CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION
MADHUSUDAN DAS
AND THE THEN
SOCIO-ECONOMIC
AND POLITICAL
ORISSA
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A man is always the product of his time. However small or great one is, no matter, the environment in which he or she is born, bred or brought up invariably plays a decisive role in shaping his/her personality, approach to life and his/her goal of life. This was true of Madhusudan Das who was very much influenced by the prevailing socio-economic conditions in Orissa.

1.1 A short peep into his life and performance

In the political welkin of modern Orissa, Madhusudan Das sparkled like a luminescent star in the second half of the 19th century. Born and bred in a zamindar's family in the district of Cuttack on 28th April, 1848, he earned the credit of being the first graduate of Orissa who received the degree from the L.M.S College, Cuttack in 1870. He was also the first Oriya to get M.A. and B.L. degrees in 1873 and 1878 respectively from the Calcutta University. He played a pivotal role in uniting the hitherto truncated, divided and scattered parts of Orissa under various foreign and British rule into a united modern Orissa. He breathed his last on 4th February, 1934, only two years before his grand dream of the new province came into reality.

Britishers played a major role in transforming the socio-political consciousness of Indian people through their western education, liberal ideas and economic policies. While main important cities of India such as Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta were easily subject to western penetration because these cities came earlier under British rule than the other cities. Orissa was late in being imbibed into western ideas. Madhusudan was the first elite of Orissa who played the pioneering role in the historic process of modernization of an ancient people.
Madhusudan had inculcated the spirit of renaissance in India by his long association with people of eminence, and stay in Calcutta. When he returned to Cuttack with his M.A.; and B.L. degrees in 1881 he was only 33, a young man endowed with high spirit, vibrant with new enthusiasm and vive, tremendous self-confidence with a vision to uplift his poor fellowmen and sail them to a safe shore of shining past glory and opulence. Taking upon himself the onus of ushering in socio-cultural transformation of Orissa, he chose Cuttack, the hub of his activities. The burdens of a family and worldly life that could hamstring a person in his evangelistic role were no longer with him to pull him back, as his wife was already dead before he returned to Cuttack. He dedicated himself and his entire life for the service of the motherland Orissa. He appeared to be a beacon of hope and inspiration to the handful of educated and public spirited men built around the only educational institution, Ravenshaw college at Cuttack. The only Oriya journal Utkal Dipika, worth the name with Gourishankar Ray as its editor was published from Cuttack. In 1882 to spearhead the socio-political activities of the people an association named Utkal Sabha was formed at Cuttack with Madhusudan as guiding star. The Utkal Sabha played a major role in moulding the public opinion in Orissa in the last two decades of the 19th century. Madhusudan took an active interest in the activities of Indian national Congress and brought its messages and liberal ideas into Orissa.

Madhusudan was the first elected representative of the municipalities of Orissa and Chita Nagpur to the Bengal Legislative Council in 1896. His active role in the Council was an indication of his keen interest in drawing the attention of the British authorities to the important problems plaguing the people of Orissa. He again came to the Council in July 1900 as a representative of the District Boards of Orissa and took an active interest in promoting the cause of the Boards in particular and the interests of the people of Orissa in general. He strongly vouchsafed for the promotion of higher education and demanded grants for improvement of educational facilities in Orissa. In this connection
Madhusudan pleaded for the introduction of traditional crafts in the primary schools to help the children of agriculturists and artisans.

Madhusudan efforts to uplift Orissa in the economic and industrial realm are praiseworthy. He noticed the role of an ineffective and indifferent administration in the worst famine of Orissa in 1866-67, which brought millions to famished death with great anguish and dismay. In 1897 he established the Orissa Art Wares to resuscitate the dying filigree products and to rekindle the spirit of manufacturing indigenous goods of high quality and large quantities for export. Under his patronage, the first steam factory in Orissa was founded by the end of the 19th century. Long before the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal and gandhian programme of boycott of foreign goods, Madhusudan had started the revival of indigenous products in right earnest.

As the first Oriya to visit England, he organized some sort of exhibition of the fine filigree products of the Orissa Art wares in London to convince the Britishers how the people of Orissa were capable of producing magnificent handiworks. Inspired by the industrial development and economic prosperity of western people he decided to industrialize Orissa and in that stride he decided to open the modern workshop known as the Utkal Tannery for manufacturing quality shoes in Orissa for export. Though it ended in heavy loss, but his ideal remained relevant today in an age when importance is no longer given to quality and values.

His pioneering role in uniting the Oriya speaking tracts in different parts of India into a united province stood monumental. In 1895 the Chief Commissioner of the Central provinces decided to abolish the Oriya language from official use in the district of Sambalpur. The entire Orissa witnessed a protest storm against this arbitrary measure. Madhusudan Das wrote to Lord Curzon that the people of Orissa fully supported the memorial submitted to Sir Andrew Fraser and it was their desire that the Oriya territories should be placed under a chief commissioner. By the beginning of the 20th century the constitutional agitation in different parts of the Oriya speaking territories had started and Madhusudan played a path breaking role in rousing public
enthusiasm on this vital issue. Amidst unprecedented enthusiasm the Utkal Union Conference was formed in 1903 to spearhead the Oriya movement till the formation of a separate province in 1936. Madhusudan as the first secretary and the moving spirit behind such an organization carried on its activities with full momentum till it attended its goal. Agitation for the creation of a separate state amalgamating the scattered Oriya speaking territories continued unabated with full vigour after Bengal partition in 1905. In his second visit to London Madhusudan met Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India and put forth before him the genuine grievance of Orissa for creation of a separate province for Orissa. In the Utkal Union conference held at berhampur on 6-7th April 1912, Madhusudan spoke in deep anguish: “I suppose there is no people under the British government who have been treated more unjustly and unkindly than the people of Orissa who have done nothing to deserve such treatment”. In 1916 he headed the Utkal Union Committee with a view to spearheading the work. It took the opportunity to meet Lord Chelmsford on his visit to India and put before him the long cherished desire of Orissa people. The Constitutional Reforms Report known as the Montford report did nothing in this respect except deciding to keep Orissa as a sub-province.

Under the provision of the Government of India Act 1919 Madhusudan was appointed a Minister of Local Self Government, a culmination of his long career of public service. His name remains glorious and finds associated with three important enactments, the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Bill, 1922, the Bihar and Orissa Local Self Government (Amendment) Bill, 1922, and the Bihar and Orissa Village Administration Bill, 1922. He successfully piloted the first two bills and lent strong support to the the third one. Like the great English philosopher J.S. Mill, Madhusudan was very critical of the provision of salaried minister in the department of local self government. He said the minister “must inspire the members of the municipalities and district boards, all local bodies, local authorities and villages with a patriotic spirit, inculcate in them a genuine spirit of self sacrifice, a genuine desire of nation building, and with their cooperation in discharge of the responsibilities of his office.” He himself was
prepared to work as honorary minister of local self government. But he did not
continue long in the office. He sought Governor’s permission to practice as
vakil as his public life meant financing all public movements. The rejection of
his proposal resulted in his resignation from the government in 1923.

His Utkal tannery came to end despite Mahatma Gandhi’s efforts to revive
it. He was crestfallen at the news that the court declared him insolvent. Yet his
dream and resolution to of bringing the people of Orissa to the notice of the
world remained firm and unchanged. The issue of boundary problem again
surfaced before the Simon Commission in 1928. Madhusudan made his last
ditch effort to resolve the issue. He put forth concrete evidence before the
Orissa Boundary Committee in 1931 for a separate province. As a member of
the Orissa Administrative Committee under the Chairmanship of John Austin
Hubback, he rendered valuable service in the last phase of the proceedings and
signed the document.

The architect of his long cherished and arduously fought for new Orissa
did not survive long to see its sheen dawn. He departed on 4th February, 1934 no
longer to remain as the lodestar to Oriyas for guidance and direction.

Orissa had always been forced to pass through an ordeal of forein rule.
It lost her independence in 1568 to be ruled, successively by the Afghans, the
Mughals and the Marathas till the advent of the British in 1803. The beginning
of British rule harbingered some basic changes in the land revenue
administration, which profoundly affected the economic life of the people. The
new Government was run by a group of rapacious adventurers without any
sympathy or understanding for the subjects; the period of misrule and
exploitation was prolonged leading to a great explosion in 1817 and a worst
catastrophe in 1866. Both these events were turning points in the history of
Orissa.

1.2 Foreign Misrule

The rule of the Imperial Gangas and the Suryavamsi Gajapatis (1110 -
1550) witnessed the heyday of political and cultural achievements in the history
of Orissa, when her territories had extended from the river Ganges in the North to the Godavari in the South and the Bay of Bengal in the East to the Amarkantak Hills in the West. During this period the magnificent temples of Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konarak were built; the Oriya language and literature evolved and the recurring Muslim invasions failed to make a dent in the political stability of Orissa. But the death of the last independent ruler Mukundadeva in 1568 administered a rude shock upon this ancient land, as the successive sway of the Afghans, the Mughals and the Marathas apart from bestowing a prolonged period of misrule for over two hundred years ravaged the countryside ruthlessly through periodic depredations, extortions and vandalism. Orissa, experiencing an uphill task to sustain her political and cultural eminence slowly began to disintegrate in the 17th and 18th centuries giving rise to numerous small States under petty chieftains. In the 18th century the Qutb Sahi family of Golconda and the Nawab of Bengal respectively ruled upon the Southern and the Coastal areas of Orissa separately. In 1751 Alivardi Khan, the Nawab of Bengal passed on Orissa (South of the river Suvamarekha upto Chilika lake) to the Bhonsle of Nagpur. Since then Orissa, excepting the southern portion (South of Chilika lake) came under the rule of the Marathas and the Bhonsles administered this province through their Governors stationed at Cuttack till 1803 when the city along with the fort of Barabati was captured by the forces of the East India Company.

1.3 Territorial Truncation and the Consequent Effects on Oriyas

British commercial relation with Orissa had begun since 1633 when the East India Company established their factories at Hariharpur. Subsequently, the port of Balasore became the nerve centre of their maritime trade. With the silting up of the river Balanga, Balasore began to decline and was supplanted by Calcutta in the early part of 18th century. It was only after the grant of Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765 that the East India Company developed political interest for Orissa which culminated in the occupation of southern part in 1768 and the coastal tracts in 1803. Sambalpur and the adjacent region in the western part of Orissa finally came under the British rule in 1849.
account of this piecemeal conquest, Orissa remained politically divided: the area comprising modern districts of Ganjam and Koraput were administered from Madras as a part of the Madras Presidency; the coastal districts of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri constituted the Orissa Division of the Bengal Presidency and Sambalpur with its adjacent tributary States formed a part of the Central Provinces. Such territorial vivisection was utterly ruinous for an ancient people with rich cultural heritage, because in each of the Provinces the Oriya-speaking people formed a minority. Their language, literature and culture were jeopardised due to the dominance of the Telugus in Madras, Bengalis in Bengal and the Hindi-speaking people in the Central Provinces. In these three Provinces an invidious campaign was launched to obliterate Oriya language and culture in the 19th century which engineered acute racial tension. The attempts of eminent Bengali scholars and officials in the 1860s to establish the superiority of Bengali culture and language in the Orissa Division, the Resolution No.237 dated 15th January 1895 of the Government of the Central Provinces substituting Hindi in place of Oriya as the court language of Sambalpur and the discriminatory treatment against the Oriyas in Ganjam area ignited public controversies and agitation. Everywhere the minority Oriya community groaned under the chauvinistic spirit of the majority community and blamed the artificial administrative division as the most potent cause of their plight.

After its occupation in December 1803, the Orissa Division (under the Bengal Presidency) formed the nucleus of the Oriya-speaking tracts, the total, area of which was 23,907 sq. miles including the tributary States. The tributary States were outside the scope of direct administration of Bengal since the Bengal rules and regulations were not applicable there. The Commissioner of the Orissa Division (consisting of the districts of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri) exercised merely supervisory authority over the administration of the tributary States as their Superintendent, leaving internal autonomy in the hands of the Princes.

1.4 Early British Administration

The British rule in Orissa did not augur well for the people; it was bristled with numerous disadvantages. In their attempt at "progressive
organisation of the revenue of Cuttack," the Government attempted at short
term land revenue settlements which resulted in fluctuating assessment. Since
the revised assessment was always without any consideration of the actual yield
of the land or with reference to the actual quality of land under cultivation, the
peasant proprietors experienced real hardship. Frequent, short term, arbitrary
settlements spelt disastrous consequences for as well. They could hardly meet
the ever increasing demands of the Government and found themselves in
extreme peril for default in payment of revenue. They fell into heavy arrears and
often lost their estates in public auction. Due to short term settlements, over-
assessment and timely collection of revenue, the Zamindars often sold their
estates at a throw-away price or made it over to the charges of the Government
to be relieved of their loans and arrears. Since the Government showed no
leniency in collecting dues on the scheduled date for which no advance notice
was given to the proprietors, the latter were either forced to incur loan from the
money-lenders to deposit the Jama or were helpless if for default the estates
were attached and subsequently sold by public auction. In this process during
the period December 1806 to December 1816, out of a total of 2340 estates in
Orissa 1011 were sold by public auction for arrears of revenue. These estates
were purchased by rich Bengalis of Calcutta who slowly began to replace the
Oriya land-holders forming a new class of exploiters. This happened due to
several factors: (i) The Oriya Zamindars could not know the date of auction; (ii)
the distance between Cuttack and Calcutta was formidable; (iii) The Bengali
clers manipulated records and matters in such a way that hampered the
interests of the Oriya Zamindars. These factors had a cumulative effect in
depriving and dispossessing the Oriya Zamindars from their estates. Lands in
Orissa passed on to the hands of absolute strangers. During the ten years period
(1806-1816) 350 estates were purchased by outsiders and 891 Oriya proprietors
were reduced to complete impoverishment. Purchase and sale of land became
a vicious trade "with a whole herd of inferior miscreants, dependent instruments
and parasites" thrived on this business of rapacity, greed and plunder.
Corruption in the bureaucracy was rampant. The Amlas, invariably one and all-

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the Sheristadars, the Nazirs, Police and Salt Daroga vied with each other to make easy money and flourished. People began to feel, and quite justifiably, that the Maratha Government with its entire absence of system was better adapted to the state of society in which they existed than the British Government with its enlightened, humane and refined one.

1.5 Deplorable Plight of the landholder

During the Maratha rule, and even earlier, the Military Chiefs in the tributary States were enjoying rent free Jagirs. Those who rendered military service in times of war also enjoyed similar Jagir lands and were called the Paiks. British Government refused to allow the Paiks and their military leaders either special privilege or Jagirs. Major Fletcher, who made the first settlement in Puri resumed all the Jagir lands, depriving about 10,000 Paiks from an ancient privilege. Their lands were assessed at the same rate as those of the Ryots. Such indiscriminate resumption naturally caused great resentment among the landed militia. W. Forrester, the joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector of Khurda rightly observed this action of Major Fletcher as a harsh one;

"When I first took charge of Khurda I was disposed to consider it a very harsh measure, the general resumption of all the Jageerlands and to think that it in no small degree contributed to the zeal and eagerness with which the inhabitants of Khurda Joined the Bukshee in the insurrection. I am still of the opinion that almost total resumption of Jageeers and particularly the almost immediate assessment of a heavy tunkee as the small portions which had been reserved to the Dalbeheras and others was a harsh measure."

Thus the British revenue policy was neither beneficial to the Zamindars nor to the Ryots. Within a few years of the imposition of British rule, the Oriya Zamindars as a class began to disappear. Their place in the socio-economic life of the country was occupied by the outsiders who enjoyed their estates through agents. These agents had no sympathy for the local inhabitants or peasants and thrived on ruthless exploitation.

"When we first began to dabble in revenue affairs, we found that whatever may have been the system of land assessment it was bearing only the
bitter fruits of extortion and oppression. Every man tried in his turn to pay as little and exact as much from his neighbour as fraud and falsehood could compass.

The condition of Oriya Ryots and Paiks fast dwindled due to triennial, biennial and annual settlements which resulted in increasing assessment. Those reduced to improverishment were forced to sell away their clothes, furniture, bullocks, utensils and sometimes even their wives and children before resorting to complete destitution.

1.6 Depreciation of cowry currency

The depreciation of cowry currency was another distressing feature of the early British administration. In Orissa cowry was used in monetary transaction since very early times. It continued to be the main currency under the Mughals, the Marathas and was accepted by the British in 1803 as a medium of exchange. The British authorities collected revenue in cowries till 1808 when they stopped receiving payments in the form of cowries. This led to a sudden depreciation of cowry currency and uncertainty in the market causing great hardships to the people. Since the Government insisted upon payment of their dues in silver Tankas, the exchange value of silver Tankas became exhorbitantly high. This effected the Zamindars who found it extremely difficult to pay the Government dues. Even borrowing of silver Tankas at an enormous interest from the shroffs was not easy due to its scarcity. The economic position of the Zamindars and Ryots alike became deplorable. The fall in the value of cowries resulted in the rise of cowry price of commodities everywhere. In Cuttack market the rise in prices was recorded to be almost 50% during 1807-1808 and 1816-1817. In the countryside the rate of increase was still higher. This effected everyone. The common man found himself utterly confused in the new system of currency introduced by the Government and due to his long association with cowry currency failed to give it up in non-official use. Thus for sometime the circulation of two currencies caused profound chaos.

1.7 Salt Monopoly
The salt monopoly of the British Government was another unpopular measure which effected the common man's life in Orissa. The manufacture and sale of salt was a flourishing trade in the coastal tracts of Orissa much before the advent of the British. During the Maratha rule about three lakh maunds of salt was exported per annum. The quantity of salt exported to Bengal is not known. But during the ten years preceding 1803 (annexation of Orissa), the company was importing at an average rate 68,269 maunds per annum\textsuperscript{44} The annual income of the Maratha Government from exporting salt to Bengal during this period was approximately Rupees two lakhs \textsuperscript{45}. In order to monopolise this lucrative trade, in 1804 the Governor-General-in-Council reserved for the Government the exclusive privilege of manufacturing salt in Orissa\textsuperscript{46}. A salt agent for Orissa was appointed\textsuperscript{47} at Fort William to look after the salt and opium department. He was responsible for the manufacture, management of the sale, export of surplus salt and prevention of smuggling\textsuperscript{48}. It was soon found that the price of salt took an upward trend rising as high as five to six times its former price. While in 1804 the price of salt per maund was 88 paisa, in 1817 it was sold for Rupees Four per maund\textsuperscript{49}. Since Bengal could offer this high price, salt found its way out from Orissa causing acute scarcity in the land of its production where the people's purchasing power was less than Bengal. The lower classes of people were almost precluded from purchasing this essential article\textsuperscript{50}. Scarcity of salt made their condition more distressful because next to rice it was the most important item of food. Due to profiteering motive the Government remained oblivious to the sufferings of the people\textsuperscript{51}. But they found it difficult to check smuggling in which the salt Amlas took active part. Naturally the people grudged. The Collector of Cuttack wrote:

"Whatever the real causes may be or where the fault may be, I confess myself quite unable to decide, but certain it is that the cry for salt is general through out the district, not only is the high price complained of, a price which is said to preclude the lower classes of the people from purchasing it, but the difficulty of procuring it even by those who can afford to pay for it\textsuperscript{52n}."

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This led the Commissioner of Cuttack to believe that the advantages derived by the Government by the extension of salt monopoly "poorly compensates for the privation and discontent", occasioned by that measure to the people.53

1.8 Corruption in Bureaucracy

The apathy of the Government was evident in several aspects of the administration. In the coastal districts of Orissa there are several rivers, large and small, with their numerous tributaries, which during the rainy seasons often cross their banks and inundate huge acres of agricultural fields causing irreparable damage. To prevent the havoc of floods rivers had been tamed by embankments which were most numerous in Cuttack district.54 During the Maratha period (1751 - 1803) they were maintained by the Zamindars. In 1806 by Regulation VI, the British Government entrusted the general charge of embankments to a Committee consisting of three members.55 There were two Superintendents for the management of embankments in northern and southern divisions. In 1813 a Surveyor was appointed for better management of the embankments.56 Inspite of these measures, however, the conditions of the embankments began to deteriorate. In many places repairs were neglected and "public money was grossly misappropriated." The Darogas in charge of seasonal repair works made fortune for themselves and purchased lands with the money advanced for repairing the bunds. In this fraudulent practice even the Superintendents had a share and the fraud gradually became a system.58 As a result of this, during the flood the weak embankments very often gave away, inundating vast acres of cultivated lands and inflicting untold miseries upon the people.59

1.9 Judiciary stuck in Corruption

To what extent corruption had crept into the Government would be evident by a study of Judicial administration, which, apart from being inefficient, promoted extortion and fraud. The administration of criminal justice was vexatious causing great hardships to innocent prisoners.
From 1805 Orissa was brought under the Bengal system of administration established by Lord Cornwallis. The Division was placed under the charge of one Magistrate and the Court of Circuit for Calcutta for criminal justice. The Magistrate had limited powers of fine and imprisonment besides the power to apprehend law breakers and criminals. The Court of Circuit held its sessions twice a year following a complete procedure unlike the Maratha system. Subsequently, the Judges of Circuit "for their personal convenience" held the session Court once a year. Since the people were not conversant with the code of laws they were left entirely in the mercy of the Vakils. Very often the hearings of the Courts were delayed causing much inconvenience to the innocent prisoners and witnesses. Justice was quite expensive too. "Bribery, corruption, peculation and forgery, were rife in all the courts and public offices - notably in the Judges." In 1828 the Munsifs of Bhadrak and Pattamundai were charged with corruption and embezzlement. To prevent exposure they destroyed their records either by burning the court or engaging burglars. It was a regular practice of the Zamindars to bribe the Amlas to get petitions and settlement papers passed through the office with favourable orders. Sanands and other deeds were indiscretely forged without any moral compunction.

1.10 Police Steeped in Corruption and Misrule

The Police administration was thoroughly steeped with corruption, which affected people both of the higher and the lower classes. J. Richardson, the found "Excesses and oppressions committed by the Police Darogas, the Tahasildars, Amlas and. parties of Sepoys. Even G. Martindell, the Military Commissioner (1817), observed "the enormous exactions and extortions of the Native officers of the district, both Judicial, Police and Revenue." Mirza Mehdi, the Police Daroga at Puri, was a legendary figure who "through a merciless system of exactions" amassed great fortune. Salim Ali of the salt department at Balasore was another notorious figure famous for gross embezzlement. The family members of Saheb Zaman thrived very well through abuse of power and corruption. The Amlas and the Darogas became fabulously rich at the cost of Zamindars and Ryots. As there were not many
Oriyas enjoying the offices of either Amlas or Darogas, the administration was run mostly by the Bengalis or Muslims protected by the Court. Mo one ventured to bring charges against the intriguing and corrupt officers for fear of victimisation. Consequently, there was a loss of confidence in the British laws and the integrity of the British Courts. The Bengal Regulations instead of bestowing the benefits of an enlightened Government, introduced into Orissa "a herd of needy rapacious strangers" devoid of any moral ethics. Such rampant corruption and the inability of the Government to prevent it naturally alienated the people.

1.11 Native Oriyas Deprived of Employment

Another factor equally responsible for alienating the Oriyas from the British administration was denial of employment opportunity to native Oriyas. At the time of occupation of Orissa a complete body of native Oriya officers serving in various capacities such as Amils, Tahsildars etc. were available. Their services were dispensed with by the new Government whose modus operandi was based upon new rules and a new system with which the Oriyas were not conversant. Owing to their ignorance of the British rules and Regulations they did not find appointment in the Government except against some posts of low categories. The idea of slowly training up the Oriyas in important offices did not find favourable consideration at all. Such exclusion of the natives from offices of trust and responsibilities in the Revenues, Judicial and Police departments had an adverse effect. It jeopardized Government interests in Orissa and the people felt deeply aggrieved for being ignored.

1.12 Interference in Jagannath Temple

Though the British Government adopted extreme caution in dealing with the religion and religious institutions of the people they gradually began to interfere in the management of the Jagannath Temple at Puri. In 1805 they proposed to appoint a Committee if Pandits to superintend the affairs of the temple and all receipts, disbursements and discipline were to be vested upon the Collector of Pilgrim tax. With a view to improve the administration of the temple these proposals were enacted into laws as Regulation IV of 1806. But on
tills issue the members of the Governor General's-Council were found to be divided. When the new system failed to yield desired results the Government released the Raja of Khurda from Midnapore in 1807 and handed him over the management of the temple. But since then eschewing the policy of non-interference the Government exercised much control in the internal affairs of the temple. The practice of interference in the internal economy of a Hindu temple was not only contrary to the established policies, but also regarded as shameful. Watson, the fourth Judge of Calcutta Court of Circuit would therefore remark: "It appears to me a shameful and insulting mockery of their old idolatrous superstition that an European public officer should have any interference or control in such matters."

1.13 Humiliation of the Raja of Khurda

Mukundadeva II, the Raja of Khurda for his long and historic association with the Jagannath temple was highly respected by the Oriyas. In 1807 he was appointed the Superintendent of the temple without being restored to his estate of Khurda. His earnest appeal for a restoration of Khurda fell into deaf ears. Even as the Superintendent of the temple, much of his powers were curtailed by the Government. By the Regulation XIX of 1810 the Government reserved the right of removing even the Raja and his successors from the Superintendent ship on ground of misconduct and incapacity. The Raja was often suspected and looked down upon by the Government. His distress and humiliation grossly exhibited the authorities's lack of understanding and respect for the local institutions.

1.14 Exacerbating the Crisis

Thus, in Orissa the early British administration created an explosive situation. The frequent short term revenue settlements, excessive taxation, unscrupulous Amlas, an indulgent and depraved bureaucracy, scarcity of currency, rise in the price of salt, demonetisation of cowry, widening gap between the ruler and the ruled, gradual extinction of the Oriya Zamindars, impoverishment of the common man, disrespect for the historic institutions and the denial of loaves and fishes to the sons of the soil had their cumulative effect
in aggravating an unprecedented crisis. It took the shape of a rebellion in 1817 with Khurda and Puri as the main theatres of a violent struggle aimed at redeeming the land from the foreign rule. Trower, the Collector of Cuttack rightly stated 81:

"A system of extreme tyranny, violence and oppression has existed which has proved ruinous to this once flourishing country by the consequent desertion of a great proportion of the cultivators of the soil. I am concerned to state too that this system is to be dated from the conquest of Khurda by the British troops".

As if to reinforce this observation William Forrester, the Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector of Khurda wrote82:

"The grand cause of that unfortunate event I am now satisfied was the dreadful misery and distress to which the whole of the inhabitants of Khurda had been reduced by the enormous assessment and the extortion of the numerous farmers."

1. 15 Paik Rebellion

Thirteen years of misrule ultimately resulted in the Paik rebellion of 1817 under the leadership of Bakshee Jagabandhu, the erstwhile commander of the Raja, of Khurda. He, like most of his militia had suffered on account of the resumption of Jagir lands and the machination of the Bengali Amlas83. The dispossessed militia men of the Raja raised the standard of rebellion in relentless fury as if "to threaten the expulsion of the British from the whole of Orissa"84. The injustice of the British Government forced Jagabandhu to keep the smouldering fire of rebellion ablaze till 1825 when due to the superiority of arms the Government could successfully suppress it85.

This rebellion was not merely an act of violence in which the Paiks alone took part. It was a "crusade, the object of which was to expel the English from all interference with the land of Purusottam Chutter" (Puri)86. Since the civilian population of a vast area stretching from Banpur in the south upto Kanika in the north and Puri in the east upto Baud and Dasapalla in the west had joined in the upsurge, historians believe it to be the first war of independence87.
Another school of historians consider it to be a peasant's revolt\textsuperscript{88}. Be that as it may, the first few years of misrule, apathy and disrespect for the local institutions caused great resentment among the people, who having been driven to desperation took resort to an armed struggle under Bakshee Jagabandhu.

1. 16 Disastrous Consequences

However, the Paik rebellion was a turning point in the history of Orissa, the years of administrative experiments were over and the period of consolidation began\textsuperscript{89}. From 1803 to 1805 Orissa had been placed under the administration of two Commissioners (Harcourt and Melville) who exercised powers unfettered by any regulation. This was a period of observation when they enjoyed wide powers. From 1805 to 1817 Cornwallis's Judicial, Revenue and Salt Regulations were introduced in Orissa without making the people ready to appreciate the sudden change \textsuperscript{90}. Under the new system of administration local institutions, old usages and traditions were ignored. The consequences were found to be disastrous. The Sadar Board of Revenue, therefore wrote to the Court of Directors\textsuperscript{91}.

"The chief defects in the administration of Cuttack, in our Judgement, flowed from a too precipitate introduction of a system of Government entirely new to the people".

Realising that the Cornawallis system of administration was unsuitable to Orissa, the Government took measures to introduce changes through a special regulation (No. V) passed in 1818\textsuperscript{92}. Orissa constituted a Commissioner's Division with Robert Ker as the first incumbent and the Board of Revenue hoped that "the superintendence of Ker over the executive administration would go far to remedy the defects"\textsuperscript{93}. On Ker's recommendation the Regulation XIII of 1813, was passed which stipulated restrictions on the sale of estates for default of payment or for arrears. He introduced a triennial settlement, suspended Chowkidari tax and reduced the price of salt.

In 1819 the Sadar Board of Revenue initiated measures to restore several small estates to their original proprietors\textsuperscript{94}. This helped in reinstatement of some of the old landed aristocracy. The Government tried to root out
corruption by drawing proceedings of suspension against several Amlas. Major Fletcher, a very important officer was branded for Incapacity and dishonesty. Even Edward Impey, formerly Superintendent of Tributary Mahals was dismissed from service. Thomas Coopens, the Head writer at the Judge's Court, Cuttack was prosecuted for embezzlement. For similar charges Goldsbury, a Deputy Collector lost his job and Forrester committed suicide. These measures followed by strict vigilance led W. Forrester to write in 1821, that:

"The people at present did not suffer from any severe oppression of the Amlas".

More money was spent on the repair of embankments than before, with steps taken to prevent misappropriation. The Judiciary was also toned up. By Increasing the frequency of Circuit Courts the difficulties of the witnesses and prosecutors in the criminal cases could be removed.

In 1828, for better administration Orissa was divided into three Divisions: Northern, Central and Southern, each under a Magistrate cum Collector. By Regulation I of 1829, Orissa was made the 19th Commissionership of Bengal Presidency comprising Balasore, Cuttack and Puri districts. The Commissioner of Orissa also functioned as the Superintendent of the Tributary states. Thus the structural foundation of the future British administration in Orissa was laid and order could be restored.

1.17 Siphoning of the Resources to British Treasury

Organisational changes introduced by the higher authorities in Orissa were mainly to ensure a steady flow of wealth to the British treasury. The company drained the resources of Orissa by way of land revenue, monopoly and excise. It is evident from Ewer's report that the average annual remittance from Cuttack was approximately 7½ lakh of Siccas to Calcutta. Admitting the motives of early British administration W.w. Hunter wrote;

"In 1803 when the country passed to ourselves, we did not venture to spend very much on our acquisition. We placed a Collector, or his subordinate, in the three district capitals, and told him to get as much and spend as little as he possibly could".
Within a few years the income of the Government began to swell which by 1825 could reach a staggering amount of Rupees 30 lakhs excluding all expenses. The total expenditure of the establishment came to Rupees 5 lakhs only. By 1858 when the Company's rule was superseded by the Crown administration, the annual income had reached Rupees 58 lakhs out of which about 20 lakhs was spent on running the Government. Thus, on an average, the Company took away from Orissa 38 lakhs of Rupees every year, progressively reducing the people into the miseries of poverty and ruination. Since no steps were taken for either material or moral welfare of the people, their future prospects appeared totally bleak.

With the introduction of Crown administration Orissa was at peace during the remaining years of the 19th century and was administered with comparative ease. Her placidity was misconstrued by the Government as a sign of contentment. While in other provinces measures were adopted to improve the administration and economic conditions of the people, Orissa suffered gross neglect due to complacency of the Government. Even the Tributary states being inaccessible were allowed to grope in their seclusion. It is difficult to believe how such an enlightened Government could afford to neglect the welfare of a people living so close to Calcutta, the seat of Imperial administration.

1.18 Disadvantages

(a) One of the chief disadvantages from which Orissa suffered in the 19th century was the lack of communication facilities. Intersected by large, untamed rivers the countryside posed great problems for want of a network of roads. Her only link with Calcutta was through sea. In reality, Orissa was isolated from the rest of India, The Government evinced no interest to improve the primitive condition of the Jagannath Road on which pilgrims from the North moved towards Puri, Describing the deplorable state of communication Sir George Campbell wrote:

"The people, shut up in a narrow province between pathless jungles and an impracticable sea were in a condition of passengers in a ship without provisions".
1.19 Decline in Maritime Trade

(b) The once flourishing ports on the Orissa coast, at Balasore, Dhamra, Harispur, Puri and Manikpatna had declined rapidly and were unsuitable for navigation. Their decline had adversely affected the maritime trade having a direct bearing upon the economic condition of the people. Export trade of rice and salt from these ports had come to an end. The disadvantages of their decline could be felt no sooner than 1866 when acute scarcity of foodstuff leading to the great famine made the Government realise their necessity. When steamers loaded with rice reached the ramshackle ports there was neither any safe anchorage, nor unloading facilities for an expeditious disposal of the essential commodity. It was still more difficult to transport rice from the ports to the famine struck areas where no semblance of road existed. This slowed down relief operation allowing the famine to take a heavy toll of human life.

1.20 Indifferent and Ineffective Administration

(c) The administration of Orissa was entrusted to irresponsible officers who governed without thought or foresight. The executive power was indifferent and ineffective; "The Executive reigns, but does not govern". As it was understaffed there was a clear tendency to avoid interference in the affairs of the people. Most of the administrative business was entrusted to the Zamindars who functioned as sort of intermediaries between the Government and the people. The Collectors and their subordinates lived in 'Ivory towers' widening the gap between them and their subjects. Another factor which made this gap unbridgeable was the growing distrust for Indian hands since the time of Cornwallis and the appointment of Europeans in Government service. But as it became difficult to employ Europeans against increasing vacancies due to the heavy cost involved, the Government preferred to run with scanty staff. Dearth of officers apart from effecting the efficiency of the administration failed to ameliorate the grievances of the people. The combination of the office of Collector with that of the Magistrate or that of the Commissioner with the
Superintendent of Tributary States of Orissa, was probably asking for too much from one man. Particularly, in Orissa due to its remoteness and inaccessibility the European officers were greatly handicapped. One example will make the point clear. In January 1866 when the districts of Orissa were in the grip of a famine, T.E. Ravenshaw, the Commissioner was away in Mayurbhanj on tour. His long absence from the headquarters besides keeping him out of tune with the development delayed prompt action against the impending crisis.

1.21 Lack of Communication between the Ruled and the Rulers

(d) That there was no communication between the famine afflicted people of Orissa with the higher authorities was evident during the visit of Sir Cecil Beadon the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to Cuttack and Puri. In a public Darbar held at Cuttack on 17 February (1866) where twenty Rajas, eighty Zamindars and many officials and non-officials were present no one ventured to make him realise the gravity of the situation. Even at Puri where he saw the famished crowd, he remained unconvinced about the seriousness of the famine. Stunned at this stoical unconcern of the Lieutenant Governor, Sir John Lawrence, the Governor General later on remarked:

"It seems to be incredible that all the different individuals with whom he personally conversed should have been altogether silent at such a momentous period, and that they should have given no expression to the anxious fears and doubts which they cannot but have felt. But at any rate the very clamour from the starving multitude, which beset him at Puri, ought to have led him to make special inquiry, which could not have failed to lay bare the real condition of the people at that very time. It was certainly the duty of the Lieutenant Governor to have done this".

1.22 Lack of Education and Political Consciousness aggravating the tragedy

(e) Apart from the apathy and negligence of the local officers, the rampant illiteracy and lack of consciousness among the people were equally responsible for aggravating the tragedy. The Government merely looked upon Orissa as an appendix of Bengal, and as a source of revenue. They paid no
attention either for the growth of education among people to make them enlightened or provision of irrigation canals to meet natural calamities like drought. In the field of education Orissa was so utterly neglected that even Henry Ricketts, the Commissioner (1835-1840) assailed the Government's deliberate policy to perpetuate the backwardness of the Oriyas. It is incredible to believe that the whole province with an area of 52,995 sq. miles and a population of 4,534,813 had only 77 schools of low categories with 3500 pupils. The Christian missionaries did pioneering work by establishing an English charity school at Cuttack in 1823. But the Government did not take any step to further the cause of English education. The prayer of the people of Balasore for an English school was turned down in the 1840s. Even the famous Woods Despatch of 1854 failed to usher a new age in Orissa. The proposal of G.F. Cockburn, the Commissioner for creating a separate post of Inspector of Schools for Orissa and the establishment of several schools along with a Normal school for the training of teachers were turned down by the Lieutenant Governor. The people had to remain contented with three High Schools in the three District headquarters of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri. Collegiate education was a dream for the Oriyas as Calcutta alone offered them the opportunity. But, Calcutta was an expensive place besides being far away from Orissa and the journey was most unsafe. Such discouraging state of affairs thwarted the educational appetite of the Oriyas, seriously impeding their intellectual growth. They became devoid of a sense of awareness to their problems and grievances, much less gathering courage to fight for their redressal. They failed to understand the Bengal Regulations of the Cornwallis system and under compulsion remained reticent. This attitude proved suicidal to their cause.

1.23 Agriculture in dire negligence and peasants in deep poverty

Lastly, the people suffered because capital and labour were controlled by outsiders. Orissa remained a "neglected benighted province". The situation led to increase of wealth outside the agricultural community with increasing poverty within. It is unfortunate that in an agricultural province like Orissa, the British Government did not take interest to ensure a steady
income for the peasants from their fields. Notwithstanding the manifold disadvantages of short term settlements, they introduced in 1837 a settlement for 30 years. On expiry of the period the term was extended to a further period of 30 years i.e. up to 1897\(^{123}\). These experiments in revenue administration adversely affected the prospect of agriculture by throwing the peasants into a state of prolonged misapprehensions. The thirty years settlements helped to promote doubts and uncertainties and the peasants felt disinclined to improve agriculture. Advertently, or inadvertently the Government precipitated a crisis.

1.24 British Administration unsympathetic to 1866 catastrophe

Though drought was caused by the failure of Nature to provide adequate rains, the catastrophe of 1866 caused by the failure of monsoon could have been tackled through an ever vigilant administrative machinery. The famine ruthlessly exposed the inherent defects of British administration in Orissa\(^{124}\). It was the culmination of a long period of neglect and indifference. It may very well be regarded as the epitome of the unsympathetic administration of the British. The Government when forced to investigate into the causes of the unprecedented tragedy observed that the territorial vivisection of the Oriya-speaking tracts prevented the marshalling of resources to tackle the emergency\(^{125}\). Lack of roads, railways, ports, navigable canals and above all a lack of understanding of the need of the people also played their part. But be that as it may, the great famine cast an indelible stigma against the British Raj.

Bemoaning over the failure of the Government Sir Stafford Northcote, the Secretary of State for India concluded in 1867, that:

"This catastrophe must always remain a monument of our failure, a humiliation to the people of this country, to the Government of this country and to those of our Indian Officials of whom we had perhaps been a little too proud. At the same time, we must hope that we might derive from it lessons which might be of real value to ourselves, and that out of this deplorable evil good of no insignificant kind might ultimately arise"\(^{126}\).

1.25 Orissa: A mere geographical expression
The famine of 1866 became another turning point in the destiny of Orissa. Report of the Famine Commission brought home the truth that administrative indifference coupled with practical difficulties of administering Orissa under three separate provincial administrations (Bengal, Mudras and the Central Provinces) was at the root of this catastrophe. Northcote would suggest a regrouping of the Oriya-speaking territories as a measure of reducing the danger of administrative neglect of a country regularly ravaged by natural calamities like flood and famine. But it was easier said than done. The Oriya-speaking people were in a most unenviable state; a proud race with rich cultural heritage in art, literature, painting, religion and maritime trade were condemned politically and forced to live without education, without a vernacular press and without an elite class to provide leadership, Orissa was merely a geographical expression, a terra incognita; "to the English administrators it was a veritable Boetia thrown at the tail end of their respective domains which needed not much attention, and to the people of Orissa it was a land striken by fate, reduced to the lowest dreggs of poverty and hopelessly dismembered. To provide the beacon of hope for an emancipation the Providence occasioned the birth of Madhusudan Das in 1848 in Orissa.
References


3. Ibid.


5. During Mughal period Orissa had been divided into five administrative sub-units called Sarkars, viz., Jaleswar, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Kalinga dandpat and Rajmahendry. The Nawab of Bengal administered the first three Sarkars, whereas Kalinga dandpat and Rajmahendry formed part of Chicacole Sarkar under Golconda.
   i) Jadunath Sarkar, (ed). The History of Bengal (Muslim period), (Patna) 1973) pp.200 and 207-10;


8. K.M. Patra, Orissa Under the East India Company (New Delhi, 1971) P.XII


10. W.W. Wilson, Ibid.

11. K.M. Patra, op. cit.
   B.C. Kay, op. cit. pp.8-16.
15. Ibid.
18. K.M. Patra, Orissa State Legislature and Freedom Struggle, (Delhi, 1979) P.2. These tributary States were: Angul, Athgarh, Banki, Dasapalla, Dhenkanal, Hindol, Khandpara, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Narasinghpur, Nayagarh, Nilgiri, Ranpur, Sukinda, Talcher and Tigiria.
20. Ibid.
26. B.C. Ray, op. cit. p.177; Orissa Historical Research Journal, op. cit, p. IV.
29. Ibid.
30. S. Mohanty, Madhusudan Das (flew Delhi, 1972) p.2.
31. A. Trower to the Board of Revenue, 22 November 1813, Vol.32.(O.S.A).
32. Bukshee Jagabandhu Vidyadhara was the military commander of the Raja of Khurda and leader of Paik rebellion of 1817.

33. W. Forrester to A. Stirling, the Commissioner, dated 1 August 1818, (Board of Revenue Record Room).

34. B.C. Ray, op. cit. pp.184-185;
   J.W. Kaye-The Permanent settlement in Bengal, pp.2-3.


36. B.S. Das, op. cit. pp.175-176,


42. Calender of Persian Correspondence, Vol. IX, No.605.

43. 4 May 1804, Government to Melville and Harcourt, Bengal Civil Judicial Consultations, 5 September, 1805, No.26

44. B. C. Ray, op. cit. p.205.

45. Ibid., p.206.

46. 4 May 1604, Government to Melville and Harcourt, Bengal Civil Judicial Consultations, 5 September 1805, No.26.

47. J. King.

48. 4 May 1804 Government to Melville & Harcourt, Bengal Civil Judicial Consultations, 5 September 1805 (No.23).


52. 13 May 1817, Trower to the Board of Revenue, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 24 October 1817, No.38.

53. Ibid.

54. 18th January 1813, Embankment Committee to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 20 February 1813, No.36.

55. 31 December 1813, Trower to Embankment Committee, Ibid, No.37.

56. Ibid.

57. 17 February 1813, Embankment Committee to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 27 February 1813, No.25.

58. 20 December 1814, Richardson to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 18 March 1815, No.29.


60. W. Blunt and H. Shakespeare, Regulation for the Administration of Police and Criminal Justice in the Provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, p.54.


62. 13 May 1818, Ewer to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 17 July 1818, No.15.

63. 28 September 1816, Watson to Nizamat Adalat, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, 7 February 1817, No.37.


65. Ibid.

66. 3 January 1814, Richardson to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 5 February 1814, No.37.

67. 3 March 1813, Martindell to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations. 24 April 1818, No. 44.

68. 13 May 1818, Even to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 17 July 1818, No.15.
69. 7 February 1818, Ewer to Government, Bengal Civil Judicial consultations, 3 March 1818, No.1.
70. Ibid, For a detailed list please see P. Mukherjee, op. cit. pp.77-80.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. 13 May 1818 Ewer to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 17 July 1818, No.15.
74. Ibid.
75. P.K. Pattanaik,op.cit.pp.159-60.
76. Ibid.
77. P. Mukherjee, op.cit. p.62. Raja Mukundadeva II was imprisoned at Midnapur since 1805 for his hostilities against the Raj. By heredity rights he enjoyed the sole authority to manage the Puri temple.
79. Ibid.p. 107.
82. W. Forrester to A.Stirling, 21 October 1819, Board of Revenue Archives, Cuttack.
83. Krushna Chandra Singh, a Bengali Amla usurped the Jagir land of Bakshee Jagabandhu by manipulating records.
85. W. Blunt to W.B. Bayley, 27 May 1825, Board of Revenue Archives, vol.31-A.
86. Orissa Historical Research Journal, vol. III, No.4,p.XII.
90. Ibid.
91. Bengal Revenue Selections, Revenue letters from Bengal 17 July 1818.
   East India House Records (N.A.I.)
94. Proceedings Board of Revenue, 17 July 1819.
96. G.Toynbee's A Sketch of the History of Orissa, 1803-1828, Reprinted in
97. Ibid., P. Mukherjee, op.cit.p.167.
98. Walter Ewer investigated the circumstances which led to the Paik rebellion of 1817.
   May 1818.
101. K.M. Patra, Orissa Under the East India Companyt (New Delhi, 1971),
   p.324.
102. Ibid.
103. The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal was appointed as the Famine
   Commissioner to investigate the causes of Orissa Famine, 1866 and
   suggest remedial measures.
   No.3-4, PP.87-88.
107. One million people died.
110. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Minute of Sir John Lawrence, 20 April 1867.
115. "No other province in the Presidency was so deficient of intelligent and public spirited residents who would appreciate the fact bearing on the prospects and means of the people and who could give practical information to the authorities in carrying out remedial measures". Proceedings of Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, General Department, Education, June 1868, No.60, Commissioner of Orissa to the Government of Bengal No.523, 20 September 1867.
119. Ibid., pp.66-68.
120. K.M. Patra, Orissa Under the East India Company, op. cit.,
121. Ibid., p.320.
123. Annual Administration Report, Bengal, 1901-1902, p.110.
126. C.E. Buckland, op. cit. p. 386.
127. Report of the Indian statutory Commission (1930), Vol. V, pp.535 & 566. The Government reports show that there were serious droughts in 1803, 1806, 1808, 1809, 1813, 1817, 1828, 1837, and 1842 and heavy floods in 1851, 1853, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1862, 1866, 1868 and 1872. There were cyclonic storms in 1866, 1872, 1874 and 1892. Also see P. Mukherjee, op. cit., p.355.