CHAPTER-2

MADHUSUDAN DAS AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO ORIYA NATIONALISM
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Madhusudan withdrew himself from the milieu in which he was brought up and returned to the former milieu with a reorientation of vision to guide his people long neglected and looked down upon to a new direction and goal. Plato’s simile of the Cave is worth mentioning to understand the role he played in building a new Orissa. Plato likens the ordinary run of mankind to the prisoners in a cave, standing with their backs to the light and gazing at shadows cast upon a screen by the realities which are moving about behind them. The prisoners take it for granted the shadows which they see on the back wall of the cave are the ultimate realities, since these are the only things that they have ever been able to see. Plato then imagines a single prisoner being suddenly released and compelled to turn around and face the light and walk out into the open. The first result of this is the reorientation of vision. Then he returned to the cave to tell his fellow beings, who have never seen the light about the need to reorient their vision. The withdrawal makes it possible for the personality to realize the powers within himself which might have remained dormant if he had not been released for the time being from his social toils and trammels. The withdrawal is an opportunity, and perhaps a necessary condition for the transfiguration of the personality. But a transfiguration in solitude can have no purpose, and perhaps even no meaning, except as a prelude to the return of the transfigured personality into the social milieu out of which he had originally come. The return is the essence of the whole movement as well as its final cause.

This happened in the case of Madhusudan who withdrew himself from the turbulent social milieu into a new environment in Calcutta. After being reoriented with new ideas, vigour and impetus returned to Orissa to rebuild them.
The second half of the 19th century provided adequate stimulus for the growth of Oriya nationalism; particularly the language agitation, which could generate a strong consciousness for the Oriya language and culture. A new outlook dawned in the minds of the emerging elite along with a sense of pride in their rich heritage. Poets, novelists, social workers and the Journalists contributed whole heartedly to this cultural renaissance. There was a mushroom growth of associations to serve numerous objectives - social, cultural and political which gave great impetus to the growth of Oriya nationalism.

A survey of the vernacular languages of India conducted by G.A. Grierson in 1896\(^1\) had revealed, that:

"The Orissa country is not confined to the Division which now bears that name. It includes a portion of the district of Midnapore in the Worth which together with part of Balasore was the ‘Orissa’ of the phrase “Bengal, Bihar and Orissa” met in the regulations framed by the Government in the last decades of the 18th century. Oriya is also the language of most of the district of Singbhum, belonging to the Division of Chota Nagpur, and of several neighbouring Native States\(^2\), which fall politically within the same Division. On the Vest it is the language of the greater part of the district of Sambalpur and of a small portion of the district of Raipur in the Central Provinces and also of the number of Native states which lie between these districts and Orissa proper. On the South, it is the language of the North of Madras district of Ganjam with its connected Native States\(^4\) and of the Jeypore Agency of Vizagapatam, It is thus spoken in three Governments of British India, viz. in the Lower Provinces of Bengal, in the Central Provinces and in the Madras Presidency”.

Oriya language and script took their present form as early as the 15th and 14th centuries during the rule of Imperial Gangas\(^5\). From 15th century commencing with Sarla as till the advent of the English a large number of poets and writers enriched Oriya literature by their contributions\(^6\). In 1801 and 1811 respectively H.T. Colebrooke\(^7\) and Walter Hamilton\(^8\), two great Indologists had recognized the distinctive features and high quality of Oriya literature. Other English scholars who appreciated the antiquity and richness of Oriya as a major
Indian language 10 AA were Andrew Stirling\textsuperscript{9}, W.W.Hunter\textsuperscript{10} and John Beams\textsuperscript{11}. Admitting the distinctiveness of Oriya the Missionaries for easy publicity took measures to translate many religious books in the language\textsuperscript{12}.

\textbf{2.1 Adoption of Oriya as Official Language}

In view of the above, the British approved the use of Oriya as an official language in Orissa Division along with Persian. For better understanding of the problems of the people such policy was always helpful to the administration. The rules and regulations of the Government were let known to the people through their own language. Besides, the officers were often advised to learn the language of the people they governed\textsuperscript{13}. On 18 August 1837, a Circular order of the Commissioner stipulated the recording of the proceedings of Criminal Courts in Oriya language\textsuperscript{14}. Next year a list of those Deputy Collectors who did not know either to read or write in Oriya was prepared\textsuperscript{15}. Henry Ricketts, the Commissioner asked the Deputy Collectors of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore to pass a language test in Oriya since it was to be used in all official correspondence\textsuperscript{16}. The use of Oriya language in all Judicial records was ordered through a Circular of the Sadar Diwani Adalat and the Sadar Nizamat Adalat dated 5 July 1837\textsuperscript{17}. Amos Sutton missionary was appointed to translate the Judicial records of Cuttack Courts from Parsi, Urdu and Bengali into Oriya. Subsequently, two more translators were appointed\textsuperscript{18}. On 5 October 1841 the Government of Bengal expressed their desire to acquaint the people with various rules and regulations thorough a Gazette to be published in local language\textsuperscript{19}. Accordingly A.J. Mills, the Commissioner proposed to appoint Amos Sutton for editing the Oriya Gazette on a salary of Rupees 300 per mensem. Later on the Oriya Gazette was edited by C. Lacey and his son W.C. Lacey successively\textsuperscript{20}. That such patronage of Oriya language was in the interest of the people is known from the correspondence of Mills. In 1839 he informed the Sadar Board of Revenue that the Court proceedings at Puri being recorded in Oriya was immensely beneficial to the public\textsuperscript{21}.

\textbf{2.2 Shortage of Oriya Text books: An Obstacle to Spread of Oriya Language}
This language Policy of the Government, however, failed to serve as an impetus to the cause of Oriya language due to an acute shortage of Oriya text books which impeded the growth of education through Oriya medium. The Education Committee of Cuttack had no alternative but to suggest the Government that Bengali text books available in plenty should be translated in to Oriya for use in the schools. The paucity of Oriya text books prompted the Inspector of Schools to recommend that Bengali be made the medium of instruction in schools. Accordingly, Bengali was introduced as the medium of instruction by Bowring, the Collector of Cuttack in the schools at Kendrapada and Mahasingpur. In 1848 the collector suggested the Commissioner; “The Oriyah of this district, whatever it may originally have been, is now but a dialect of Bengali, from which it differs chiefly in pronunciation, and in its written character. I would submit as a measure of general policy, it is desirable that the Oriyah should cease to exist as a separate language within the British territories.”

2.3 Replacement of Oriya by Bengali

But such a change in policy, the Commissioner realised was fraught with the danger of substituting the Bengalis in place of the Oriyas against Government jobs and should be discouraged. As a compromise some officers mooted the idea of introducing Hindustani in the Courts and schools of Orissa. Ignoring the advice of G. Gouldsbury, the Commissioner and E. Roer, the Inspector of Schools, the educational authorities allowed the introduction of Bengali in place of Oriya in 1864-65. Furthermore, the Director of Public Instructions did not make any provision for the publication of Oriya text books which he considered to be an infructuous expenditure. Roer’s vigorous advocacy for supplying Oriya class books failed to move the Government; and a pro-Bengali strand in the educational policy began to threaten the Oriya language with its grammar, idioms and rich literary heritage.

2.4 Perpetuation of Bengali Administration through its Language

It was an opportune moment for the Bengali Officers and Amlas to perpetuate their hold over the affairs and administration in Orissa through a
clever manipulation of the situation. They lost no time to gear up the bureaucratic machinery in an attempt to obliterate Oriya language and culture. A deliberate and systematic effort was made to publicise Bengali as a rich and superior language of which Oriya was but a mere local patois. They took the cue from an initial move in this regard taken by Bowring, the District Magistrate of Cuttack who in 1647 had observed that for administrative convenience Oriya should not continue as a separate language of a small unit; it would be beneficial if Oriya could be written in Bengali script. He further stated that Oriya was a derivative of Bengali language. Umacharan Halder, a Bengali Deputy Inspector of Schools who came to Orissa in 1864 on reversion from a higher post in Midnapore due to misconduct, advocated the use of Bengali script for the Oriya language. He published his views in the Cuttack Star without anticipating the bitter public controversies his statement would provoke.

2.5 Monopolization of Jobs by Bengalis

In Orissa, due to the aversion of the Oriya-speaking people to English education (till 1839) almost all the Government jobs were monopolised by the English-educated Bengalis. These men were neither willing to learn Oriya language nor liked to educate their children through that medium. Being influential men in the Government they consistently adopted a hostile attitude towards the Oriya language. In 1870 Kanticharan Bhattacharya, a Bengali teacher of Balasore High School, published a monograph expounding the thesis that Oriya was a mere dialect of the Bengali language, and not distinctly separate from it. The views of Kanticharan got further support from the scholarly exposition of Rajendralal Mitra, an eminent Bengali historian of Calcutta, who in course of a lecture delivered at the Cuttack Debating Club in December 1868, stated that no useful purpose would be served by trying to defend Oriya as distinct from Bengali.

2.6 Anti Oriya Campaign
He further harped on the issues like the poverty of the Oriyas, non-availability of Oriya books for the schools and the necessity of adopting Bengali in place of Oriya. In his opinion, "The Uriya, instead of being a self contained and independent member of the Aryan Indian Vernacular is more closely and intimately connected with Bengali." Such views of eminent scholars led the Director of Public Instructions to suggest the Government the futility of printing Oriya text books. A group of Bengalis at Balasore carried on a signature campaign in favour of their language with Sibdas Bhattacharya, the Deputy Inspector of Schools as the leader of this clandestine move. Other proponents of introducing Bengali in place of Oriya were Rajkishore Mukhopadhyay, a Law teacher of Cuttack and Trailokyanath Mudhopadhyay of Jajpur who suggested withdrawal of any support for a dying out language like Oriya.

A great public controversy raised its head over such anti-Oriya statements in 1869-70, drawing to into vortex of conflict members of both the communities. It was heartening to observe that the domiciled Bengalis of Orissa tried their best either to remain aloof from the controversy or rallied round the cause of Oriya language. Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, a noted Bengali academician and writer mercilessly exposed the misconception of Kanticharan Bhattacharya, stating that Oriya, Assamese and Bengali had close similarities on account of their common origin. John Beams, the Collector of Balasore studied the problem from a scientific angle and established the historicity of Oriya language and grammar. In his opinion, "At a time when Uriya was already a fixed and settled language, Bengali did not exist."  

2.7 Organized Protests against Bengali Dominance

The language controversy took a very serious turn due to the organised attempts of rival communities to espouse their respective cause. While the Cuttack Society and the Cuttack Debating Club organised the in an anti-Oriya campaign with the Utkal Hitaisini of Kalipada Banaapadhyay as their publicity media, the Oriya cause was championed by Ullasini Sabha and powerful writers like Gauri Shankar Ray and Fakir Mohan Senapati. Ray branded Rajkishore Mukhapadhyay, the Law teacher as a 'sheep' for his lack of wisdom. Through
the scathing editorials of the Utkal Dipika and Samvad Vahika, both Ray and Senapati could successfully stimulate a national feeling among the Oriyas against the machinations of the Bengalis, The language crisis fostered a strong race consciousness among the Oriyas, who now realised that their political redemption depended upon the safety of the Oriya language and culture. It is this love for their mother tongue which boosted up brisk literary activities giving birth to modern Oriya literature, Besides, the emergent Oriya nationalism became manifest in 1870 when the Oriyas of Balasore town petitioned against Sibdas Bhattacharya, the Deputy Inspector and got him transferred. Atkinson, the Director of Public Instructions was publicly condemned as ‘Kalapahad’ for his pro-Bengali attitude in 1874 when he visited Orissa. The Oriyas hereafter, more often than not, took a concerted move to prevent the imposition of Bengali, thereby exhibiting a growing concern for their problems and welfare.

### 2.8 Acceptance of Oriya as a Separate Language

The language crisis in the Orissa Division tended to subside towards 1872 when the Bengal Government acknowledged Bengali, Assamese and Oriya as separate languages. Bengali ceased to find a place in the educational institutions of Orissa forcing the Bengalis to learn Oriya language. Even teaching of Bengali was not allowed. The domiciled Bengalis did not resent learning the language of the land of their adoption. This catholicity of temperament gave fillip to healthy emotional integration and a large number of Bengali elites enriched modern Oriya literature by their prolific writings. Radhanath Ray, Ram Shankar Ray, Pearl Mohan Acharya, Sitanath Ray, Dwarakanath Chakravarti, Nimai Vallabh Vidyasagar, Krishna Prasad Choudhury and Raja Baikuntha Nath lie were some prominent members of the domiciled Bengali elite class who immensely helped the growth of Oriya society and culture in very many ways. The social tension of the 1860s gave way to a new era of harmony and progress. Pearl Mohan Acharya wrote the first History of Orissa in Oriya language which became extremely popular among the grown ups and the children alike, inculcating in them a sense of pride in the past history and glorious heritage of Orissa. The educated people began to talk
of ‘Oriya race’ and ‘Oriya culture’ and projected the same national consciousness in their writings.

2.9 Associations

By serving as a breeding ground for the formation of many socio-cultural associations in Orissa the language crisis served another useful purpose for the growth of Oriya nationalism. Like the vernacular press these associations came into existence as public forum to project different strands of opinion and rendered valuable service in the social life. Their formation apparently marked the gradual progress through which the society in Orissa was advancing.

Though the Mutual Improvement Society of Cutback formed by the Englishmen was the first social organisation in Orissa, the origin of Oriya associations can be traced to the famine of 1866 when some leading publicmen of Cuttack town formed a ‘Rice Selling Company with a view to serve the famine striken people. This company was organised by Harekrushna Das and Iswar Chandra Banerjee. But the real source of inspiration for organising associations was the desire of the Oriya elite class to protect their mother tongue from Bengali chauvinism. Accordingly, the first socio-cultural association to make its appearance in 1866 was the Utkal Bhasa Unnati Bidhayini Sabha of Balasore. Fakir Mohan Senapati, Radhanath Ray, Bholanath Samantrai, Damodar Prasad Ray and Joykrushna Choudhury were the members of this Sabha.

2.10 Formation of Anti-Oriya Debating Club

Those Bengalis who were trying to introduce their script and language in Orissa formed the Cuttack Debating Club in 1369 which sponsored the anti-Oriya campaign of scholars like Rajendralal Mitra. Thereby Cuttack Debating Club stimulated great public controversy and tension. The Bengali Zamindars had formed the Cuttack Society to serve their own interests. Its Secretary was Kalipada Banerjee. The Cuttack Society patronised a Library, a Press and two weekly newspaper, the Utkal Hitaisini in Oriya and the Orissa Patriot in English. There were no Oriya member in this association and the Utkal Dipika had alleged serious charges of misappropriation against its
Secretary, apart from stating that the Society did not serve the Oriya cause. Ravenshaw, the Commissioner made an unsuccessful attempt to merge together the Cuttack Debating Club, Cuttack Society and Utkaal Bhasa Unnati Bidhayini Sabha under one association to be named as the ‘Orissa Society’. In doing this he tried to bring harmony between the Oriya and Bengali communities. The Utkaal Bhasa Uddipani Sabha which came into existence in 1867 was mostly an association of the aristocrats of Cuttack town with three main objectives: (i) to improve Oriya language, (ii) to introduce it in the Government offices and (iii) to get the Oriyas appointed against Government jobs. For its noble endeavour, the association was highly praised by the Utkal Dipika, In fact this association compiled some Oriya text books, succeeded in introducing chaste Oriya language in official business and furnished a list of Oriya writers to the Commissioner.

In the Oriya society the members of the karana caste were the first to avail the benefits of Government employment since 1835. Narasingh Charan Das, Chaturbhuj Patnaik, Madhusudan Patnaik, Brahmananda Das, Dinabandhu Patnaik and Harekrushna Das etc., who served as Deputy Collectors were of karana caste. On 1 January 1869 Narasingh Charan Das initiated the move of forming an association for the collective improvements of the karana community. This came to be known as Karana Sabha. The association strove to remove certain caste prejudices and reduce ritual expenses during marriage and other functions.

2.11 Cuttack: The Hub of all Protest Organizations

A study of the nature and objectives of various associations shows that Cuttack was the main center of brisk social activities where associations were formed by the students, the Christians, the Muslims, the Brahmos, the Kayasthas, for the improvement of Oriya language, eradication of corruptions, to enforce prohibition and to ensure the spread of education. At Balasore the National Society, Baikunthanath De Social Club, the Mohammedan Association and the Balasore Branch of Brahmo Samaj played vital role in organizing the public life. The orthodox people of Purl set
up the Purl Society, Puri Students Association and other organisations which served the cause of Sanskrit studies and Jagannath cult. Ganjam, Bhadrak and the headquarters of the tributary states also saw the emergence of organised public life to improve community interests. Commenting upon this new development in the Oriya society the Utkal Hitaisini published:

"Orissa is gradually being flooded with societies in the Western Style. There are societies of school founders, societies relating to social and political issues involving the youths, the exciting societies of Pandits, school teachers and even old people are adorning this town of Cuttack".

2.12 Utkal Sabha: Articulating Oriyan Cause

Such organised public life while facilitating radical social changes and a progressive outlook, also helped the emergence of political associations like the Utkal Sabha and the Orissa Association. In fact the former was the precursor of the latter. The Utkal Sabha (Cuttack, 1877) was initially an association for literary discussions with Gopal Chandra Datta, a domiciled Bengali as the Secretary. It met twice a year under the chairmanship of eminent academicians and men of letters to discuss literary topics. In 1879 the members of the Sabha heard Peari Mohan Acharya’s discourse on “National life”. From 1881 the character of the Sabha began to change further when Madhusudan Das appeared as the leader of the Oriya elite class at Cuttack. He joined hands with Gauri Sankar Ray, the editor of Utkal Dipika and other like-minded persons to organise and educate the people on contemporary political issues. Madhusudan and Gauri Shankar transformed the Utkal Sabha into a political association by widening its objectives and increasing the frequency of meetings. Since then the Utkal Sabha concerned itself with important political issues like the Local Self Government Scheme of Lord Ripon. In 1883 the members discussed the controversial Ilbert Bill and passed resolutions calling upon the Government to bestow such judicial powers upon the Indian Judges which would enable them to try the European offenders of law. Since then the Utkal Sabha or as it was also called the Orissa Association, provided a much needed forum for the
conveyance and articulation of the political thinking and aspirations of the people of Orissa.

2.13 Formation of Orissa Association for Specific Problems of Orissa

In course of time the Orissa Association concerned itself more and more with the specific problems of Oriyas instead of general issues concerning the whole country. Probably Madhusudan’s stewardship was responsible for this new orientation. In 1885, he became the secretary of the association and its Vice-president from 1888. He served the organisation in that capacity for a long period of fifteen years remaining as the undisputed leader of the Oriya people. The Orissa Association resorted to public discussions on various grievances affecting the people and memorialising the Government for their early redressal. In a meeting of the Association held in 1884, Madhusudan pressed upon the necessity of expanding the canal system for irrigation purposes, prevention of droughts and famines. The meeting was attended by the Commissioner who got an opportunity to understand the agrarian problems besetting Orissa. During the visit of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to Cuttack in 1885 Madhusudan, on behalf of the Orissa Association presented a memorial, demanding among other measures, extension of railways, agricultural development, spread of industries and industrial education for the benefit of his countrymen.

2.14 Demands for Amalgamation of Oriya Speaking Tracts

The amalgamation of outlying Oriya-speaking tracts under the Central Provinces and Madras Presidency with the Orissa Division was given due emphasis in the memorial. From now onwards the amalgamation issue was accorded top priority among the public demands spearheaded by Madhusudan through the Orissa Association. On 17 November 1888, he presented an Address of welcome before Sir Stewart Colvin Bayley, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal drawing the latter’s attention on (i) to the difficulties experienced by the transfer of Salt Administration Headquarters to Madras resulting in the loss of employment opportunities for the Oriyas and reduced production, and (ii) disadvantages of keeping the Oriya-race politically divided
under three separate Provinces. Elaborating the maladies of Orissa Madhusudan stated;

"The isolated position of Orissa, owing to want of facilities for communication and the absence of foreign capital and foreign enterprise which have contributed so largely to the development of manufacturing industry and have furnished means of livelihood to the labouring class in other parts of India make distress and scarcity to be felt more by the people here than they are felt in any other tracts within Your Honour's rule. Railways, the most important and potent factor in the civilisation of the world has not yet been introduced in Orissa, though its ancient cities attract more visitors every year than any city elsewhere in twenty years. It is no wonder that Orissa was most backward in intellectual advancement and material prosperity. We sincerely hope that Your Honour will give us the Hallways and thus open the road to Orissa's material prosperity and intellectual advancement which the canal system has not accomplished. The transfer of Salt Department from here to Madras Government has affected the interest of labouring classes by depriving many thousands from earning their livelihood. At a time when it is proposed to transfer a portion of Central Provinces to the Bombay Presidency, we feel it our duty to solicit Your Honour's attention to the fact that the tract of the country where the Uriyas reside is anomalously placed under the administration of Madras, Bengal and the Central Provinces Governments. We would therefore, ask Your Honour to place the territorial limits where the Oriya language is spoken under one administration and thus knit together under one administration a large population which speak one language and have the same tradition and customs".

2.15 Lieutenant Governor's Rejection of Amalgamation of Orissa

It was probably not possible for Sir Bayley to adopt prompt measures ameliorating the problems outlined in the Address of welcome. But his comments upon the issue of amalgamation appeared most disastrous. Not withstanding the sound reasons advanced by the Orissa Association for amalgamating the scattered Oriya-speaking tracts, Bayley summarily dismissed
the idea as ‘ridiculous’ without even trying to justify his stand. Expressing the bitter public feeling the Utkal Dipika reported that the “Darbar congregation was disappointing” and the “Lieutenant Governor was most unsympathetic”.

2.16 Language Agitation in Sambalpur

The language agitation in Sambalpur caused by an unfair and impolitic decision of the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces gave an opportunity to the Orissa Association to try its strength. The Central Provinces was a Hindi-speaking province with only one exception, i.e. the Sambalpur district where the people spoke Oriya. In the Government records, the district was therefore, mentioned as an ‘Oriya country’. The official business was transacted in Oriya language. This linguistic difference between Sambalpur and other districts of the Central Provinces where Hindi was the official language gave rise to certain administrative difficulties. It prevented the transfer of officials; Oriya employees of Sambalpur resisted their transfer to Hindi-speaking districts and the Hindi-speaking employees found it inconvenient to function in a non-Hindi district like Sambalpur. Further, the Government observed that the Oriya employees were forming small groups of vested interests due to a prevailing custom of ‘Mahaprasad’. The ‘Mahaprasad’ custom, apart from cementing friendship between two or more persons was actually a sort of offensive and defenses alliance for nepotism and corruption. Besides affecting the general efficiency of the district administration, the custom made detection of crime difficult. It was therefore considered desirable by the Government to substitute Hindi in place of Oriya as the Official language in Sambalpur. The Government felt that since the Oriya language spoken in Sambalpur was a local dialect, more akin to Hindi, the people would welcome such a change. A successful integration of the district with the province through a change of official language would remove the insular outlook of the people.

2.17 British Policy of Replacing Oriya by Hindi

Prompted by the above consideration, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces through the Resolution No.237 dated 15 January 1895 declared that Oriya be replaced by Hindi as the official language of the
Sambalpur district. The order stipulated maintenance of official records in Hindi and employment of Hindi-speaking officials. Those who did not know Hindi were required to learn it forthwith. Hindi became the medium of instruction in the schools. Non-Hindi teachers were required to learn Hindi at Raipur failing which they were retrenched.

2.18 Public Protest against the language Policy of the Government

Contrary to the expectation of the Chief Commissioner that the substitution of Hindi in place of Oriya as the official language would be a welcoming change for Sambalpur, the people of the district reacted strongly to the new language policy. The Sambalpur Hitaisini published from the adjacent tributary State of Bamra, gave expression to the public resentment and called upon the Oriya-speaking people to agitate against bureaucratic tyranny. While strongly commenting upon the language policy of the Government, the editor, sincerely believed that the Chief Commissioner would see reason by learning from the recent language controversy in the Orissa Division where some Bengali Officers arbitrarily tried to impose Bengali as the medium of instruction in schools and introduce the Bengali script. He successfully roused the apprehension of the Oriyas that their language and culture were in grave crisis. The situation demanded strong and concerted public action against the language policy of the Government. A large number of letters to the Editor, to the leading public men of Sambalpur, and appeals to the Government were published creating an unprecedented mass consciousness. Inspiring poems of poet Gangadhar Meher called upon the people to rally for the cause of the mother tongue and Oriya culture. Dharanidhar Mishra, a representative Oriya elite of Sambalpur, organised public meetings in the towns and villages to mobilise strong public opinion against the unpopular step taken by the Government.

He even submitted a lengthy memorial to Lord Elgin, the Viceroy analysing the fallacy of the language policy and demanding its abrogation. The language agitation of Sambalpur had its echo in the Orissa Division. The lending newspaper of Cuttack and Balasore - viz, the Utkal Dipika and Sambad_Vahika, vehemently criticised the Resolution No.237 dated 15

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January 1895 as ‘impolitic, unjust and arbitrary’. The Oriya press gave the language issue both depth and dimension by urging upon the Oriya-speaking people to unite and fight for their language and culture. Series of lengthy editorials published in these papers exposed the misconceptions of the Government.

2.19 Protest Movement in Cuttack against Imposition of Hindi

The elite class of Cuttack town held a public meeting on 3 May 1895 with Madhusudan Das as the President to record their protest against the imposition of Hindi, emphatically demanding the restoration of Oriya as official language103. On 20 June, Madhusudan as the President of the Orissa Association rented a memorandum to Lord Elgin explaining the richness and the distinctiveness of Oriya language104. He drew the attention of the Viceroy to the status of Oriya as an official language under Bengal Presidency. The memorandum contended that it would be unfair to punish the entire Oriya community of the district for the alleged corruption and nepotism of a few employees; that the language policy was against the idea of natural justice, and against the spirit of British administration, because a vast community should not be forced to learn the language of a few officials. To Madhusudan, the language policy was an extremely cruel measure and the worst type of gagging105.

2.20 Madhusudan Das’ efforts to convince British Government

Since Madhusudan was the chief spokesman of the Oriya-speaking people, Oharanidhar Mishra, and other leading men of Sambalpur desired that the former should raise the language question in the British Parliament during his proposed visit to England. He should convey his feelings personally to the British people and their leaders106. During his sojourn in London Madhusudan met public men and administrators like Sir William Wedderburn, Sir Charles Dilkie and Sir George Hamilton among whom he circulated a monograph “A Brief Account of Orissa Under British Administration”. The monograph was a gross exposition of maladies caused by the apathetic British administration, with a poignant note which said that “The Government will have to make amends for the wrong done to Orissa”107.
2.21 Reconsidering the Language Policy

Not withstanding these steps Oriya was replaced by Hindi as the official language of Sambalpur with effect from 1 January 1896 causing great hardships to the local people. It exercised an injurious effect upon the mental faculties of the Oriya children. Gradually the number of Hindi teachers began to multiply at the coat of Oriya schools and Oriya teachers. The doors of Government employment remained closed for the sons of the soil. With the importation of increasing number of Hindi-speaking officials discontentment among the Oriyas began to swell. The people again took resort to memorialise the Viceroy in 1901, complaining against the violation of the Government of India’s instruction to restrict the number of non-Oriya Officers imported to Sambalpur and the arbitrary manner in which 82 Oriya Primary Schools in the district had been closed. Though the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces subscribed to the views that:

“It was necessary for the welfare of the district and its officials that Oriya should be stamped out as far as it lies within the power of the Government to do so.”

He was forced by Curzon, the Viceroy to examine the veracity of the allegations about the closure of 82 primary schools. Curzon was an avowed champion of vernacular as the medium of instruction in the Primary schools for which he asked the Chief Commissioner to reconsider his decision regarding the restoration of Oriya as official language of Sambalpur.

2.22 Non-Acceptability of Hindi among the People

Andrew Fraser, the Chief Commissioner was obliged to give a close look to the language issue. He found out that the imposition of Hindi had failed to make the language popular among the Oriyas. Further, maintenance of official records in a language unknown to the people concerned had generated much corruption and practical hardships. He, therefore, suggested that Hindi and Oriya both should be recognised as languages of the court. But this was hardly satisfying to the Oriyas. They made another courage move to realise their
aim. A small delegation waited upon Fraser at Nagpur to convince him that the Oriyas of Sambalpur were culturally and ethnologically related to the main stock in the Orissa Division. Therefore, as a measure to overcome the administrative inconveniences caused by retaining only one Oriya-speaking district in a Hindi-speaking province they should better be transferred to the Orissa Division under Bengal\textsuperscript{114}. The same delegation decided to wait upon the Viceroy at Simla in September 1901 on the occasion of an All-India Educational conference. Madhusudan Das could not lead this delegation to Simla due to some unavoidable difficulties\textsuperscript{115}. He despatched a lengthy telegram to the Viceroy on 2 September drawing the latter’s attention to the “impolitic and impractical”, order of the Chief Commissioner in substituting Oriya by Hindi as the official language of Sambalpur\textsuperscript{116}. He further, endorsed a copy of the memorandum which he had submitted to Lord Elgin on 20 June 1895 as President of the Orissa Association. Curzon gave due weightage to the request of Madhusudan who was informed that the Viceroy was waiting for a report from Fraser to take a final decision in the matter\textsuperscript{117}.

2.23 Restoring Oriya as the Official Language in Sambalpur

Fraser visited Sambalpur in the last week of September and after a careful and thorough enquiry into the grievances of the people submitted his famous Note dated 5 October 1901\textsuperscript{118}. He found that, (i) the people were keen on getting their children educated in Oriya, (ii) the closing of 82 primary schools was a mistake and (iii) there was no demand for Hindi. Since $\frac{4}{5}$ of the total population of the district was Oriya-speaking, he concluded: “the Government ought not, except on the plea of absolute necessity to compel the people to give up their mother tongue \textsuperscript{119}. What I am convinced of, is this, that Uriya and not Hindi ought to be the Court language of Sambalpur, and that, in that case, Sambalpur ought to be joined with Orissa to which it really belongs”\textsuperscript{120}.

The Government of India had no reason to reject the recommendation of the Chief Commissioner. Accordingly, orders were issued canceling the Resolution No.237 dated 15 January 1895 and restoring Oriya as the official
language of Sambalpur with effect from 1 January 1902\textsuperscript{121}. The success achieved by the people after a prolonged struggle for just cause was indeed gratifying. It led to great rejoicings in Sambalpur and everywhere in the Orissa Division. The people and the Press conveyed to the Viceroy and the Chief Commissioner their profound gratitude for a fair decision\textsuperscript{122}.

2.24 Joining of Sambalpur with Orissa

How the successful conclusion of the language agitation in Sambalpur led to the joining of the district with Orissa Division is an interesting study. Andrew Fraser's suggestion that "Sambalpur ought to be joined with Orissa to which it really belongs\textsuperscript{123}\textsuperscript{123}", did not go in vain. On completion of the East Coast Railway in 1899 Orissa could be linked up with Calcutta. This was a milestone in the history of the province as it could be brought nearer to the seat of supreme Government for a better appreciation of its problems. The first Viceroy ever to visit Orissa was Lord Curzon, who fascinated by her archaeological monuments visited Bhubaneswar and Puri on 16 December 1900\textsuperscript{124}. On this occasion Madhusudan got an opportunity to acquaint the redoubtable Viceroy with the rich cultural heritage of Orissa and the maladies caused by her political dismemberment.

Curzon was then preoccupied with the problem of a territorial reorganisation of the Indian provinces most of whose territorial size he considered to be 'antiquated', 'illogical' and "productive of inefficiency", He was bent upon fixing "the provincial boundaries for the next generation\textsuperscript{125}\textsuperscript{125}. Since the idea to reduce the stupendous size of Bengal, was uppermost in his mind it, was uncertain if he would entertain Fraser's proposal to accommodate Sambalpur as an additional burden for the Government of Bengal\textsuperscript{126}. Fraser, therefore, had proposed an alternative; entire Orissa Division with the district of Sambalpur would be added to the Central Provinces whose Chief Commissioner would administer a large homogenous unit consisting of the Oriya-speaking people\textsuperscript{127}. The leading public men of Orissa were divided on this issue. A section of Oriya people considered it more advantageous to be governed as a part of the backward Central Provinces where the Oriyas would not have to
compete with the highly educated and advanced Bengalis\textsuperscript{128}. But Madhusudan vehemently opposed this move. As leader of the Orissa Association he led a delegation to wait upon the Commissioner of the Orissa Division\textsuperscript{129}. In his opinion the accession of Orissa with the Central Provinces would be detrimental to her progress. Orissa should better remain with Bengal to avail of the advantages of the Calcutta University, the High Court and the employment opportunities which the city offered\textsuperscript{130}. The Government of India also entertained similar views because during the past one hundred year’s close administrative contact the association of Orissa with Bengal had grown stronger, Further, the East Coast Railways which United up Cuttack with Calcutta by a most convenient line of communication in 1899 promised better administration for the neglected province\textsuperscript{131}.

2.25 Amalgamation of Orissa as a Homogenous unit under the Bengal Presidency

The mission of Madhusudan was partially fulfilled in December 1903 when the famous Risley Circular\textsuperscript{132} of Lord Curzon proposed to amalgamate all the Oriya-speaking tracts under Bengal. In the Circular the Government of India stipulated that considering the Question like “race, language, administrative convenience and territorial integrity” Sambalpur with five adjoining Oriya Tributary States, (of the Central Provinces), Orissa Division and a port of the Singbhum district of the Chhota Nagpur Division (of Bengal) and Ganjam district, Ganjam Agency and Vizagapatam Agency tracts (of Madras Presidency) should be amalgamated together to form a homogenous unit in the Bengal Presidency. This would ensure a linguistic and cultural integration of the scattered Oriya race, besides relieving the three Provincial Governments from “a troublesome excrescence\textsuperscript{133}.

After due consideration and exchange of views the Government of India in a Despatch to the Home Government proposed the partition of Bengal for creating a new province, wherein it was recommended to transfer Sambalpur along with the tributary States of Bamra, Kalahandi, Patna, Rairakhol and
Sonepur from the Central Provinces to the Orissa Division. The Resolution No.2491 dated 19 July 1905 said:

“Linguistic considerations are the main reasons for this transfer, which it is confidently believed will be beneficial to the interest of the people”.

The above mentioned areas came under the administration of Bengal with effect from 16 October 1905 which marked the successful culmination of a popular movement to safeguard Oriya culture and language. Madhusudan’s unabated struggle to amalgamate the Oriya-speaking tracts of Sambalpur region and the crowning success provided great impetus to similar movements in Ganjam area under the Madras Presidency.

2.26 Language Agitation in Ganjam

In 1896, the Linguistic survey conducted by Q. A. Grierson had revealed that:

“Oriya is the language of north of the Madras district of Ganjam, with its connected Native states and of the Jeypore Agency of Vizagapatam”.

The above region had formed a part of Madras Presidency since 1766 when the British occupied Northern Circars. During rule of the Imperial Gangas and Suryavamsi Gajapatis this area had formed a vital part of their empire. A large number of Oriya inscriptions dated in 14th and 15th centuries are found in the temples of Simhachalam Mukhalingam and Srikurmum. The area constituted a nucleus region of the Oriya country serving as the cradle land of Oriya culture. But after the British occupation a growing influence of the Telugu-speaking people was gradually felt in the Court, Telugu language was introduced in the Schools and in the Courts. That admitted by James Grant, A.R. Symmonds, John Beams and A. Stirling. In 1774 in the Ganjam district alone there were 1,000,000 Oriya-speaking people constituting 2/3 of the entire population. The census figure recorded in 1881, 1891 and 1901 shows that the Oriyas were more in number than the Telugu-speaking people. In social relationship, caste, customs and traditions they had no affinity with the South. In matters of food, clothings, habits, religious rituals they were akin to
the people of Orissa Division. The temples built in the area were typical Orissan temples in their architectural style. As a bilingual area consisting of both Oriya and Telugu population, Ganjam posed a great problem for the administrative authorities. They were prone to believe that the inclusion of Ganjam as the Northern most district of Madras was a historical error. The historical connection between Ganjam and Orissa and the linguistic and cultural affinity often impelled the Oriya population of the district to pine for an union with the main stock of the race living in the Orissa Division.

2.27 Dominance of Telugus Putting Oriyas in Jeopardy

The dominating position of the Telugus in the Courts, their preponderance in the Schools and Government offices held the Oriya interests, Oriya language and culture in jeopardy. Oriya was never taught in the schools where the teachers were either Telugus or Tamilians. The Oriya boys had no inducement to join the schools since they were to learn every thing through Telugu medium; as a result, the loaves and fishes of Government employment were denied to them. Though the Madras Government in their G.O. No.2024 dated 15 December 1890 desired that half the number of employees in Ganjam should be Oriyas or Oriya-knowing persons, and officers without knowledge of Oriya would not be promoted, these orders were never obeyed. A malafide attempt to abolish Oriya from University examinations generated bitter resentment against the Telugu chauvinists in 1870. The Utkal Dipika published an account of the unkind treatment meted out to the Oriyas in Ghumsur soliciting Government intervention in the matter. An Oriya movement was launched at Russelconda, the headquarters of Ghumsur Taluq where the people in a public meeting resolved to memorialise the Government to protect Oriya language against what they termed as Telugu expansionism. The Oriya Press strongly criticised the clandestine move of some Telugu officials to write all depositions and Judicial proceedings in Telugu script.

2.28 Oriya Movement
The Oriya movement in Ganjam was patronised by Harihar Mardaraj Deo, the Raja of Khallikote. To organise the movement he invited Nilamoni Vidyaratna, the renowned editor of Sambalpur Hitaisini in 1902 who started Prajabanahu a weekly newspaper from Rambha. Through this paper Nilamoni transmitted the spirit of Oriya nationalism and created a vigorous public opinion for the amalgamation of Ganjam and other adjacent Oriya-speaking tracts with Orissa. He persuaded Harihar to organise a national conference of the Oriya-speaking people to stimulate unity and solidarity among the dismembered tracts. Accordingly, in July 1902 Harihar held an informal meeting of the Oriya leaders like Madhusudan Das, Radhanath Ray, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Maharaja of Mayurbhanj, A. Parasuram Patro and others at Rambha palace to discuss the distressful conditions of the Oriyas under Madras Presidency and the ways and means of holding a national conference at Berhampur with representatives from all Oriya-speaking tracts. The leaders appreciated the initiative of Harihar, and Nilamoni gave wide publicity to the proposed conference through the Prajabanahu.

2.29 Madhusudan's Role in Inspiring the people for Amalgamation

The conference which took place at Berhampur on 11 - 12 April 1903, under the Chairmanship of Shyam Sundar Rajguru, the first Graduate of Parlakimedi was a successful congregation of the Oriya elite, pulsating with a new spirit of national consciousness. There was so much enthusiasm and involvement among the Oriya delegates attending the conference that when Madhusudan Das alighted from the train at Berhampur, his carriage was drawn physically by the mammoth crowd to the place of meeting. He gave an inspiring speech on the necessity of amalgamation. This assemblage was known as the 'Ganjam National Conference', it was indeed a milestone in the history of Oriya nationalism.

Since the amalgamation issue was uppermost in the mind of Oriyas of Ganjam they memorialised the Viceroy to amalgamate Ganjam with Orissa as the best safeguard to their language and culture. Their dismemberment from the main stock was considered "like a limb separated from the body". They prayed
for the union of all the Oriya-speaking areas under one Government and one University. Against the representation, the Telugus of Ganjam submitted a memorial to the Viceroy, to neutralise the effect of which the Oriyas submitted another rejoinder on 1 November 1903 under signature of 566 persons.

2.30 Separation of Ganjam and other Oriya Speaking Tracts from Madras Presidency

Taking note of the developments and the Justification of the Oriya cause, the Government of India in the famous Risley Circular proposed an excision of Ganjam and other Oriya-speaking tracts from the Madras Presidency for union with the Orissa Division. Since the Telugus were opposed to the excision proposal, they made a vigorous move to mobilise public opinion against the scheme. The Telugu officers did not even hesitate to exercise official pressure to prevent excision. Under the Telugu influence the Indian National Congress at its Madras session resolved;

“That the Congress views with deep concern the present policy of the Government of India in breaking up territorial divisions which have been of long standing....and deprecates the separation of the district of Ganjam and the Agency tract of Ganjam and Vizagapatam districts from the Madras Presidency”.

2.31 Opposition of Governor of Madras to the Move

Such persistent efforts of the Telugus received warm patronage from Lord Ampthill, the Governor of Madras. Ampthill was never in support of the separation of Ganjam area from his province. He was unhappy over the issue because Curzon did not consult him prior to formulating of the scheme. Fortunately for him Curzon proceeded on long leave from April 1904 to January 1905 when the Government of India finalised the details of territorial regrouping. During the absence of Curzon, Ampthill officiated as the viceroy, and under his behest the Government of India resolved:

“Reasons of administrative expedience arising out of the peculiar linguistic and racial conditions and the geographical conformation of Ganjam and the Agency tracts of Vizagapatam were opposed to the transfer of those areas from the Government of Madras”.

67
The decision temporarily sealed the fate of the Oriya movement in Ganjam. But the Oriya-speaking people did not give in. They consistently maintained pressure upon the Government through memorials and delegations demanding employment of Oriyas in the Government service and accession of the Oriya tracts with Orissa.

Thus, over the language issue the barometer of Oriya nationalism recorded steady rise of national consciousness; the hopes created by the successful agitation of Sambalpur did not appear bleak inspite of the failure in Ganjam. The Oriyas remained steadfast in their effort to realise the political objective of amalgamation which had a deeper cultural meaning, i.e. protection of Oriya language and culture.
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48. N. Samantrai, op. cit., p.87.
49. Utkal Dipika, 20 September, 1879.
50. Sahu, Mishra and Sahu, op. cit., p.444.
51. Utkal Dipika, 26 May 1867.
52. M.C. Mahapatra, op. cit., p.190.
53. Ibid., p.189.
54. Ibid., p.190.
55. Utkal Dipika, 23 July and 17 December 1870.
59. Cuttack College Student’s Association (Utkal Dipika, 19 August 1882), Orissa Graduates and Undergraduates Sabha (established, 3 March 1888).
60. Christian’s Association (1869).
61. Orissa Islam Association (1875).
63. Kayastha Sabha (1889).
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65. UtKal Dipika, 3 May 1879 and 23 August 1884.
66. Ibid.
67. Siksha Samiti (Oriya O Navasamvad, 19 May 1887).
68. Established, 30 June 1878.
69. Established, 1 June 1895.
70. Established, 11 January 1896.
71. Samvod Vahika, 28 August 1879.
72. Utkal Dipika, 20 August 1879.
73. Established, 1882.
74. Utkal Dipika, 27 August 1870.
75. Odia O Navasambad, 26 October 1891.
76. Ganjam Utkal Hitavadini (Utkal Dipika, 16 November 1872).
77. Utkal Hitaisini (Utkal DiPika,13 June 1874).
78. At Dhenkanal and Talcher etc.
79. The following associations were formed at Cuttack: Mutual Improvement Society (1859), Rice selling Company (1866), Utkal Bhasa Uddipani Sabha (1867), Cuttack Debating Club (1869), Cuttack Society (1869), Karana sabbha (1869), cuttack Young Men’s Association (1869), Cuttack Vidyadhyapani Sabha (1869), Cuttack Bhagabata Samaj (1873), Utkal Sabha (1877), Cuttack Suhrud Samaj (1878), Cuttack College students’ Association (1882), Orissa Association (1882), Orissa People’s Association (1873), Orissa Graduate and Undergraduate Sabha (1888), Kayastha Sabha (1890), Cuttack Union Club (1891), Cuttack Reading Club (1892), Orissa Sanskrit Samity (1893), Students’ Social Club (1896. Orissa Christian’s Association (1896), and Utkal Union Conference (1903).
80. Utkal Dipika, 20 February 1879.
81. Ibid.
82. Surendra Mohanty, Madhusudan Das (New Delhi, 1972), P.27.
83. Lord Ripon introduced the scheme to educate the Indian elite in the art of Self Government.

84. Utkal Dipika, 25 May 1883.

85. Surendra Mohanty, op.cit., p.50.

86. Samskarak, 3 March 1887.

87. Utkal DiPika, 24 November 1888.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.


92. Mahaprasad is the holy food offered to Lord Jagannath in the Puri temple. Two persons willing to be friends swear eternal friendship by feeding each other a very small quantity of Mahaprasad. Thereafter they became close friends and call each other as ‘Mahaprasad’.


95. Edited by Pandit Nilamoni Vidyaratna. There was no newspaper published in Sambalpur. Bamra was ruled by Sir Basudev Sudhal Dev, an enlightened ruler with great literary interest.

96. Sambalpur Hitaisini, 13 February 1895. See Supra, p. 87.

97. Sambalpur Hitaisini, 8 and 20 February 1895.

98. A renowned poet whose powerful writings ushered a new age in Oriya literature.

99. He was the first matriculate of Sambalpur District.

100. Proceedings, Home-Judicial, August 1895, No.198-204 (N.A.I.).

101. Utkal Dipika, 23 February, 30 March, 20 April, 27 April, 4 May, 11 May and 18 May 1895.

102. Sambad Vahika, 14 February and 21 March 1895.

103. Utkal Dipika, 11 May 1895.

104. Ibid., 22 June 1895.
105. Paras 33 and 36 of Memorial.
106. Sambalpur Hitaisini 24 March and 7 April 1895.
Madhusudan visited England in 1897.
107. Surendra Mohanty, op.cit.,p.64.
108. Commissioner, Chatisgarh Division’s Letter No.1104 dated 5 February 1901 addressed to Chief Commissioner, Central provinces forwarding the Memorial of Madan Mohan Mishra.
110. Madan Mohan Mishra’s Memorial.
111. Proceedings, Central Provinces - Home - General, May 1901 No.203 Note - p.3 (C.P.R.R).
112. Ibid., Note p.3.
113. Proceedings, Central Provinces, Home General, May 1901, No.203, Note p.6, and the letter No.4169 dated 17 July 1901 from the Deputy Commissioner - Sambalpur to the Commissioner, Chhatis Division.
115. Utkal DiPika, 14 September 1901.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid., 29 September 1901.
119. Note, dated 5 October 1901, para 12.
120. Ibid., para 16.
122. Utkal Dipika, op.cit and 2 January 1904.
123. Concluding para 16 of the Note dated 5 October 1901 of Sir Andrew Fraser.
124. Suryanarayan Dash, Desaprano Madhusudan (Oriya, October 1971) p.166,
127. Note dated 5 October 1901.
128. Ibid. This section was led by G. White and George Howell, two European Missionaries.
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132. Letter No.3678 dated 3 December 1903, from H.H. Risley to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal. Proceedings. Ibid.
133. Para 15 of the Circular.
136. Ibid.


143. A. Stirling, An Account, Geographical, Statistical and Historical of Orissa proper or Cuttack (Calcutta, 1904) p.29.

144. T.J. Maltby, A Practical Handbook of Uriya Language (Calcutta, 1874) P.V.

145. In 1891 the Oriya constituted 50% of the total population. In 1891 they constituted 53% and in 1901, 75%.


149. Proceedings, Home (Delhi) January 1912, No.75-78 (N.A.I).

150. Utkal Dipika, 20 October 1870 and 18 April 1874.

151. Utkal Dipika, 22 October 1870.

152. Proceedings, Home (Delhi) January, 1912, No.75-78.

153. B.Mohapatra, Odia Andolanar Itihas (Oriya, Cuttack, 1976) p.56.

154. Ibid., pp.54-58.

155. He had graduated from Raj Mahendri College in 1892 and was appointed as the tutor of the Prince of Parlakimedi. He was the founder of Utkal Hitaisini Samaj and Bhasa Vivardhini Samaj; Chairman of Parlakimedi Municipality from 1894-1909. An avowed Champion of Oriya Culture, he was the editor of The Ganjam News and had attended several annual sessions of National Congress.


157. Ibid., p.58.