a leading scholar not only of Orissa but also of India as a whole.

Nilakantha was born on the 5th August, 1884 in Sriramchandrapur Sasan of Satyabadi Police Station of Puri district. He began his studies in the village chatsali. He was intelligent and possessed sharp memory power from his childhood. After completing his study in the village chatsali Nilakantha prosecuted his studies in the Middle Vernacular School in the village. But he had to leave his village at the age of fifteen. He got the Middle Vernacular scholarship of Rs.4/- per month from the Middle Vernacular School after securing first position in Orissa in 1899 and took admission in
Pandit Nilakantha Das
(1884-1967)
Puri Zilla School. At Puri Zilla School he was greatly influenced by the personality of his teacher Chandramohan Maharana. The force of determination can achieve anything - this thing he learnt from Chandramohan. But he had to go to Cuttack Collegiate School leaving Puri as his loss of health necessitated change of place. He passed the Entrance Examination from Cuttack Collegiate School. At Puri Godavarish became his first friend. There he also became acquainted with Gopabandhu. Because Gopabandhu was a student of Puri Zilla School. In the year when Nilakantha was admitted in Puri Zilla School, Gopabandhu left that institution for higher studies in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.

The National Movement and love for 'Swadeshi' were gradually gaining ground in that age. Much before the arrival of Gandhiji on the political scene of India, late Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das made propaganda on 'Swadeshi'. The Utkal Sammilani was convened at Cuttack in 1903. Nilakantha the young student was one of the spectators at this conference.

Young Nilakantha was inspired by the evolutionary history of the first Session of the Utkal Sammilani. Madhu Babu was then one of the top-ranking Congress leaders of Bengal. He thought that he would get the out-lying Oriya-speaking tracts merged with Orissa through the Congress. But this hope did not materialise. Madhusudan left the Congress and conceived the idea of a separate national movement for evolution of a full-fledged Orissa. This was what accounted for the formation of the Utkal Sammilani. The Utkal Sammilani assumed an important role in removing the dependence of poor and helpless Orissa. The charge of distributing the Prarthana Pustak (Prayer Book) at the conference of this sammilani was entrusted to Nilakantha.
As a visitor to this Sammilani Nilakantha has noted down the following: The illustrious ruler of Mayurbhanj Maharaja Ram Chandra Bhanja presided over the first session of this Sammilani. I was a mere spectator, so to say, at this Sammilani. I still remember the Maharaja delivering his presidential address. All the delegates wearing turban of rose colored cloth, the veritable choice of Madhu Babu were sitting in the meeting. The scene of Ram Narayan Mishra, M.A., B.L. of Sambalpur, Jugal Kishore Tripathy, M.A. of Singhbhum, Fakir Mohan Senapati of Balasore, Gouri Sankar Ray of Cuttack, Rajendra Narayan Bhanjadeo of Kanika, late Harihara Panda along with some Zamindars of Ganjam sitting on the dais is still dancing before my eyes. I cannot describe what feeling of Madhu Babu's quick movements, Ram Chandra Bhanja's impressive figure at the table aroused in me then. The memory of that feeling cannot be revived and retold today. The brisk activities of Gopabandhu in the company of Balukeswar Mishra still remain as a living memory. That new awakening of national life, though old now, has not lost its charisma in me as if it was my first initiation in life".35

Madhusudan convened a big public meeting at Puri in 1904. Nilakantha was first to sign the pledge for 'Swadeshi' when none came forward to sign this pledge at this meeting. To sign this pledge was a courageous deed at that time. People were hesitating to express their opinion freely for fear of the British Government. Almost all the commodities beginning from cloth to pin were being imported from foreign countries particularly from Great Britain. Different raw-materials were taken from our country to Great Britain at lower prices and various commodities manufactured in that country were imported
to India by the Britishers. This process adversely affected our economy. As a remedial measure, the far-sighted leaders of our land tried to mobilise the younger generation to sign the pledge of using 'Swadeshi' or indigenous goods or goods manufactured in our country. There was every possibility of a person coming under the evil-eye of the British Government if he signed this pledge. So the well-to-do people of the society were afraid to sign this pledge. Nilakantha had evinced his courage by signing this pledge. He took the vow from that day to use country-made cloth.

After his marriage in early 1905, Nilakantha went to Cuttack to appear at the Entrance Examination. Puri was then the cultural centre, but Cuttack was the centre of Oriya nationalism. The "Utkal Dipika" of Gouri Sankar and the "Utkal Sahitya" of Biswanath Kar were the living symbols of Oriya people's literature, social being and national feeling. It was the dawn of India's new awakening with this background of India's new awakening, the soul of Orissa was searching as if for a new identity. The Indian National Congress was trying to ensure coordination between the alien ruling Britishers and the intelligentsia of the country at the mental or intellectual level. The extremists were influenced by the Russo-Japanese war. India did not remain isolated from the rest of the world. The developing cities on the coastal belt of India not only worked as centres of trade and commerce but also as centres for exchange of ideas. With the end of the Sepoy mutiny or First War of Independence, Universities were being established at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras the impact of which was being felt in Orissa. In fact, the Ravenshaw College at Cuttack became the life-centre of Orissa for spread of modern education. So
Nilakantha was not altogether a stranger to the cultural life of Cuttack before coming to Cuttack Ravenshaw College for continuing F.A. in 1905. He became acquainted with many eminent persons including Gopabandhu, Brajasundar and others by attending the Utkal Sammilani in 1903 and through his service to the fellow ailing students in the collegiate school hostel.

Nilakantha passed the B. A. Examination in 1909 from Ravenshaw College and M. A. Examination in 1911 from the Calcutta University.

The Oriya students had to face a lot of difficulties while continuing M.A. at Calcutta. The 'Hindu Samaj' was formed at Calcutta during the studentship of Nilakantha with the cooperation of Godavarish. To flourish a moustache was a ban in the Oriya Brahmin society at this time. Nilakantha himself flourished a moustache violating the existing norm and this was obviously a step towards reformation movement.

Under the guidance and seasoned advice of Gopabandhu Das, Nilakantha chalked out his future course of action during his college days. Pandit Gopabandhu's thought assumed concrete form at the 'Smrutipith' of renowned Pandit Harihara. The Satyabadi School was founded on the Kumara Purnima Day in 1909. Nilakantha attended the foundation-laying ceremony of the School. After this, Nilakantha accepted teachership in this school and later went to Calcutta to continue M. A. and acquire knowledge to prove himself as a worthy teacher of this institution.

The Satyabadi School and the life of Nilakantha were woven in a single thread. This was the first seat of Sadhana for Nilakantha. Nilakantha joined the Satyabadi School as a teacher in October 1911. He came as if to sincerely pour down
the liveliness and all the experience of an active life at Calcutta - the then capital of the country - and the power of knowledge of the modern liberal moral education into a great ideal institution that sprang up in the sylvan atmosphere of the rural area. He accepted the job with a monthly emolument of Rs.40/- only.

Nilakantha Das was the Head Master and simultaneously the Hostel in-charge of the School. The direct responsibility of the School devolved on Nilakantha. Nilakantha was like a big tree in the Satyabadi Vana Vihar. He assumed the responsibility of teaching almost all subjects in the higher classes. He used to fix up the programmes of the school. He had the tenderness of the teacher and firmness of an administrator and everybody felt the firmness of his administration. He did not spare respectable teachers older than him if their dereliction of duty came to his notice. He paid sharp attention towards the moral development of the students and the teachers of the school. In order to boost up the knowledge of the students he introduced the system of 'Class Library' in the School.

Pandit Rama Ballav Mishra, the then District Magistrate of Puri, who was pleased to visit the school on the 24th April 1912 shortly after the school was destroyed by fire observed: "I was pleased to notice the spirit of self-help among the executive of the school. The classes are now being held under the shade of the trees near the school house and the work of teaching is going on as if nothing has happened. The institution is a refreshing example of self-sacrifice on the part of the Superintendent (Babu Nilakantha Das ) and his Assistants and fully deserves support and encouragement."
Pandit Nilakantha was a famous teacher. He was also a great Social reformer. Dr. Natabara Samantray has rightly described him, "The main aim of Nilakanth's reformist agitation was eradication of many - a man made evil from the society and to a healthy ideal social life instead." Pandit Nilakantha led a "Moustache rebellion" in which bands of Brahmin boys went about sporting moustache in protest against the caste rigidities. This was the beginning of his social reformation movement in Orissa.

Pandit Nilakantha occupies a high position in Indian politics. In 1921, he gave up his Lectureship under Calcutta University being influenced by Gandhiji's non-cooperation Movement. In 1922, he was arrested for this. He invited Gandhiji to Satyabadi in 1923 being advised by Gopabandhu and accompanied Gandhiji in his 'Padayatra'. In 1923, he was lodged in Hazaribag Jail along with eminent leaders like Acharya J. B. Kripalani and Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

On January 9, 1924 Nilakantha was elected as a Member to the Central Assembly. Nilakanth's clear views in the Central Assembly on Railway Budget, Finance Bill, Salt Policy, Public Security Act, and import of Railway sleeper from Great Britain can be traced to the period from 1924-1929.

It was high-lighted in the Famine Commission Report in connection with the Naanka Famine in Orissa in 1866 that the landless farmers who used to earn a living by producing salt were in utter distress due to Government's monopoly in Salt trade. The speech of Nilakantha on Salt trade was so lengthy that eventually he had to cut short his speech. The result was that the Government did not take any policy decision to give permission to any private company for salt-production. Finance
Secretary Sir George Schuster said, "I was just coming to that, I was going to say, that if the Honourable Pandit himself or anybody else liked to apply for facilities to be given to erect a factory, the Government would give him every encouragement."

Another main problem was that of Dadan-labourers. The labourers used to go to the Tea gardens of Assam as coolies being persuaded by Coolie sardars. The Sardars used to make these labourers way-ward by getting them addicted to Ganja and other narcotics. These labourers were returning to their native places in broken health and in dying condition. Panditji or Nilakantha gave the call for efforts to be made at all levels for ameliorating the plight of these labourers. He was also personally looking to the problem of the Oriya workers engaged in Tata Company and other firms at Calcutta etc.

Nilakantha devoted his life to the service of the country. He was for a while the General Secretary of the Swaraj Party in the Assembly when Pandit Motilal Nehru was its leader. He was for two terms the President of the Orissa Provincial Congress Committee. He moved a Non-Government Bill on February 8, 1927 for Unification of all the Oriya-speaking out-lying tracts of Orissa and this Bill was accepted and paved the way for creation of a new separate Orissa Province.

Soon after the demise of Gopabandhu in 1928 Nilakantha started "Gopabandhu Seva Samiti" at Sakhigopal and continued his work. In 1933-1934 Pandit Nilakantha set up the "Naba Bharat Press" and had permanent site at Cuttack. He became the President of the Utkal Congress Committee in 1935-1936. Pandit Nilakantha had set up 37 Congress candidates in the first election to the Orissa Assembly by his own efforts and the
Congress was victorious at 36 places excepting Dharmasala of Cuttack district.

Pandit Nilakantha was elected to the Pradesh Congress Committee in 1939 and became its President. Because of petty cliques in the Congress he left it in disgust in 1940 and organised a Coalition Government with the Muslim League in 1941; but he himself did not accept office as a Minister. He opted to continue as an Honorary National War Front Leader for Orissa. He formed the Independent People's Party in 1951 and got himself elected to Orissa Assembly with three other colleagues and became their leader. It was a unique achievement that a party formed a few months before the election of 1952 had cent percent success in the election. His perorations in the Assembly were piercing as well as informative. He was persuaded to come back to the Congress fold as an elder statesman in 1956, was elected to the Assembly unopposed in 1957, was installed as Speaker of the Orissa Legislative Assembly.

He was in fact a genius. He has written a large number of books which testify to his insight, wisdom and scholarship. He was awarded 'Padma Bhusan' in 1960 in recognition of his services to the country and he had contribution for establishment of the Utkal University in 1943. Pandit Nilakantha was selected at the Utkal University Senate meeting as the Vice-Chancellor of the University twelve years later in August 1955. He remained in this capacity for long seven years. He has taken notable steps for spread of education in Orissa in his capacity as Vice-chancellor of the Utkal University.

Although he was an M.A. in Philosophy from the Calcutta University, yet he was invited by the then Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University Sir Asutosh Mukherjee to teach Oriya as
the Professor of Oriya in that University due to his erudite scholarship. He was the lively source of the Oriya literature. He died on 16th November 1967 after enriching Oriya literature by his contributions.

**Pandit Godavarish Mishra**

Godavarish Mishra was the most handsome of all the leaders in Orissa. He had impressive personality and charming manners. In early career, he was in the habit of donning European dress and living his life in European style. He was elegant in his dress, food and habits and was a bitter enemy of Shabbiness in dress, manners and conduct. His trait of character made him adorable in certain circles and contemptible in other circles. He was a life of paradoxes and he died as a disappointed man, wronged by persons, whom he had in his simplicity of faith built up from the scratch.

He was a much younger man than his friends Nilakantha, Gopabandhu and Harihara. He was born in 1885 in a poor family at Banpur and had spent his days in great adversity. Any other person, born in the midst of similar disheartening circumstances, would have cherished an ambition of accepting a lucrative job under the Government to which he was entitled by reason of his high academic qualifications. He had his M.A. degree in Economics and was the first Economist in Orissa. But he had come in close association with Pandit Gopabandhu from his student days, and had been inspired by his ideals of service to the country. It is not that Godavarish had no opportunity of getting into a Government service. In fact the Commissioner of Orissa Division had invited him several times to accept a job under the Government. It is said that in 1910, on the eve of his B. A. examination Godavarish played a role in an English
Pandit Godavarish Mishra
(1886-1956)
together on eating Palm-fruit, who accepted service as a teacher in the Satyabadi High School on a pittance of thirty rupees per month. By the time he joined Satyabadi he had already a large family and the responsibility of maintaining them was also on him. Still the lure of the unknown and the love of his country had so much infatuated him that he forgot all his worldly attachments and cast his lot with the Satyabadi group.

In 1913, he joined Satyabadi. Godavarish was received with same amount of fanfare in the School and same sort of welcome ceremony was organised with Mahant Maharaj of Emar Matha in the chair.

Godavarish Babu has himself recorded many of his experiences during his stay at Satyabadi: "During the School hours the teachers acted as teachers and the students were treated as students. But while laying the garden, working with spade there and watering the garden the teachers and the students worked shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand and as co-workers. We all have carried bricks and lime-pots on our head for constructing the school house broomed the floor and have done many works which are looked down upon contemptuously by the educated people. Like coolies, we have carried wood, bamboo and hay from the mofussil areas. we have approached the rich people for donation. We have consumed coarse rice, slept on the ground and tolerated the rigours of the sun and the rain. We have done everything whenever required to do, with a smiling face. We accepted poverty and public service as the principle or vow of our life.

Godavarish within a short while acquired a great reputation as an ideal English teacher. From his childhood, he had a wonderful command over pronunciation and his intonation
play, and among the audience were the then high European dignitaries of the then Bihar and Orissa Government. They were so much impressed by his personality and pronunciation of English that he was asked to go to England on a state scholarship to study on Agriculture. But when he consulted his 'Guru' about it, Gopabandhu curtly asked him, "Do you know that in stead of cultivating land, you have to cultivate the minds of lakhs of Oriyas? You should not waste your intelligence and energy on a profession in which you are not rooted. Please do not forget your poor brothers of Orissa who eagerly look for your service". This was enough to change Godavarish's mind, and he rejected the offer. In his place, the scholarship was awarded to one D. R. Sethi, who later retired as the Agricultural Adviser to the Government of India on a salary of four thousand rupees, but Godavarish died a very poorman. On another occasion, Godavarish was offered a scholarship to go to the United States and on completion of training in the States, to become the Principal of the Deaf and Dumb School of Calcutta. It was a covetable offer, and Godavarish asked for Gopabandhu's opinion. Gopabandhu's reply was "Godavarish, you will certainly build up the career of a few hundreds of deaf and dumb children as their principal. But who will build up the careers of lakhs of destitute in Orissa?" These persuasions of Gopabandhu changed his mind and Godavarish ultimately cast his lot with the band of self-abnegating youngmen who chose Satyabadi as the venue of their activities. It may be recalled here that it is the same Godavarish who managed with one cloth in the Puri Zilla School and also with one meal per day, it is the same Godavarish who worked as the cook of his Head Master and earned his High School education, it is the same Godavarish who spent his days
was like that of an Englishman. His methods of teaching English were so widely acclaimed that at the instance of the Government, he had to give demonstration lessons in English in the schools at Cuttack. His students say that he had a wonderful retentive memory and he could remember the roll numbers of all the students and he used to refer to them by numbers.

From the very beginning, he had a poetic bent of mind. He used to compose nice poems and when he found any student composing poetry, he not only encouraged him, but also occasionally recited his poems with him to teach him how to recite correctly.

It was unfortunate that Godavarish as he himself describes, had not a very good time in the School. There were frequent mis-understandings between him on the one side and Nilakantha and Harihara on the other. At the first instance a misunderstanding developed between Gopabandhu and Godavarish. But gradually difference cropped up between him and Nilakantha. Godavarish says that Nilakanth's father used to come to the school and jeered at the teachers saying, "This is my son's school. He is the owner of this factory and you all are his paid labourers." The teachers for some time took it as a joke, but later this proved to be a serious cause for misunderstanding.

However, Godavarish continued his association with the School till its end. Gopabandhu selected him later to go and spread education among the Oriyas in Singhbhum district of Bihar. So after six years of association with Satyabadi, Godavarish left on the 7th February, 1919 for Singhbhum to be the Head Master of Chakradharpur High School.
Godavarish had an eventful career. He was closely associated with Gopabandhu in all his social and political activities and he also followed his foot-steps and joined the Bihar-Orissa Legislative Council. He had also secured the membership of Orissa Legislative Assembly from 1937 till 1946 and from 1952 till 1956. He died while he was still an M.L.A. At the instance of his leader Pandit Nilakantha Das, he seceded from the Congress and joined the coalition Government with the Muslim League in November, 1941. As a Minister of this Coalition Government he was given the portfolios of Home, Finance, Education, Public Relations and Civil Supplies. The establishment of the Utkal University and expansion of collegiate education in Orissa were the outstanding achievements during his 2 and a 1/2 years tenure as a Minister. The spark of education as lighted by him has now illuminated the entire state and not only new colleges are coming up, but also talks of four more universities are in the air. He has also founded a High School at Banpur - his birth place - and donated a portion of his landed property to the school. Memories of poverty did not allow him to remain a rich man and live and die in luxury. He seceded from the Congress for sometime and bravely faced many difficulties in life.

Godavarish was an eminent litterateur. He has his contributions in all aspects of Oriya literature. He is a poet, dramatist, novelist, journalist and a literary critic. To his credit, he has written about twenty books. His style is enchanting, his diction well chiselled and his ideas superb. He has identified himself with the aspirations of the common man through his writings and compositions.
He had pungent humour. He could make lively a drab gathering with humorous stories and anecdotes and at times his pungency created many enemies. Godavarish towered above his contemporaries to such an extent that he became the object of jealousy and hostility of many of his co-workers. He could not reach high eminence in political life as was expected of him and died a disappointed man. Sir Hawthorne Lewis, one time Governor of Orissa, had said of him: "Had Godavarish been born in England, he would have been as great if not greater, a Prime Minister as Gladstone." Lewis had seen something of his administrative abilities as a Minister. In 1956, Godavarish staged Satyagraha violating Sec. 144 and the curfew clamped at Cuttack. He was arrested for this and was sent to Jail. He was suffering from fever at the time of his release. He succumbed to his illness on July 26, 1956.43

What Godavarish has done for Orissa and for his fellow countrymen as a litterateur, teacher, public leader and a Minister, has no parallel. His memory is fondly cherished by the people of Orissa although he is no more.

Pandit Krupasindhu Mishra

He was the fourth among the 'Pancha Sakha' or the 'Five Friends' of Satyabadi and the youngest of them all. Unfortunately he was the first to die from amongst them. He was born on the 27th June 1887. He hailed from Birapratappur, a village in the vicinity of Sakhigopal and had taken an M.A. degree in Philosophy from the Calcutta University. Like Nilakantha and Godavarish he could have secured a lucrative job by virtue of his education and intellectual ability. But it was not to be. And Gopabandhu had also cast a spell on his mind right from his student career. Not being a very rich man, he was
Pandit Krupasindhu Mishra
(1887-1926)
not easily willing to sacrifice his career. He joined the staff of the Satyabadi school but could not take up his residence in the School hostel. Gopabandhu had assigned a specific duty to him. Gopabandhu believed that mere talks of the revival of the ancient glories of Orissa were not enough. Historical investigations should be made into the ancient monuments and places of historical importance and books embodying these researches should be published so that the people of Orissa may be able to know themselves and their past activities accurately. Keeping this in view he had organised a band of research workers under the leadership of Krupasindhu and the outcome of their investigations were published in the form of two books called "Konark" (the place where the famous Sun Temple is located) and "Barabati" (the famous fortress of the Rajas of Orissa at Cuttack). Krupasindhu had begun to write the history of Orissa but he died before the book was completed. Though an M.A. in Philosophy, he was in charge of teaching History in the School and his students were of opinion that he was a very excellent teacher. Had he lived longer he could have contributed more towards historical research in this State. While working as a teacher he was associated with all the administrative activities of the School, but because he was not staying in the School hostel, he could not be placed in charge of administration.

While discussing about the writings of Pandit Krupasindhu we should keep in mind the words of late Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh about him. Dr. Mansingh has written 'Pandit Krupasindhu was the historian of the Satyabadi group. His premature death is a misfortune for Orissa. He died at a time when his writing was attaining maturity and the country was expecting more from him."
Pandit Krupasindhu had no speciality in his teaching method, but he had fullness of spirit. Although he was teaching every subject, yet he was fully interested in teaching History. He was completely absorbed in matters relating to the School. But he did not use to come to the school Boarding except at night and during the school hour. He was well acquainted with everybody due to his large heartedness.

Krupasindhu was an ideal person with a notable personality. He was a great leader and organiser. He contributed much for the development of Oriya literature through his writings. He emphasized on the ancient glories of Orissa and as a co-worker he participated in each and every field with his Satyabadi sakhas. His premature death on the 12th February 1926 was a terrible blow to the Satyabadi group as well as to the people of Orissa.

**Acharya Harihara Das**

Shri Harihara Das was the only Acharya in modern Orissa despite his not having a hermitage in the forest like the ancient Acharyas. His place of 'Tapasya' was the problem-ridden human society. He used to see God among the people. His sacred place of pilgrimage was not confined to the four 'Dhams', rather it spread from village to village. His adored principles were truth and peace. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to his work.

Harihara Das was born in 1879 in Sriramchandrapur village near Sakhigopal. He passed from the Vernacular school in his village and continued his studies at Puri getting a scholarship of Rs.4/- per month. After coming out successful in his F.A. Examination he continued his P.L. course. He also went from Cuttack to Calcutta for continuing his study there. After
Acharya Harihara Das
(1878–1971)
completion of his study he took up teachership in Puri Zilla School. He was not satisfied with the Government job. He desired to join a proposed High School in the Ex-Garjat of Nilgiri. Harihara joined the Pyarimohan Academy at Cuttack after the High School at Nilgiri was wound up.

In 1913 Harihara joined the Satyabadi School with a monthly salary of Rs.25/-.

Then in that year Harihara was given the Acharya title. He literally took to his duties in the school. He regarded the boarders of the Hostel as his own children. He was clad in a simple dhoti and lived a very simple and austere life. With a pair of wooden sandals producing their peculiar ticking sound the Acharya used to visit the rooms of all the boarders and make detailed enquiries about their life, health and studies. He was not merely an excellent teacher. He used to nurse the students in the Boarding when any of them fell ill, like a close relative till the ailing students health was restored. He was very influential in the school and both Gopabandhu and the Head Master had implicit faith on him. He had served the school with sincerity and zeal throughout the ten years of its existence. When Gopabandhu joined the Non-Cooperation Movement and converted the Satyabadi High School into a National School the Acharya also willingly went through this change or transformation.

Acharya Harihara became the Headmaster of the Satyabadi School towards the end of 1918. He was not only an ideal teacher through out his life, but also a social reformer of highest order. He had a great love for truth. He discarded his sacred thread earlier and during his stay at Satyabadi he flourished a moustache and like Mahatma Gandhi he was in the fore-front of the Harijan Movement.
Main Entrance of the Panchasakha's Samadhi Pith

Samadhi Pith of the Pancha Sakhas
Acharya Harihara, who left Satyabadi in 1921, associated himself with various welfare works. Acharya Harihara's cardinal principle in life was public service. Acharya Harihar in view of his service to the distressed can be compared with Mother Teresa who has international reputation for the public service and service to the distressed people.

Acharya Harihara worked for some days as the Editor of the weekly 'Samaja'. He was a Gandhian in the true sense of the term and had been an active participant in all constructive works of Mahatmaji. He was a Sarvodaya leader and he was asked to preside over the All-India Sarvodaya Conference in 1959.

Harihara breathed his last on the 21st February 1971 after an eventful career.

Besides these five comrades there were many other associates and leaders of the Satyabadi era who contributed much for the development of the modern Orissa. More prominent among them were the following persons:

Lingaraj Mishra

Lingaraj Mishra was a reputed leader of Orissa. He was the son of Nilakantha Mishra of village Sriramchandrapur in the Puri district. He was born in 1894. He was educated at Cuttack and passed M. A. from Calcutta University. He was the Superintendent of Sanskrit studies in Orissa for a short period. As a close associate of Pandit Gopabandhu Das and a member of the Satyabadi group, he served in the National School at Satyabadi till 1926. He joined the Non-cooperation Movement in 1921 and got himself associated with the Servants of People's Society in 1928. He became the Editor of the 'Samaja' in 1930. He was a national leader. He played an active role in the political history of Orissa. He was imprisoned for
participating in the Civil Disobedience and Quite India Movements, he was a Member of the Orissa Legislative Assembly, Minister of Education, Health and Local Self Government in early 1950. He was elected as a Member of the Parliament in 1956. He died on 18 December 1957.

**Jagabandhu Singh**

Jagabandhu Singh was a notable leader in Orissa. He was born at Bhubanpur in Puri district on 15 February 1876. He was a close associate of Gopabandhu Das and played an important role in the Socio-political history of Orissa. He was a Pleader of Puri and Vice-chairman of the District Board, Puri. He was a Member of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council for two terms from 1923-26 and 1929-30. He presided over the Chakradharpur Session of the Utkal Union Conference in 1920. He was selected as a member to represent Orissa in the A.I.C.C. He was a political leader and a great writer. He wrote books on the history of Orissa and Orissan culture. He joined the Freedom Movement. He died in 1948.

The teacher of the Satyabadi School were the closest associates and co-workers of Pandit Gopabandhu Das. They influenced the Orissan society by their noble idealism and selfless dedication and sacrifice. Among them the following were the prominent persons:

**Ram Chandra Rath**

Ram Chandra Rath was an ideal teacher. He had passed the Entrance Examination. He was a very poor man. He was appointed as a peon in the Puri Collectorate on a pay of Rs.10/- per month. He was later promoted to the post of Peskar and posted in the Sub-divisional Court at Khurda. But Ramchandra was not satisfied with monetary and material gains and when he heard
that the Satyabadi School had been established, he offered his services to work as a teacher in a letter to the Head Master. Ramchandra Rath resigned his job and appeared at Sakhigopal. He told Nilakantha that he would rather die of starvation than go back to a soul-killing job if he was not appointed in the Satyabadi School. Ultimately Nilakantha Babu was compelled to take him in.

**Basudev Mohapatra**

Basudev Mohapatra was the heart and soul of the School. He was teaching Literature and Mathematics in the higher classes. He was a fluent speaker, a capable organiser and a sportsman. Gopabandhu asked him to take care of debating, athletics and organisational activities. He was no less a scholar as well. He could take an active part in the learned discussions with that great Savant Pandit Nilakantha Das. He was affectionate and sympathetic towards the students. He was a good writer. His advice to students was to develop their moral character.

**Venugopal Achari**

Venugopal Achari was a typical addition to the staff of the Satyabadi School. He was a double M.A. and was a professor of the Ranchi College. He resigned his highly paid Government service and joined the staff of the School on a monthly salary of Rs.50/- only. He was a Tamilian. He was teaching Geography in the School. He started preparing the maps and reliefs himself and within a short time the School was provided with the necessary geographical apparata. He was a great scholar and devoutly religious and his love for the students was boundless.
Satyabadi Tripathy

Satyabadi Tripathy was teaching in the lower classes of the School. Impressed with his sincerity and devotion, Gopabandhu appointed him as his Personal Assistant for sometime and he was actively associated with the founding of the Satyabadi press and publication of the 'Satyabadi' Journal. He enjoys the credit of being the first biographer of his Master in Oriya. (Aged more than sixty, satyabadi still remains associated with all kinds of National activities and his association with the 'Samaja' founded by Pandit Gopabandhu Das, as its correspondent, still continues).

There were many other teachers in the school whose contributions to the building up the institution as well as of its students still remain fresh in the memories. Among them were the Dhaneswar Maharana, the famous Painter and Craftsman of Orissa, who was brought to teach various crafts to the students, Banchhanidhi Mishra, the Sanskrit Teacher, Pandit Bhubaneswar Rath, Kavichandra, the Sanskrit teacher, Aparna Parichha, the Music teacher, Lokanath Mohapatra, Narayan Sumanta Pattanaik, Gangadhar Mohapatra, the Secretary of the School Bank, Paramananda Mishra, the Secretary of the Reading Room, Madhusudan Mishra, the Second Pandit.

The Satyabadi High School with such highly qualified, dedicated and self-sacrificing persons on its staff was an object of admiration for every visitor who came to the School and it naturally spread its radiant glow throughout the country. This open air grove school was almost contemporaneous with poet Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan but unfortunately for Orissa when Gopabandhu joined the National Movement in India he
transformed the Satyabadi School to a National School and it ultimately died out.

Each of the teachers of the Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya was as if the symbol of dedication, public service, affection, compassion and humanism and they were united with a vow to serve the country and to build realmen who would be devoted to the cause of the country with all their heart and soul. All the teachers of the Satyabadi School constitute the Satyabadi Group.

Once Gopabandhu paid a visit to the Santiniketan at Bolpur in 1914-15. During his visit to that place he marked mismanagement and lack of sincerity in maintaining discipline in the Hostel there. On his return, he narrated this in his address to the students. There was sanctity in the Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya as every thing was being done there with strict discipline and restraint and the atmosphere became lively due to this. Dereliction of duty was unknown here. Dr. Lancaster of London wrote after visiting this school, "I heartily congratulate the teachers of this School for their grand success in self-dedication and I sincerely desire that such type of institutions should be opened in large number in the entire state." 

The memories of its glory are still fresh in the minds of its students and the surviving teachers and the people of Orissa nostalgically recall those halcyon days in the history of our province when Satyabadi worked as the centre of all the cultural, literary, educational and political activities. The name Satyabadi is still looked upon as a symbol of all that is the purest and the best in Orissa.

Observing the spirit of dedication of Pandit Gopabandhu the founder of this institution and of the teachers Sir K. G.
Gupta had written, "The School is a happy combination of old and new methods, but its success is mainly due to the spirit of self-sacrifice which actuates those who compose its staff."

In fact, the achievements of the Satyabadi group can be placed at par with that of Mazzini, Garibaldi, Rousseau, Voltaire, Livingstone etc. who have been regarded as 'heroes' in the world history, though in different fields. The rise of the Satyabadi group constitutes an epoch-making era in the history of modern Orissa.
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