CHAPTER-IV
A. Indigenous attempts at social reforms:

I. Rise of Mahima Dharma and its influence on Orissan Society.

The early indigenous attempt at socio-religious reformation in Orissa is sought in the foundation and propagation of Mahima Dharma. A reformative sect, it emerged in mid-nineteenth century Orissa as a movement which found following among the tribes and classes generally considered lower in Brahmanical hierarchy.

Mahima Gosain, the founder of the Dharma, had appeared in the holy religion ste of Puri in 1826. During his stay there he sought to establish his theory of Advaita (non-dualism) before the association of learned men in the Sri Jagannath Temple but found no following. From there he went to Kapilas Hill in Dhenkanal district and after ardent tapasya (penance) attained Siddhi (ultimate realisation) in 1862. Mahima Gosain then went out on a mission to spread his message in the coastal district of Cuttack, Puri, Ganjam and in the feudatory states of Dhenkanal Athagarh, Hindol, Baudh and Sonpur. His message was also well received in the areas of Sambalpur
and Anugul. He established centers of Mahima Dharma called Alekha Tungis wherever he went which disseminated his message. His parasanyasis (disciples) had a strict instruction not to retire to forest but to live the most austere life in course of wanderings across villages and other inhabited areas.

The mission of Mahima Gosain soon bore fruit and the number of his adherents swelled in the coastal district of Cuttack and Puri. Mahima Gosain never visited Balasoe personally but due to the missionary enterprise of his Sanyasis the faith found wide acceptance in various localities of the district. Alekha Tungis and Ashramas came up at Bhadrak, Balasore, Khaira, Basa, Sore, Jaleswar, Baliapal and Langaleswar.

Mahima Gosain gave up his mortal frames in 1876 but left behind the ablest spokes man of the Dharma in his ardent disciple Bhimabhoi. The tradition contained in Baudhagan O Doha and medieval bhakti songs of the famous Pancha Sakha found poignant expression in his writings. Stutichintamani and myriad Bhajans of Bhimabhoi powerfully expressed not only the mystic ideas of personal salvation but envisaged ways of
redemption for man in society from his cruel destiny\textsuperscript{3}. Bhima was prepared to consign his soul in the hell if it could save mankind from destitution. He sang in earnestness:

\begin{quote}
Boundless is the anguish and misery of the living, 
who can see it and tolerate; 
let my soul be condemned to hell.
But let the universe be redeemed \textsuperscript{4}.
\end{quote}

The vision of an apocalypse, the end of Kaliyuga, always occupied a prominent place in Bhima shoi's moral and social philosophy. To him society was a picture of depravity that lacked character. Therefore, he entreated men to came to the path of rectitude. The horrifying spectacle of the famine 1865-66 had shaken his heart. He sang "the day the God of people would be the king, I will bow down to him". Bhima had an innate sense of confidence in the a capacity of men to change his destiny for the better. For this he questioned idolatry discrimination between man and man in the name of caste and sex and all concepts of pollution and purity. To him God was one and indescribable. Yet He lived in all
beings "from the inanimate to the animate, from insects to birds" in equal measure. For men, Bhima envisioned only two castes: one male and the other female. As regards commensal attitudes, his injunction was to "eat at every place without compunction about caste" and to "eat all sorts of food whether fish, meat of 

The teachings of Bhima Bhoi marked a radical shift from the cardinal precepts of Mahima Dharma as had been enjoyed upon its followers by Mahima Gosain. His teachings were also an affront to the cultivated social attitudes and practices of the upper castes. Mahima Gosain had laid emphasis on non-violence leading to vegetarianism, a practice generally associated with the Kulin sections of the Brahmins who did not eat non-vegetarian food. It was an easier option for the depressed classes to acquire social acceptance and respectability. But Bhima Bhoi was essentially a man rooted in the ethos of the Kandha tribe to which he belonged and regularly attended its assembly. The egalitarian practices of the Kandhas such as widow remarriage and community celebration of festivals and partaking of food had an
abiding impression on his personality. His unreserved participation and approval of these practices enabled him to communicate his radical message to his people as also to the people of the cultivating and artisan castes more easily.

Bhima Bhoi’s message gradually crystallised into a radical social-consciousness among his followers. They innovated a new tradition. They refused to eat food from the houses of Brahmins thinking them to be the perpetration of social inequity. They too did not eat offerings from the temples. They never respected any flag hoisted on the temples.

Though Bhima himself would have felt against at any attempt to run down Jagannath, for he himself revered the deity as the symbol of religious catholicity in Orissa, a section of his followers became extremely critical of Jagannath worship. They felt that forcible entry in to the Jagannath temple would open up new awareness for social mobility in the Hindu system. For the purpose they made a long march from Dhenkanal to Puri using kingship network. This invited resistance from the Pandas (temple
priest) which resulted in a violent riot in front of the temple on 1st March 1881. The vernacular press expressed concern at the unseemly behaviour of the followers of Bhima and described them as “nomadic persons resembling the local Kelas (snake charmers)”.

The incident, however, evoked supportive response in a section of the intellectual circle. Akshaya Kumar Dutt, a leading social reformer of the time praised the Mahima Dharma’s (followers of Maham) for their boldness. He characterised the movement as progressive. The immediate impact of the spread of Mahima Dharma on social stratification in the district of Balasore per se is not evident from any contemporary record. The census report of 1881 did not return any body professing Mahima faith. But the fact that the rise of Manima Dharma as a reformative force in late 1900 century roused considerable social consciousness amongst the lower castes of Orissa can hardly be disputed. It provided an avenue to them to earn social respectability so far denied to them. The sprouting of Alekha Tungis in Balasore like any other part of Orissa and
the immense popularity of Bhima Bhoi’s *Bhajans* are living testimony to this fact.

ii. **Influence of Brahmo movement**

The Brahmo movement of Bengal started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828 to propagate Vedantic monism to purge all corrupting practices of Brahmanic Hinduism and to bring about such social reforms as the uplift of women, removal of caste prejudices and the spread of modern education had its inevitable impact on the social life of 19th century Orissa.

Balasore and Cuttack were the two main centers where the Brahmo movement had found an easy foot-hold. As early as 1855 Brahmo prayers were being held at the Mayurbhanj palace of Motiganj Bazar in Balasore town. A regular congregation of the *Samaj* was established there in October 1869. The founders who included Fakir Mohan Senapati, were zealous about the ethical teachings of the *Samaj*. The congregation started at first with four members. But it soon increased to 19 within six months. Seven of them were the native of Orissa, the rest being Bengalis in government Service. The reason for establishing the regular congregation in Balasore had an
interesting background. According to Fakir Mohana’s account Brahmonisms in Balasore was the handiwork of one Isan Chandra Basu a Brahmo preacher from Calcutta. His work came at a time when the educated youth from the town were in a quandary about the uses of Hindu religions in the face of aggressive propagation of Christianity. But since not many of them had the courage to quit Hinduism, they found in Brahmoism a saving grace. Fakir Mohan himself ands Radhanath Ray were facing this inane question. So when Isan Basu came to Balasore they made immediate acquaintance with him after a while, however, Fakir Mohan felt out with Basu as the latter switched from religion to the issue of language and tried to prove the excellence of Bengali over Oriya. Next Fakir Mohan found company in another Brahmo named Prasanna Kumar Chaturya, a Bengali clerk who came to the Salt Office at Balasore. Soon they conducted Brahmo Service every Sunday evening at Chaturya’s residence which stood behind the temple of Jhareswar Mahadev separated by a narrow alleyway. But here too a terrible shock awaited Fakir Mohan. Serving of ‘spirit’ at the end of the congregation, which Fakir Mohan notes, had became a part of ritual of the
Brahmos all over. This made him part his camp with Cahaturya's congregation. After this regular congregation consisting of Damodar Prad, Govinda Prasad Das, Jayakrishna Chaudh, Bholanath Babu, Fakir Mohan himself and a other casual attenders who started in the built house on the western edge of Motig Bazar belonging to the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj²⁰.

However, the spread of Brahmoism Balasore remained ever confined to a English-educated leading individuals and office goers. The strong orthodoxy of Hindus in district like else where in contemporary Orissa afforded a small prospect of conversions on large scale. But the adductive influence of movement continued to spread and the word its reformative ideas slowly gained ground among the informed circle of the population. Brahmo mouth piece Dharma Bodhini was brought out in 1874 from the town. Through this journal enlightened Brahmos like Madhusudan Ra Pyari Mohan Acharya and Viswanath Kar made effort to popularise Brahmo ideas. Marriage of Mahara Sriram Chandra Bhanj of Mayurbhanj with daughter of Keshab Chandra Sen, high priest
the neo-Brahmo sect, added prestige to the movement in Orissa.

iii. Oriya Language Controversy

Whereas the socio-religious reformation movement undertaken in Orissa by the Mahima Dharma and the Brahmo-Samaj had at best a peripheral impact on the late 19th century Orissan society the controversy that was raised about the same time regarding the suitability of Oriya as a medium of instruction in the newly established vernacular and English schools of Orissa really steered the hornet's nest.

It was a matter of stark misfortune for the Oriyas. The Orissa of yore, by the time the British occupied it, had been reduced to a dismembered bunch of administrative areas "grown up almost half-hazard as a result of conquests, supercession of former rulers and of administrative convenience". Large chunks of Oriya-speaking areas remained distributed among central, Madras and Bengal provinces. Even the coastal stretch which was annexed by the British, languished as a mere appendage of the Bengal province. The Bengali clerks and petty officials formed the second wrung of the company administration.
Educated Oriyas, however, capable in reading and interpreting the medieval ornate Kavyas and Puranas in Oriya hardly qualified to lay claim for a share in the governance of their won country. Commenting on such a sorry state of the Oriyas Surendra Mohanty, the well-known literateur and critics of Orissa writes: "the out-siders who had ingratiated themselves with the company administration and who had followed the company to Orissa as carpet beggars and adventurers came to acquire an artificial importance and a grip over the administration, threatening the cultural and economic extinction of the Oriyas. All this was done with the connivance of Government in Fort Williams, never seeking an opportunity to understand the problems of the people or their interests and aspiration except, of course, as interpreted by these interested intermediaries. No wonder, therefore, the Oriyas who had once been in the vanguard of the cultural and political life of India, suddenly found themselves consigned to oblivion and unmitigated backwardness in the beginning of the nineteenth century".

The problem of administration was attended to in some measure after the famine. Pricked
by a sense of guilt, as it were, officers of the British Government began repairing the past neglect inflicted upon Orissa and sought to remedy the situation wherever they could. About this time what the language controversy did for the surfeit of Oriya intellectual leadership no other movement until then had done.

As early as 1862 Patterson, the Executive Officer of Balasore, had given a suggestion for replacing Oriya by the Bengali language in Government-run schools of the district. The Commissioner in his letter to the Government of Bengal wrote: “As however, Begalee and Ooryah is taught in the Government School at Balasore, that institution does not, in his opinion, afford to other departments the assistance it would, were the vernacular substituted for Bengale and pupils being, as far as the school is concerned, ignorant of the language in which the Business of the District is conducted, situation in public officers can not to be held out to them as inducements and as the reward of exertion”.

The inspector of schools, Medlicott in April 1863 also reported that Oriya was regularly being taught in the Balasore Zilla School as a second language and more students
sought after the subject for the Entrance Examination. But as the language possessing no literature furnished little matter for a trying examination. His proposal was, therefore, not to encourage the boys of the higher classes to opt for Oriya as a means of evading labour necessary for the acquirement of Bengalee. W. S. Atkinson, the Director of Public Instruction, not just concurred with the opinion expressed by his inspector of schools but also added a rider in his submission to the Lt. Governor of Bengal in May 1863 to consider putting every student of Orissa schools to an additional task of taking Bengali as a secondary language.

R.N. Shore, the Commissioner of Orissa piqued at this conspiratorial suggestion of the Director of Public Instruction pointed out in his June 1863 communication to the Lt. governor that the proposal if carried out would close the University to all except the sons of Bengali parents from Orissa.

In 1865 when T. Revenshaw became the commissioner he drew the attention of the
Government of Bengal to the dismal state of Oriya language in the advanced classes of the schools in Orissa. This triggered a fresh bout of controversy regarding the extent to which the Oriya language should be employed in the schools in Orissa. W. S. Atkinson in August 1869, largely reiterated his opinion on the ground that, it would be very much to the advantage of the people of Orissa to continue to learn Bengali than to attempt to develop a new literature and an education.

The ingratiating of certain Bengali Officials with this motivated opinion was clearly visible. Umar Charan Haldar, a Bengali Deputy Inspector of school, advocated the replacement of Oriya by Bengali in view of as the availability of good number of the text books in that language and the scarcity of the same in Oriya. Shiva Das Bhattacharya, other Deputy Inspector of schools was transferred from Balasore in 1870 for holding similar views openly. Kantilal Bhattacharya, a teacher of Balasore school, published a pamphlet calling UdiaEkti Svatantra Bhasa Noi and further fueled the enraging controversy. Rajendra Lal Mitra, a noted antiquarian and scholar from Bengal who contributed articles on Orissa to
the journals of the Asiatic Society of Bengal supported the short-sighted anti-oriya movement. He held that a language spoken by 20 lakhs of population of the Orissa division of the Bengal presidency, was unlikely to develop into a full-fledged language. The pro-Bengali group picked up Mitra’s argument and aggressively campaigned their case through Utkal Hitaihini, a weekly journal and such associations as the Debating Club and the Cuttack society.

It was to such formidable challenges that a fine noted Oriyas of the time to have had some chance of coming in close contact with the local English Administrators along with some leading naturalised Bengalis of Orissa put up a strong resistance and ultimately own the day. The Utkal Dipeeka of Gouri Sankar Roy and the Sambad Vahika of Fakir Mohan Senapati were in the forefront of the pro-Oriya campaign. Even a society called Utkal Ullasini Sabha owed its origin to the language controversy. The Sabha witnessed regular assemblies in support of the cause of the Oriyas.

R. L. Martin who replaced Medlicott as the Inspector of the schools fortunately took a pro-
Oriya stand. In a strongly argued communication to the Director of Public Instruction, he suggested that "what after consideration, seems to be really necessary is to strike at the root of the matter and do in Orissa what has been, and is being done in Bengal." Commissioner Revenshaw who was greatly in favour of establishing Oriya as a recognised language of all schools in Orissa found in Martin a strong advocate of his views.

Among a other European officials who strongly supported the Oriya, when the language controversy was at its height the foremost was John Beames an I.C.S. officer. John Beames, whom Fakir Mohan openly admired as his mentor, wrote in reference to the controversy in his comparative grammar of the "Modern Aryan Languages of India" that "we are bound to fight tooth and nail against the Bengali theory by upholding the speech of the landfolk and keeping them to purify and improve it, to render it impossible for interested person to establish any barrier between the pre-inter course of all classes of society." 17

The Lt. Governor of Bengal saw merit in the cause of Oriya. At his instance finally
the language controversy ended with the Government's decision to recognise Oriya as the soul medium of instruction in all Oriya schools. Leaving aside inter-community acrimony the language controversy had one beneficial effect. It creating an atmosphere in Orissa in which the individuality of the language was firmly established.

iv. coming of native press and growing awareness and formation of opinion on administration.

The renaissance spirit which a was roused by the language controversy manifested itself in bringing forward public enterprise to establish printing presses in Orissa. This helped public-spirited individuals to disseminate their views and put forward constructive ideas on various socio-political issues of the time. Sincere effort were made also to form opinion on important administrative policies of the British Government.

Three decades after the establishment of the first printing press by the missionaries at Cuttack in 1837 efforts were made to establish printing presses in Orissa. As in every other field, Maharajas leading Zamindars and budding
literature were in the forefront of this new movement.

The Cuttack Printing Company, the first of its kind was established by Gauri Shankar Roy in 1866 at Cuttack. The catastrophe famine of 1865-66 had hastened its birth. Roy in co-operation with Vichitrarnanda Das and Lala Jagmohan Rai, the first modern play-wright of Orissa, brought about Utkal Dipika as a weekly newspaper from Cuttack Printing Company through Litho process. Vichitrarnanda Das, being Political Assistant to the Commissioner of Orissa was in a position to exert all his official influence and authority to obtains donations from the Rajas and the Zamindars of Orissa to promote this newspaper. Surendra Mohanty while chronicling life of Madhusudan Das wrote: "From such a humble beginning the Cuttack Printing Company grew into an influential institution and nothing worth while had happened in the second half of the 19th century Orissa, which had not been deliberated and debated in the premises of the Cuttack Printing Company"18.

Gouri Shankar referred to the common parlance as the father of journalism in Orissa single-
handily built up Utkal Dipika as a powerful medium of public opinion in Orissa at a time when the objective conditions for an enlightened public life were woefully lacking. The journal's "scathing satire was as much biting as its polemic scintillating". No doubt, keeping in mind the kind of patronage the journal received and the kind of issues that were being thrown up in an abnormally depressing situation after the famine, the journal had to at times pick up issues that concerned the upper sections of the society the most. In the controversy raised in reference to the extension of some of the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act in 1885, Utkal Dipika quiet unwittingly took up the cause of the land-holding class and strongly articulated itself against the Act's extension to Orissa. The incident not only exposed the nexus that existed among the landed aristocracy, the vernacular press and the petty officialdom but also earned for the journal a bad name. Some even called the Journal as an 'organ'.

Incidentally Utkal Dipika was also a willing supporter of the Zamindars practice of collecting illegal payments from their tenants in all the three districts of Orissa on customary
grounds. However, this singular aberration on the part of Utkal Dipika though on issue that concerned the economic well-being of the mass of the peasantry did not diminish the stature of Gouri Shankar in public eye. After Madhusudan's return to Cuttack from Calcutta, Gouri Shankar became his chief collaborator and colleague. Both worked together in concert for well over three ecades to build up the political life of Orissa. Their effort at nification of the Oriya-speaking areas under one administration on raised the status of both in public acclaim. The coming together of these two outstanding personalities indeed converted the premises of the Cuttack Printing Company into the veritable nerve-center of a resurgent Orissa.

Earlier Utkal Dipika concerned itself in informing people on matters such as 'Orissa famine', 'use of shoes on ceremonial occasions by Indian gentry', 'future of the orphans', 'extension of irrigation', 'encumbered estates in Orissa', 'shudhi of the famine stricken people', 'appointment of natives of Orissa to higher posts', and matters 'educational' 'economic' 'religious' etc\textsuperscript{20}. But from 1882 onwards it charted an entirely different course. On August 16, 1882 a public meeting under the signature of half a
dozen leading persons representing all sections of the elite of Cuttack was convened in the premises of the Cuttack Printing Company. The objective of the meeting was to launch an organization that would further the ends of local self-government in Orissa and undertake other welfare measures. Going by Utkal Dipika’s own report of August 19, 1882, “Cuttack had never seen a gathering of such magnitude”. All the leading citizens of Cuttack including a few English men, the people of common rank, attended this meeting. The number of participants and listeners was so overwhelming that a large number of people had to listen to the proceedings, standing outside in the corridors of the hall. The Utkal Sabha or the Orissa Association was born out of the deliberations of this meeting. Being the earliest political organisation in Orissa, the Utkal Sabha stirred the imagination of many until it lost its relevance in 1903 when the Utkal Samilani or the Utkla Union conference was formed. The Sabha “functioned as the undeclared legislature of Orissa and the Government anxiously solicited its view on all important matters relating to the administration of the Orissa Division”. Indeed the task before the Utkal Sabha and its leadership was an unenviable one. "In a
society and among the people strife-ridden by language, caste and religion, the leadership of the Sabha and more particularly Madhusudan Das its architect, had the inescapable duty to unite these groups and lead them towards enlightenment, articulation and awakening”.

In 1868 Fakir Mohan following in the footsteps of the Cuttack Printing Company established P.M. Senapati and Co. at Balasore. The haranguing experiences which Fakir Mohan had to undergo in establishing a press in the name of a his company was no less exhilarating a story.

In 1868, Fakir Mohan Senapati along with Babu Jayakrishna Chaudhury, Babu Bholanath Samata Roy, Givinda Prasad Das, Damodar Prasad Das and Babu Radhanath Ray first started a society. The immediate objective of the society was to promote and propagate Oriya literature. The decision to form a printing company was taken in the light of this objective. Some people bought shares because they realised the true significance of a printing press. Others invested in the company in the hope of earning a profit. But many were persuaded to become share-holders of the company just for the sake of it.
The cousin of Fakir Mohan was sent to Calcutta to learn the trade of printing. The money so raised was not enough for procuring a 1st class press from Calcutta. Therefore a cheaper press was brought from the Midnapur Mission House. On the appointed day writes Fakir Mohan, "it was joyfully proclaimed that printing would commence. Half the shops in Motiganj Bazar closed. Even in the towns most prominent people came to watch the process of printing. The crowds in front of the printing press filled the road and brought the passage of pedestrians to a stand still". However, not a single letter was printed. The mission press of Midnapur was unfortunately a discarded one.

After the initial failure, Fakir Mohan pursued his project with even greater interest. With a loan assistance up to rupees 800 from Kishore Mohan Das, the brother of Madan Mohan Das who was a leading Zamindars and money-lenders of Balasore, he procured a Super Royal Albion press from Calcutta. With the new press the company produced excellent print both in Oriya and in English. The district collectors of Balasore Mr. Bignold not only accorded his delighted congratulation to Fakir Mohan on his success but also placed a large order for printed forms
for the Kachery. This order augured well for the company got a good start.

The Cuttack Printing Company was bringing out Utkal Dipika. This prompted the executive committee of the P. M. Senapati and Company to publish a fort-nightly journal Bodha Dayini O Balasore Samvada Vahika thus born containing two parts in one volume. The Bodha Dayini part was devoted to literature and the Samvada Vahika carried contemporary\textsuperscript{21}. In 1872 the journal was upgraded into a weekly.

Fakir Mohan was favoured by Zamindar Baikunthanath Dey who established the Dey press in 1873. Brajanath Dev founded the third press in Balasore in 1899. This press was named as the Binod press.

The Samanta Zamindar Family of Balasore had extended patronage to Fakir Mohan's journal. Similarly Raja Baikunthanath Dey extended patronage to the publication of Utkal Darpana. These two along with several other journals brought out from different parts of Orissa became the beacon-light of social, cultural and intellectual life of late 19th and early 20th century Orissa. The most
notable among the journals published from out
side Balasore were Sambalpur Hitaishini and
Samskarak O Sevak, brought out from western Orissa
with the patronage of Sir Basudev Sudhal Dev, the
Maharaja of Bamanda and Utkal Prabha brought
out from Mayurbhanj at a the initiative of Maharaja
Sri Ramachandra Bhanja. The Maharaja of Mayurbhanj
and that of Bamanda even presented suitable
rewards for best contributions to their journals
in a bid to encourage contemporary creative
writers. Fakir Mohan Senapati, Radhanath Ray and
Madhusudan Roy like a host of other budding
literateurs of the time received generous rewards
from these royal patrons.

Quiet a portion of the work that flowed
from the pen of these makers of modern Oriya
literature was no doubt on eulogisation of the
contemporary royalty. But symptom was inherent in
the drawbacks which the 19th century Oriya press
and journalism had to suffer from. Perennial
financial difficulties, dogging poverty of the
literature, a general want of subscribers and
unscientific management of the printing companies
were all there as crippling handicaps yet to
overcome. Nevertheless as the chief medium of
communication of the time, the press considerably
served its purpose. It became the major agency of socio-political awakening. Besides it also served the purposes of preparing standard text books in Oriya for students and in the process contributed immensely in modernising traditional Oriya literature.

V. The New Literature: Its basis concerns and the social perspectives

The new Oriya literature was a kindred offspring to the Oriya eminent literary critic Prof. Khageswar Mahapatra, "Right after the great Orissa famine of 1866-67, a sense of awakening began to prevail in the Oriya mind. It was the dawn of Orissa Renaissance. The people—the traditional elite, the new literate and the nouveaux rich were now determined to assert their individuality and self-image in the new socio-political condition. Their constructive activities and community-consciousness were manifested through their own press, journals and associations."22.

The new literature was a complete break away from the medieval one. It had no use to remain steeped in the mythological atmosphere. The modern educational system and text books had
already implanted in the minds of the up coming generations new values of literature. It had aquatinted them with new forms and diction. The Government's decision to use Oriya at the lower levels of administration, the activities of missionaries in propagating a new religion and a still newer social outlook and increasing awareness of current trends in the contemporary vernacular literature of the neighbouring provinces further created an atmosphere in the literary circle of Orissa which favoured the emergence and growth of this new literature.

The most distinctive feature of the new literature was the rise of prose. However, it was not the only form which gave vent to the novelty in creative expressions. In a broad sweep almost every other form of literature such as poetry, Drama, novels, biography's, auto-biography's travelogues, belle litters came within the ambit of modern Oriya literature. In its character one finds three dominant strands. First, in all its works the essence remained inalienably soaked in the inane idea of humanism. Second, while for its inspiration by and large depended upon the indigenous culture it brought to light those high points of modern human civilisation which
corresponded to the requirements and aspirations of the emergent Oriya society. Lastly, it continually exhorted readers to become ever more aware of their milieu and respond accordingly.

The man who spearheaded the new literary movement, was Fakir Mohan Senapati, now considered the father of the modern Oriya literature. Born in 1843, he started life as an assistant to his uncle, who was supervising the repair of sails of the quay-side of the old part of Balasore, his home town. He did not have the good fortune of getting English education. But through his intense desire for learning he acquired knowledge in at least five languages including English. At the dawn of his career, he tried his hand in teaching at Barvati school and the Balasore Mission school. It was during this time, he was drawn towards creative writing. the second public press in Orissa came out of this intense desire. Thorough uncanny brilliance and hard work Fakir Mohan in the second phase of his life rose to be the Dewan of several native states which included Nilgiri, Domapara and Dasapalla. He too served for brief periods as a manger in the native state of Keonjhar and as an assistant manager
in Dhenkanal. During his above assignment his wit and managerial capacity had been called upon to tackle a number of peasant uprisings successfully.

In his life time (1843 - 1918) Fakir Moahan produced half a dozen first class novels, several school stories, poems and his autobiography. The striking features of his autobiography are the choice of events and facts, their organisation and the unique style of his presentation. Fakir Mohan has narrated his life with the equanimity of a person, as it were, seeing things from a distance. His unhappy childhood, constant ailment, his career as a teacher, publisher and administrator, his married life and his creative pursuits have all found a frank expression in his autobiography. His triumphs and failures, glories and embarrassment are presented without any attempt at self-glorification. As P. K. Mahanty writes: “the soul of Fakir Mohan as well as the history of the social evolution of 19th century Orissa, emerge in a tangible form from the pages of this auto-biography”23. Bankim Chandra was writing highly sankritised prose of Nawabs Begums, chieftains and neo-rich of Bengal, Fakir Mohan
concerned himself with the ordinary characters of everyday social life. He was like "the great servants who as in his great classic 'Don Quixote' is said to have artistically reflected the entire Spanish nation. Fakir Mohan created a truly national picture gallery, representing almost all levels of contemporary Oriya society". 

A contemporary of Rama Shankar Ray, Umesh Chandra Sarkar, Aparna panda and Gopal Ballabh Das whose novels of the time though reflective of a social concern yet mainly centered round romantic love, Fakir Mohan wrote exclusively about common people and their problems in colloquial idiomatic Oriya with matchless skill and competence. Natabara Samanta Rai, a noted Senapati scholar, suggests that all the four novels of Fakir Mohan can be taken to be depicting the social history of Orissa from the 18th to the early 20th century. According to his suggestion the novels, Chhamana Atha Guntha, Mamau and Prayashchitta corresponded to the periods between 1720-1800, 1801-1840, 1841-1880, and 1881-1920 respectively. Taken together these works present a grant continuum of 200
years of Orissa’s social history and can be taken as four volumes of one great novel.

Chhamana Atha Guntha (six acres and eight decimals) written in 1902 is generally accepted as Fakir Mohan’s greatest fictional creation. It narrates the story of a diabolical Ramachandra Mangaraj, who rose to the position of a Zamindar by acquiring vast landed property from a rich Bengali Muslim. His insatiable thirst for land still made him covet the fertile but small plot of six and half acres of land in his neighborhood owned by a childless weaver couple, Bhagia and Saria. Mangaraj’s canny maid servant and mistress Champa became an easy accomplice in fulfilling his unholy desire. The unsuspecting Saria on Champa’s persuasion borrowed money from Mangaraj to build a temple in honour of the local goddess. She believed this act of piety would beget her a son. But leave alone the hope of begetting a son, the weaver couple lost their only means of livelihood, the small plot of land to Mangaraj being unable to repay the loan. Bhagia went mad and Saria died of starvation at Mangaraj’s door steps. The matter went to court and Mangaraj was ultimately imprisoned.
In the jail he met Bhagia who in utter vengeance bit his nose. That was not Mangaraj's ordeal. On release Mangaraj died under intense mental agony. Champa his trusted mistress had eloped with a barber carrying all his valuables. But in Fakir Mohan's scheme of things ill-gotten wealth could not be digested. Champa was killed by the barbar for the wealth who himself got drowned in a river.

First serialized in the monthly magazine Utkal Sahitya, the description of the investigation and trial of the murder case in this novel were so realistic that people from distant villages actually came to Cuttack to see for themselves the court-trial of the parties supposed to be real persons.

Mamu (maternal uncle) written in 1913, is another glory tale of exploitation of the village folk by petty Government officials and clerks. Based on the epic "Kamsa-Krishna" model Mamu portrays the relationship between a treacherous uncle and as orphan nephew. Here the epic Kamsa has appeared in the grab of Nazar Natabara Das. A member of the historically evolved new babu-class under colonial
dispensation, Fakir Mohan has concerned himself with the changed socio-political situation. As in case of Ramachandra Mangaraj, in his characteristic style of concluding a story, Fakir Mohan in *Mamu* has landed Nazar Natabar Das in jail in an obvious consequence of his ill-treatment towards the opened nephew. In both the cases, Fakir Mohan has used the protagonists propensity to indulge in 'sin' and then to repent at leisure, to whip the conscience of the like-characters in contemporary Oriya society.

In a slightly different social setting, Fakir Mohan’s *Prayaschitta* (expiation) written in 1915 delineates the story of two feuding Karana families in Orissa. The difference out of arose a dispute over status between the Srikarana Baishnab Charan Pattanayak (*shuklapakhshiya*) and the other Karana of the neighbouring village, Shankarshana Mohanty (*krishnapakhshiya*). The clannish feud between these two families pushed their respective villages into a battle of legal attrition. The people of the respective villages consequentially suffered much. But the family feud took a different turn when secretly Gobinda Chandra, the college-going son of Baishnab Charan married Shankarshanna’s daughter Indumati through the
mediation of Shankarshana’s maternal nephew Rajiba Lochan. When Gobinda Chandra reached once his father-in-law’s house in the dead of night, he was attacked by the watchmen. At this Gobinda’s wife Indumati committed suicide and his mother also died out of shock. The two feuding Karanas realising the futility of social status finally left for Vrindabana for expiation. They met Gobinda there and requested him to return to the village where amity had came to prevail by them.

Historically the contemporary Oriya society was ridden with inter-generational conflict and conflict of social values. Fakir Mohan adopted this tension as the base material for his short stories. He hammered against both the fantasy of some and the fanaticism of the people. He earnestly sought to find a solution to the prevalent crisis. He spoke against prostitution and addiction to liquor in his "Patent Medicine". He continued his tirade against bride-sale in 'Birei Bisal'. He called up society against the tyranny of usury and dowry in 'Adharma Bitta' (ill-got property) and 'Madha Mohanty nka kanya Suna' (Madha Mohanty,s Daughter and Gold). He drew attention of every one to cheating in the name of religion in 'Dhulia Baba' (The Dusty
fakir). He derided the socially repugnant attitude of the English educated Oriya youth in 'Dak Munsi' (The post-man) and spoke eloquently in support of female education in 'Rebati'.

Whereas Fakir Mohan largely portrayed the contemporary rural society of Orissa in his fictions, glimpses of urban life and its corrupting influence on the people came in flashes in some of these short stories. Cuttack was then the only town and was rapidly growing as a pan-Orissan center of urban culture. Fakir Mohan lived in Cuttack between 1896-1905 and experienced the emerging new pattern of life and values. On the upper strata of that society he observed two classes of people - the nouveau rich and the officialdom. All portends of social life was thinly melting into the spreading horizons of these two classes. Fakir Mohan himself was a member of that society. But unlike others he did not lose his identity in that glare. His opposition to modernisation was not cynical. For him modernisation had to come from an awakened self-culture and without radically altering the cherished value-system of the indigenous society.
The other pillar of the new literature was Radhanath Ray. While Fakir Mohan was busy unrolling the drama of human passions that flowed beneath the deceptively quiet social surface in the century and caused ripples in the up-coming towns, Radhanath (1848-1908) wrote poetry Hellenising the entire land-scape of Orissa. It became lasting tribute to his innate patriotism when the first Utkal Samilani conclave in December 1903 at Cuttack was opened with his arresting composition: "Sarvesam no Janani Bharat, Janani Kalplateyam..." (Bharata, the mother of everyone, mother the eternal...).

Born in the back-alleys of southern Balasore, Radhanath’s early political compositions were in Bengali. A teacher by profession, in due time he became an inspector of schools and later switched to writing in Oriya at the instance of Sir Basudav Sudhal Dev, the Maharaja of Bamanda. "His poetic efforts were in part the product of the compulsion of his jobs, or more broadly speaking, the compulsion of the time, the need to cater to a taste different from what had hitherto grown up on traditional poetry and literature....He not only responded to this need for a change in taste, but also successfully established a new
taste for a new form of literature, on which subsequently the entire edifice of modern Oriya poetry was built up. 27.

Radhanath was essentially a reveler in the past glories of Orissa. He took for his themes semi-historic legends from Orissan history or at times adopted stories from western mythologies to suitably metamorphose them into an unsuspecting Orissa setting. but he was no mere aesthete. Often he interspersed his poems with what he perceived as evils in society. In 'Mahayatra', a poem of epic proportion he rummaged through the entire history of India to analyse the course of society which led to the ultimate fall of the country as a whole. In 'Darabar' he ridiculed the variety of the so-called upper classes of the Orissan society.

Darabara was the last of his major poems and was the only poem that directly touched upon the contemporary Oriya society. Here he came down heavily on the manners and frivolities of the feudal aristocracy and other cohorts of the alien rulers. In them he saw the followers of Kali, as it were, whom he had visualised in Mahayatra.
The poem opens with the setting of a ‘Darabara’ at Cuttack in 1896 where the entire array of feudal and Government official had assembled to pay court to the newly appointed Governor of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. At this ‘Darabara’, commissioner of Orissa Cook was scheduled to bestow the title of “Ray Bahadur” on the Zaminidar of Kanpurt, and the title of ‘Mahamahopadhyya’ on Samanta Chandrasekhar, the famous 19th century astronomer of Orissa, who incidentally belonged to a royal family.

A gallery of satirical portraits labeled by Radhanath as belonging to “The new-fangled” contemporary society of Orissa” has been presented between lines 52 and 204. In a farcical display of false vanity he found the so-called elite of the land quarreling among themselves for priced seeds in that ceremonial assembly. Some flaunted the pasts that they held under the government. Some talked of their noble decent in a medieval flourish. Some displayed their newly acquired wealth and some of the power which they yielded under the Raj. There were other who boasted their newfound status as the leader of the people. The vile attempt of all these categories of people to either dangle their gorgeous attires and ornaments
up to strut around pompously with their sedulous imitation of English airs, was extremely galling to Radhanath. He deplored their lure for empty titles which made them to run after British officers like pet dogs and squander money after high-ranking officials while their own men struggled for a morsel of food. Particularly Radhanath erupted into vitriolic denunciation of the Rajas of Garhjats who so remorselessly exploited their subjects and oppressed them. In a sense he could foresee the state’s people rising in rebellion against these petty despots in not too distant a future.

But then Radhanath was no rebel himself. “He adopted a camouflage in order that he should expose himself to risk and that his place in society, his job and his relations with his admirers, friend and patterns would remain safe and assured”.

There were a number of other writers from Balasore who contributed their share in sustaining this renaissant literature. Krishnakanta Das (1828-1903) of Mangalpur in Soro was a popular playwright. Chandramohan Maharana, a inhabitant of Remuna and contemporary of Radhanath Ray, was a
noted educatinist. Chintamani Mohanty from Bhadrak who spent most of his time in the district of Ganjam as a court poet in the Zamindari of Surangi was another voluminous writer. However, under the over-arching literary influence of Fakir Mohan and Radhanath, the works of these contemporary writers faded into comparative insignificance.

In its net contribution the intellectual resurgence of Orissa was to a certain extent a causal factor in claiming for the prostrated province a political identity of its own. The way Italian 'Renaissance' and German 'Reformation' provided the intellectual foundations of European nationalism doing away the mediaeval concept of universitas, so also the ideas and writings of the literautres in Orissa gave rise to the desire for a clearly demarked and respectable political existence for the Oriyas in the country.

The awakening as exemplified in contemporaneous writings had a purpose in handing out a new a consciousness in place of the long prevailing mentality to submit to poverty and oppression. In the medieval times mind was overburdened with the doctrine of Bhakti and a host of other ideas of
other worldliness. The new literature heralded far more vigorous aspirations. Henceforth there appeared a rational approach to the societal problems. The movement did not stress so much on the revivalistic resumption of the substantive body of the past Oriya customs and social attitudes. It only incorporated the universalistic and humanitarian values inherent in such customs and attitudes. Fakir Mohan advocated social justice and Radhanath did not simply decried the hypocrisy and denergisation of the contemporary society but recreated its fabled past with a rare gift of literary genius to inspire the people for a better future. He response was a covert reaction to the great challenge thrown up by the imperialist power, as aggressive and arrogant in its civilisation as politically dominant and economically powerful. Gouri Shankar Roy initiated and carried on with the journalistic crusade against the moribund social attitudes of the Oriyas while simultaneously calling for social, economical and political justice for them. Other writer-activists attempted to put a new humanist and cosmopolitan interpretation upon the old literary works, artistic creation, historical episodes and religious customs.
Because of the ruthless techniques adopted by the colonial government and their native props to suppress people protestations and because of the failure of every other method of resistance. Literacy creativism was the only avenue left for resurgence. The Introduction of western education was producing slowly a new class of liberal and enlightened intelligentsia. Their enthusiasm for social change charged the whole environment with hope and energy. Once awakened the society moved ahead.

But intellectual activity was not entirely responsible for every turn that the ensuing political struggle took. To hold so, would be to belittle the scope of the new awakening. Surely to rouse consciousness the pioneers reminded the country of its past achievements and failures. To accomplish this onerous task there was no other medium more effective than the vernacular language, no other instrument more rewarding than literature, no other symbol more appropriate than the historical nomenclatures of the land and no other example more appealing than the historical episodes. The literateurs used Oriya, uttered frequently the name of 'Utkal' and eulogised her
past, they can not be said to have harped on the irrefutable "Oriya Irridenta".

Putting their message on a broad humanitarian canvas, the literateurs addressed themselves to the immediate challenges rather than fiddling with dry ideologies. Thus their works from the view point of later political developments and then to label them as "Oriya nationalists" would amount to grossly and misplacing the original nature of the whole movement. Keeping in view the methods of movement adopted by contemporary leaders and intellectuals in other provinces and the exhortation which they issued to the people, it has not been considered proper to call them Marathi or Bengali nationalists. Likewise in case of the growth of awakening in Orissa it can not be regarded only as regional effort but as contributing to the overall 19th century national awakening. The literateurs in Orissa themselves were a part of the whole mass of creative talents that emerged in the contemporary India. They shared the same sentiments and predilections as intellectual else where.
vi. Growth of Nationalist Organisations: Their Character, perspectives and leadership.

The new atmosphere paved the way for sprouting of a number of socio-political associations in Orissa. Among these Balasore had at least four organisations which helped the educated middle class to express its ideas, view and aspirations. The earliest such organisations established in 1874 was Bhadrak Desh Hitaisini Sabha. The Balasore national society followed the Bhadrak Sabha in 1878. The other two Baikunthanath Dey's social club and Balasore school reading club mere organised in 1895 and 1896 respectively. Not much can now be said about the constitution and functions of these organisations excepting what would only be gathered from their names. Most of these organisations stayed for a short time and ultimately along with such organisation which had come up in various parts of the Orissa Division served the useful purpose of providing the much needed impulse for the formation of bigger nationalist organisations.

The first such pan-Orissan association was Utkal Sabha. In the wake of Lord Ripon's new scheme of local self-government which had generated
great enthusiasm among the leading individuals of Orissa, the decision to launch the Sabha had been taken in a meeting held on 16th August 1882 within the premises of the Cuttack Printing company. The two-fold immediate priorities before it were to help create the institution of local self-government in Cuttack and to take up issues concerning public welfare. The long-term intention of the reaching out to the larger public life of Orissa was also a part of its cherished goals from the beginning.

Within the natural limits of its leadership who were mostly serving government officials, the Sabha initially sought to gain for Orissa her felt dues through governmental benevolence. It memorialised the Government to bring in liberal reforms in the Indian Council's Act to provide greater representation to the natives in legislative councils.

The strategy of the Sabha was not to pursue a confrontaionist course with the government. Even on an important issue like the passing of Ilbert Bill which raised a major controversy across the presidency towns of country, the Sabha petitioned the Governor General for
acceptance of the bill into. Its role in trying to stone wall the extension of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 to Orissa was also more in keeping with the thinking which prevailed among the Zamindars and their well-wishers in the government.

The Utkal Sabha took active interest in the proceedings of the Indian National Congress from the very outset. Incidentally the character and style of functioning of the Congress of the time was not very different from the Utkal Sabha. Therefore, the Sabha had no difficulty in coming closer to the Congress. In a public meeting held at Cuttack on March 3, 1886. It adopted the entire resolution of the first session of the Indian National Congress. The Sabha only sought a minor modification to one resolution of the congress which urged the government to hold the Indian Civil Services Examinations in the country. The modification proposals was based on a rather trifling ground. It purposed that the candidates for Civil Services Examination should not be asked to go to England as it exposed them to the risk of loss of their castes.
From 1886 onwards the Utkal Sabha regularly sent selected representatives to attend the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress. The Balasore national society which was active in public life of Orissa also sent Baikunthanath Dey, Bhagaban chandra Das and Ramesh Chandra Mandal as delegates to the second session of the Congress.

The rupture in the relationship between the Utkla Sabha and Indian National Congress came in 1903 when the congress under the presedentship of Lal Mohan Ghos at its Madras session disapproved of the policy of the government of India to break up long-standing territorial division. The leadership of the Utkal Sabha including Madhusudan Das saw in the congress resolution a tactical move to deny Orissa a separate linguistic province. So they decided to disassociate themselves from the Congress activities and float a new broad-based organisastion in Orissa. The intention was ton re dedicate themselves to the singular objective of amalgamation of scattered Oriya-speaking areas into a separate province under the colonial dispensation.

Utkal Sammilani, she coveted political organisation was actually born out of a proposal
floated in the meeting of some leading public men of Ganjam in Rambha. The Raisely circular which demanded the unification of the Oriya-speaking areas had strengthened the need for such a larger and truly representative organisation to spearhead the movement. The Utkala Sabha with all the limitation of its characteristic upper and middle-class leadership was unable to evoke the desired popular response to its program.

The first two-day session of the Utkal Sammilani was held at Cuttack on December 30 and 31 of 1903 under presidentship of Maharaja Sri Ramachandra Bhanja of Mayurbhanj. Fakir Mohan Senapati, and Radhanath Ray from Balasore were among the people who attended this session. The Sammilani organised an industrial and agricultural exhibition as part of this session. The idea behind the exhibition was to focus on the social and economic issues of Orissa which dominated the deliberation of the session.

From its inception the Sammilani was conceived as the a parliament of the people inhabiting Oriya-speaking areas, regardless of caste, creed, language and administrative division. Commenting on Sammilani's first session, the special
correspondent of *Amrit Bazar Patrika* wrote; "this is the first time that a large number of Indian chiefs, Rajas, Zamindars and the gentry of an Iodine Province were found assembled together for the purpose of improving their material condition by mutual help. In Orissa, the princes were brought together with the aristocracy, the gentry and the poor. The whole movement was thus actuated by one feeling of nationality, its main object being to unite all the Oriya-speaking people into one race."

Indeed, the *Utkal Sammilani* could evoke considerable response among the people of Orissa. Within a year of its inception the number of branches of the *Sammilani* increased to represent different parts of Orissa including the out-lying Oriya-speaking areas. People's participation was ensured through subscription which the *Sammilani* received to carry with its activities.

In what can be regarded as a clear departure from the modus operandi of the *Utkal Sabha*, the *Utkal Sammilani* adopted programs that included (i) measures for removal of untouchability, (ii) *Svadesi* and (iii) issues concerning the economic, social and cultural improvement of the peasantry.
of Orissa. Speaking on the objectives of the Sammilani, Madhusudan Das observed "Unless the poorest and by far the largest portion of the population improve in their financial condition, it is idle to take up the Oriya's national advancement". The observation was an article of faith with him.

To highlight the nature and the extent of exploitation of the Orissan peasantry, Madhusudan used to put up a painting on the Sammilani platform. In the illustration the peasant stood at the bottom marking with his sped. Above him was the petty trader and money lender in whose basket fell the entire produce of the peasant like water. When the stream emerged from the money lender's basket it made its way into the Zamindar's Kautchery in the form of rupees. Finally, the rupees turned into hard currency landed of in a reservoir over which was placed the crown with the union jack unfurled by its side.

The Utkal Sammilani's objectives and activities, however, much they look parocheal, yet were not inspired by any rapid philosophy of irredentism. Madhusudan was never tired of
reiterating from the Utkal Sammilani platform about the symbolic relationship that existed between the Orissa of his dream and the rest of the country. The first session of the Sammilani itself had been opened with an invocation to a "mother of India".

On the leadership of Utkal Sammilani, Amrit Bazar Patrika commented; "The conception of the conference is due to the fertile genius of M.S.Das, who is known as Madhu Babu in Orissa, who, though a Christian, is as much Hindu at heart, as his good father was, and whose advice, inspite of his religious faith, is sought by every class of people, Hindus, Musalmans and Christians, the prince and the peasant. Truly with Madhusudan the character of political leadership in Orissa was undergoing a transformation which acquired a definitive egalitarian character mass-base with ascent of Gaopabandhu Das in 1920.

(B) Orissan Unification Movement.

The demand for amalgamation of the scattered Oriya-speaking areas was as old as the famine itself. The statement of Sir Stafford North Cote, the then Secretary of State for India, in the aftermath of the great famine that "Assam
and possible Orissa", be separated from Bengal for not receiving adequate administrative attention while being in the fag-end of the geographically vast Bengal presidency. This had created hope in the interested circles in Orissa. Since the very first decade of the 19th century when many old Oriya-Zamindar families had been disposed of their Zamindari following the introduction of the Sunset law, the Zamindars as a class in the coastal belt of Orissa were feeling restive under the existing provincial administrative arrangement. Sir Stafford's suggestion came as a clinching opportunity for them to ask for separation of Orissa from Bengal.

In 1875 Raja Shyamananda Dey, a leading Zamindar of Balasore and Vichitrananda Pattanaik of Cuttack together memorialised the Lt. Governor of Bengal pleading for unification of all the severed parts of Orissa under a single administration. But under the changed circumstance when the shock of the famine was long gone the appeal could not evoke favourable response from the government.

Two decades after the question assumed renewed interest when in January 15, 1895. The chief
commissioner of the Central Provinces created a flutter in Sambalpur by issuing an order to make Hindi the court language there. The Utkal Sabha instantly picked up the issue and memorialised the Viceroy of India in June the same year against this “worst form of gagging... yet unknown ever in the most despotic form of government”. In the same memorandum the Sabha demanded the unification of all Oriya-speaking tracts so as to continue the linguistic autonomy of Oriyas either under the Bengal or the Central Provinces.

Madhusudan Das in his effort to orchestrate the issue into an organised voice of protest convened a public meeting at Cuttack. The meeting expressed converted solidarity with the concern which Nilamani Vidyaratna had raised in the editorial of Sambalpur Hitaisini.

In 1896 Madhusudan was elected to the Bengal Legislative Council as the representative of the Municipalities of Orissa and Chotanagpur. By using his official capacity he sailed for England in the middle of 1897 to present the case of vivisected Orissa before the British Home authorities. Taking a dig at the historical wrong caused to Orissa he called for a timely undoing of the injustice in his straight-forward
printed pamphlet “A brief Account of Orissa under British Administration” and circulated it among people who mattered there.

The dawn of the 20th century was pregnant with enough portent for the agitationists of a unified Orissa. Lord Curzon, the new Viceroy of India, in first ever such a visit by any viceroy to Orissa came to Bhubaneswar in 1899. Yadhusudan seized this opportunity to appraise him of the issue of the isolation of the Oriya language from the courts of Sambalpur which he said had been gone under a capricious fiat. Soon afterwards Madhusudan had a meeting with Lord Curzon in Simla pleading for the unification of the Oriya-speaking areas under one administration.

On the face of such concerted protests and memorialisation to the highest authorities in Indian and in England, the provincial administration of the central provinces had to rethink on its earlier order. Sir Andrew Fraser, the then Chief Commission of Central Provinces, communicated to the Viceroy that “if Uriya was to be the court language of Sambalpur, that district had better be joined to Orissa and this might be done either by placing Sambalpur under
the control of Bengal government or by transferring the whole of Orissa from Bengal to Central Provinces". Incipient is this casual suggestion of Frasers was the major political event of 1905. In the words of Lovat Fraser, the biographer of Lord Curzon, "the movement which led to the partition of Bengal began in the most artless manner possible. When Sir Andrew Fraser sat down in February 1901 to write an innocent letter about a linguistic question, he can never have dreamed that he was setting in motion a sequence of events, which was to lead several years later to a wide spread agitation in the province of Bengal; yet such as was the case...out of that casual suggestion, the whole great controversy arose ...". The Utkal Sammilani which was floated in 1903 in reaction to the Madras resolution of the Indian National Congress, sought to capitalise on the fast changing political thinking at the upper echelons of administration in India,. In its first convention itself, the Sammilani demanded (I) the unification of natural Orissa, (ii) bringing about her all-round development and (iii) protection of the interests of the Oriya in the out-lying tracts. The Maharaj of Mayurbhanj who presided over the session, in his historic speech addressed every
one present in the assembly as "Dear brothers". Never earlier had a man from the royalty addressed the commoners as such. There simply was no public issue which would have warranted such display of bonhomie.

The year before the founding of the Utkal Sammilani, Baikunthanath Dey, the worthy successor of Raja Shyamananda Dey of Balasore, had presented a memorandum to Lord Corzon pleading for the amalgamation of all Oriya-speaking tracts. In his response the Viceroy suggested to the Government of India to use the opportunity of Berar’s incorporation into British India as a convenient occasion for redrawing the existing boundaries of the Indian provinces on the basis of language and ethnicity.

When Curzon’s scheme was put into effect, as first step towards the integration of Orissa under one administrative set-up. Sambalpur was wielded into the Orissa Division of Bengal Presidency in 1905. However, the Risely circular, which had envisioned the merger of entire Ganjam district along with the Vizakapatanam Agency Tract with the Orissa Division could not be implemented in full due to the unwillingness of the
Government of Madras to part with the said territories. The press in Madras also vehemently protested against the Risely proposal. Lord Ampthill, the Governor of Madras, who officiated as Viceroy after the controversial departure of Lord Curzon on leave, ultimately rejected the transfer of Ganjam and Vizakapatanam Agency to Orissa.

Under the auspicious of Utkal Sammilani, Madhusudan again sailed for London to agitate for the Oriya cause before the Secretary of State foe India. The London tribune commenting on the out come of his meeting with Mr. Morely stated, "it is interesting to learn that his mission here has not been wholly unsuccessful. He had at any rate enlisted the sympathies of Morely on behalf of his fellow Oriyas".

The year 1911 was momentous in several ways. In that year the capital of British Empire in India was shifted to Delhi. The partition of Bengal was annulled. And the King-Emperor George V himself announced from his Durbar in Delhi the creation of new province of Bihar and Orissa. But the announcement came much to the Chagrin of the
Utkal Sammilani leadership. The Oriya leader of Ganjam felt unduly left by the way-side and demanded to be incorporated into the new province.

In December 1916, in the XIIth session of Utkal Sammilani held at Balaosre, a committee of seven members consisting of Madhusudan Das, Raja of Kanika - Rajendra Narayan Bhanja Deo, raja of Seragada - Sobha Cahandra Singh Deo, Harihar Panda, Braja Sundar Das, Gopabandhu Das and Sudam Chandra Naik, was constituted for collecting data pertaining to Orissa and carrying out executive work of the conference through out the year. On December 11, 1917 the committee presented its memorandum to the Montague Chemsford Royal commission complete with all data and a map of the out-lying Oriya tracts which it sought should be included in its proposed province of Orissa. The commissions n favourably viewed the memorandum and in its report suggested the concerned provincial governments to expeditiously consider the issue of redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis.

In the light of the Royal Commission’s suggestion, on November 25, 1921, a resolution moved
by Biswanath Kar was passed by the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council recommending the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts to be constituted into a separate province. Towards the close of 1924, a committee consisting of C. L. Philip, the Political Agent at Bengal for Orissa state and A. C. Duff, the Collector of Bellary district of the Madras province, we appointed to assess the views of the people of Ganjam. The committee after conducting a thorough inquiry reported that "there is a genuine, long-standing a deep-seated desire under part of the educated Oriya classes of the Oriya-speaking tracts for amalgamation of these tracts with Orissa under one administration". On the basis of these report the Government of India refereed the issue to the Indian Statutory Commission of 1928, popularly called the Simon Commission.

In Orissa, even as the political air of the country was resounding with the chants of "Go back Simon", leaders of the Utkal Sammilani in clear disregard to the boycott call of the Indian National Congress extended full cooperation to the commission. The commission on its part instituted a working sub-committee to go into legitimacy of the demand and finally
recommended to the Government to constitute a Boundaries Commission in view of its favourable finding in support of a separate Orissa province.

In the meantime, the Raja of Parlakhemundi, Krishnachandra Galapati Narayan Dev drew the attention of the round table conference in London on January 16, 1931 to the fact that "all its labour to develop parliamentary institution in provinces with autonomous powers would be seriously injurious to Orissa without a separate province for 10 millions of Oriyas" The Maharaj’s invective matched the broad political designs of the British Government. Besides, the view of the recommendation of the Simian-commission, a three-member Ores Boundary Committee with Samuel O’Donned as the chairman and H. M. Meat, and T. Phonon as members was appointed to go into the question of a separate administration for Ores from financial and other angles and to make recommendation regarding adjustment of boundaries in the event of separation.

It took several years for the committee to furnish its contingency plan until on the basis of the recommendation of the joint parliamentary committee Orissa was made a separate
province under section 289 (I) (b) the Government of India Act, 1935. The order after due parliamentary approval was passed on March 3, 1936 and came into effect on April 1, 1936.

The long and persistent agitation of the Utkal Sammilani "was met half-way by the uneasiness of the British administrators'. The Association of the landed aristocrats who had been close and loyal to the British Government was a factor. But what weighed heavily in favour of Orissa was the emerging political calculation of the British in India in addition to a the agitation by "petitions, memoranda deputation and resolutions". 

Commenting editorially on the birth of Orissa the wrote on July 5, 1937: "this desire to see Orissa re-united imported into Indian politics something of the irredenta problem familiar in Europe; but there has been no narrow provincialism about this feeling, for men and women of Orissa have long been prominent in the Indian National Movement."
(C) Participation in the National Freedom Movement:

Orissa's participation in what goes under the general appellation of "Freedom Movement" had three important strands. The movement with wide popular participation at the call of Mahatma Gandhi flowed on the surface. Underneath it worked the Mahatma's stirring efforts to reform and project the Indian society in a new light. The more his constructive programs of self-help and Harijan uplift started showing results, the more the undecided questions of the hierarchically stratified society manifested in factional politics both within the Congress and between competing political formations and ideologies. With the British gradually relenting to "development of self-governing institution with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government" and the prospect of approaching freedom the intensity of factional politics increased manifold. In the intricate web of events that filled the years of struggle for independence all these three strands moved alongside each other.

(I) Pre-Gandhian nationalist movement.
Orissa being a part of the unified Bengal presidency could not have been deaf to the soul-stirring call of the Swadesi movement. It was a movement for the sizeable number of Bengalis domiciled in Orissa to show solidarity with a movement that basically protested against the partition of Bengal. The Indian National Congress which from the beginning was opposed to "the present policy of the Government of India in breaking up territorial divisions which have been of long standing" created an anti-imperialist mood by calling for a country-wide movement of Swadesi and boycott. Prominent nationalist leaders from Calcutta like Asin Kumar Banerjee, Faniendra Kumar Ghos and Bipin Chandra Pal came to spread the movement in Orissa. The chant of "Vande Mataram" filled the political atmosphere. In a public meeting held in the Cuttack Municipal hall under the presidency of Babu Janakinath Bose on 20th August, 1905, Madhusudan Das spoke fervently in support of Swadeshi. He also addressed meetings in several other place exhorting the people of Orissa to boycott foreign goods.

Despite the repressive measures taken by the government the movement became successful. At the suggestion of Rabindranath Tagore, 26 October 1905,
the day of partition of Bengal was to be
effected, was observed as the “Rakshya bandhan
Divas”. Students going round the street of
Cuttack, tied Rakhi even on the wrists of the
Muslims.

Balasore had a fair share in this nascent
nationalist movement. Swadeshi meetings and street
processions were organised here with equal fervour.
The weavers of Basudevpur, inspired by Swadeshi
idea began manufacturing fine handloom textiles.
Many enlightened people too brought indigenous
cloths on auspicious occasions. Apart from the
Swadeshi fervour, the supreme sacrifice of Bengal
revolutionary leader Jatin Mookerjee at Odangi
near Balasore on 10th September, 1915 left a deep
impression among the nationalist-minded people of
Balasore.

(II) First phase of Gandhian movement

Orissa’s full-fledged entry into the
mainstream of Indian Freedom Movement led by
Mahatma Gandhi was institutionalized in 1921. The
Congress’ objection to the formation of linguistic
provinces which was singularly responsible for
dissuading the early Oriya nationalist leader from
participating in Congress programmes was then no
longer valid. The willingness of the British government to create a separate Orissa province was in any case a part of the subjective political decision which aimed at reorganising the Indian empire on communal and linguistic lines. The government was not ready to concede to the pleas of Utkal Sammilani leaders for creating an Orissa of their vision. The congress on the other hand decided to form the Provincial Congress Committee on linguistic basis at the Nagpur session in December 1920. The feudal leadership of the Utkal Sammilani thus lost out on both counts making the way clear for Orissa’s full participation in the Congress-led non-cooperation movement “till Swaraj was established”.

Gopabandhu Das upon his return to Orissa from Nagpur session of the Congress, successfully persuaded the Utkal Sammilani in its annual session at Chakradharpur on December 30, 1920 to resolve that the “aim and objectives of the Indian National Congress be accepted as those of the Utkal Union Conference in addition to the accepted objectives of the Congress”. “Nobles moderates and ultra-loyalists” who did not agree with the resolution stayed back with the truncated Utkal Sammilani. Gopabandhu on the other hand carrying
along his followers formed the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee in March 1921 with himself as its president, Ekram Rusool as Vice-president and Bhagirathi Mohapatra and Brajabandhu Das as Secretaries. This marked the beginning of the freedom struggle in Orissa and also the split between the older and younger members of the Utkal Sammilani. The split was based on the differing perceptions between these two blocks on the emerging political situation. The block inside the Sammilani sought to maintain its leadership hold by riding the crest of popular mood which it thought was provincialist. Gopabandhu himself saw no contradiction in working for the Swaraj and Orissan unification from the Congress platform. In his rise, the transition in the character of the leadership in Orissa of which Madhusudan was the harbinger became complete and the Congress, the most important political formation.

The respectability for organising the District Congress Committee in Balasore was bestowed on Harekrishna Mahatab. In his sincere effort to organise congress activity in the district and spread among the people the ideas of non-co operation he was assisted by Karunakar Panigrahi,
Biswanath Hota and Harendra Ghose at Jaleswar; Krishna Prasad Mahapatra and Nilambara Das at Basta; Nanda Kishore Das at Soro; and Banchanidhi Mohanty, Ghanashyama Sahu, Upendranath panda and Muhammad Hanif at Bhadrak. Mahatab himself with the help of Bhairab Chandra Mahapatra, Surendranath Das and Subodh Chandra De worked hard to spread the message of congress in Balasore town. Most of these men gave up their studies or left jobs to join the non-co operation movement at the call of Mahatma Gandhi who in his whirlwind tour of the country had came to Orissa in the last week of the March 1921. Their work was facilitated by the already prevailing nationalist sentiment among the intellectual circle in the district. To rouse it further a "Swaraj Mandir" was set up in the Balasore town and a cyclostyled weekly consisting of eight pages in the name of Swarajya Samachar was brought from here. Swaraj Mandir also played the role of a catalyst in training volunteers in the congress programme which included:

(a) boycott of foreign goods and government institutions; (b) propagation of hand-spinning and wearing with the help of Charkha; (c) organising village Panchayats and national schools and (d) prohibition.
The volunteers vigorously carried on picketing in front of liquor-shop and against foreign cloth. The measure was so successful that even the porters refused to tranship the consignments of foreign cloth from the railway station to the local shop. Nationalist news paper like The Samaj, Amrit Bazar Patrika and a The Servant were subscribed in the district with the financial help from the Congress. Small-time businessmen and middle class people were drawn in large numbers to the Congress programme. But the Zamindars in the country-side were not forthcoming. However, some Zamindars of Bhadrak area instead of registering rent-suits in the court submitted their list of defaulters to the Congress office. In Srijang village even sale-deeds were registered in the local congress office. At Soro a national school was established to help students who left government-run school.

In December 1921, Indian National Congress in its annual session at Ahmedabad resolved to start civil disobedience under Gandhiji's leadership. 53 Delegates from Balasore who attended the Ahmedabad session returned with much enthusiasm to carry out the congress resolution. The district level organisers selected Sartha village in thana
Basta for the purpose. But in the meantime village fires and arson caused by the agent provocateurs of the police created wide-spread panic in the district. Also peasant uprising in the Zamindari of Kanika against illegal collections of cess, arbitrary settlement of revenue and mismanagement of drought relief measures added another dimension to the non-cooperation movement. At the behest of the Raja of Kanika, Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo, who was an important leader of the Utkal Sammilani, the government took the uprising as motivated by the non-cooperation movement. A reign of terror was let loose on the protesting tenants. Gopabandhu Das and Bhagirathi Mahapatra who came to express solidarity with the oppressed peasants to Bhadrak were taken prisoner for six months for violating the prohibitory orders of the government against holding any meeting.

The Kanika uprising had several portents for the Congress politics in Orissa. It became apparent that in an agrarian society the meaning of Swaraj for peasants could only be relative to their freedom from feudal bonds. Leaders like Nabakrishna Choudhuri, Sursendranath Dwivedi, and of course, Harekrishna Mahtab had an inkling of this
fact and organised *Kishan Sabhas* (Farmers Association) in subsequent years. Such indulgence in agrarian politics by Congress leaders brought for the party rich electoral dividends when the occasion came. But at the same time it snuffed out possibilities of autonomous politicization of the agrarian committees. It also created in the substantial land-holders and feudal chiefs a group of formidable political opposition which continue as a festering sore on the body-politic of Orissa for a great length of time.

(iii) **Swarajists and Factionalism within the Congress.**

Non-cooperation movement came to an abrupt end following violent incident at Chauri Chaura in February 1922. Excepting constructive works, Gandhili suspended the programme of civil disobedience indefinitely. Most of the Congress leaders responsible for the movement were put behind the bars. At this time a division in the congress rank based on ideology appeared on the scene. A section of the Congress party led by Motilal Nehru and Chittaranjan Das formed the Swaraj Party in 1923 to participate in the elections to the various legislative bodies. Their objective was to obstruct the work of the
Government from within the Councils. With a great deal of persuasion the Swarajist succeeded in getting approval of a the Congress for their plan.

In Orissa the Swaraj party started with the Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya, originally founded by Goapabandhu Das during the days of Svadeshi movement at Sakshigopal in the district of Puri as its nucleus. The keenness showed by Pandit Nilakantha Das and Pandit Godavarish Mishra, the former colleagues of Gopabandhu Das at the Satyavadi Vidyalaya, to fight election while most of the congress leaders were still in prison, was not liked by leaders like Mahatab. In the election Pandit Godavarisha Mishra, Jagabandhu Singh and Radharanjan Das of Balasore were elected to the Bihar and Orissa provincial legislative council and Pandit Nilakantha Das to the central legislative assembly.

Upon their release Gopabandhu and Harekrishna Mahatab began to work out the constructive programme all over again. In Balasore, Mahatab started a new weekly news paper, called Pratantara from the Swaraj Mandir on 2nd September 1923. He also took initiative to open a number of congress Ashrams in different parts of
the district. In 1924 with the spacious intention to promote Gandhili’s constructive programme he got elected as the chairman of the Balasore Zilla Board. In 1926 in the election to the Bihar and Orissa Provincial legislative council he became the congress candidate from the Bhadrak constituency and got elected. Beside in his own admission he contrived to get elected Nanda Kishore Das, a deserter from the Satyavadi Vidyalaya, to the same council from Balasore constituency.

The compulsive effects of electoral politics within the provincial Congress created bitterness between the two seemingly opposing camps. Mutual insinuations and lobbying for berths in the various legislative councils arose often which had become pitched in the early years of 20th century. In a competing atmosphere, Brahmin Associations in Puri and Karan Associations in Cuttack had been set up to promote educational and other interest of people belonging to the respective castes. The intention initially might have been noble but subsequently it assumed a repulsive form when a group of non-Brahmin Congress workers mainly belonging to Cuttack and
Balasore district" set up a new political center named Alakashram at Jagatsinghpur in Cuttack district as “a revival to the Satyavadi group of Brahmin politicians led by Gopabandhu Das”\(^54\). During his life time Gopabandhu, whom Mahatma Gandhi hailed in his condolence message as “one of the noblest among the sons of Orissa, the land sorrows and tears”, used to sort out differences between his old and new colleagues by exerting the force of his personality\(^55\). But with the untimely death of Gopabandhu on 17th June 1928, caste-politics broke into open. In the words of Lalmohan Pattnaik, “misunderstanding grew. Puri being the strong hold of Brahmin and Cuttaack of Karanas their differences quietly ushered in the noxious Brahman-Karana problem. Gradually, it developed into a menace to the society\(^56\).

(iv) Gandhi’s visit to Orissa.

Orissa “the epitome of India’s poverty” could, indeed, have done well without getting embroiled in sterile factional politics. The high-point of this truth was not lost on Mahatma Gandhi when he visited Orissa for the third time in the 2nd week of December 1927\(^57\). During his
two days sojourn in Charbatia village he got a deeper insight into actual state of rural society in the district of Balasore. Scores of marooned people came to him explaining their misery and for succour. Harassed by the ravages of flood and excessive increase in revenue demands any number of them were migrating to Calcutta. Among 6240 house holds in the village a school teacher with a monthly salary of rupees 10, who could barely manage dal and vegetables together for a family of four members, was only next to the Zamindar in rank and was considered a rich man. While he advised Chakradhar Behera, the peasant leader from Kanika to submit to the courts for the settlement of all land disputes, he entreated the just demands of the peasants. There could not have been a secretary on the faction-ridden leadership of the congress for lack of concerted their part to ameliorate the sufferings of the people. In his parting address on 21st December Gandhiji called upon every one to sink all differences and honestly work for nobler causes.

Gandhiji’s visit had a beneficial effect. In 1927 and 1928 when the district of Balasore suffered due to extensive floods, Congress volunteers and general people alike went
round the marooned villages doing rescue and relief works. This was a positive turn around in the social attitude of the people since the days of the Na-Anka famine. Besides, Sri Jivramji Kalyanaji Kothari at the instance of Mahatma Gandhi after giving of all his personal property came long with his wife to Charbatia to work among the people there permanently. Iswar Lala Vyas and Purubai also came to do Sarvodaya work permanently at Bhadrak and Soro.

(v) Second phase of Gandhian Movement

The appointment of the Simon Commission in November 1927 to evaluate the working of the Government of India Act, 1919 with a view to determining the future course of constitutional development was not appeasing to the Indian National Congress. Disgusted with the continuing “divide and rule” policy of the British Government the Congress finally declared Purnaswaraj (complete independence) as its goal at Lahore in December 1929. For its accomplishment the congress working committee in February 1930 authorised Mahatma Gandhi to launch the civil disobedience movement. Many Congress men of Orissa resigned from the various posts at the direction
of the Congress to take active part in the movement.

Gandhili commenced the civil disobedience movement on 19 March 1930 with his famous salt-march from Sabarmati to Dandi. The Utkal Provincila Congress Committee on its part had decided to start the movement at Inchudi on the Balasore coast. On 14th April 1930 the first batch of volunteers led by Acharya Harihar Das broke the salt laws by manufacturing contraband salt at the appointed place. There was unprecedented enthusiasm among the people. Surendranath Das, the man behind the successful organisation of the event, was acclaimed as Sardar. For the first time a large number of women led by Ramadevi and Malati Devi joined the movement at Inchudi on 20 April 1930. Thus began the era of women’s participation in the freedom struggle in Orissa. Soon the movement spread to other parts in Balsorte, Cuttack and Puri districts.

Besides salt agitation, other programmes of civil disobedience including picketing before excise shops, boycott of foreign cloth, propagation of Khadi and non-payment of Chaukidari tax were also continued. Despite the arrest of
all prominent Congress leaders and hundreds of Satyagrahis (civil disobedience volunteers) the movement showed no sign of flagging. At Srijang near Inchudi a police party was manhandled by an infuriated mob on 12 July 1930. It led to the arrest of 54 persons and the imposition of punitive tax amounting to six thousand rupees on the villagers. Out of desperation the Government proclaimed an ordinance declaring all Congress organisations unlawful. Stringent press regulations forced the two nationalist newspapers, the Samaj and Prajatantra to postpone their publications. Some Congress men led by Sardar Surendranath Das still carried on the movement at Inchudi from underground.

However, the Civil Disobedience Movement received a setback on 5 March 1931 due to Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The Congress withdrew the movement to facilitate Mahatma Gandhi’s participation in the second Round Table Conference in London. The Government released all the political prisoners as part of the agreement. But the entire exercise was in vain. Not only that the Mahatma returned empty-handed but a great damage was inflicted on India in August 1932 by the proclamation of the scheme of
communal representation by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay Mac Donald. The Congress had resumed the Civil Disobedience Movement but it failed to contain the impact of the "Communal Award". Under such circumstance two parallel movement began taking roots within the Congress. A section of congress following the pact reached between the Hindu and the Depressed class leaders at Poona, substituting reservation of seats for the Depressed classes in joint electorates, concentrated in the works of Harijan emancipation. Another group of young Congressmen "inspired by Marxist philosophy sought to channel the congress movement along with the lines of class struggle". In the opinion of Harekrishna Mahatabn the appearance of this group of "Congress socialists" was a reaction to the formidable force of appointment within the Congress who did not consider Gandhian ideology as good enough but sought to use the Congress platform for electoral gains.

(vi) Socialist movement.

In Orissa the first step towards organising the socialist movement was taken on 1933. In a secret conclave at Cuttack Nabakrishna Cahoudhury, his wife Malati Chaudhury, Surendranath Dwivedi,
Goura Chandra Das, Bhagabati Panigrahi and Rabindra Mohan Das came together to form the “Utkal Congress Worker’s Communist League”. Widespread crop failure in that year provided the League with the right opportunity to get closer to the peasantry. It submitted a representation on behalf of the cultivators to the Bihar and Orissa Government at Patna for remission of rents. In 1934 the League brought out a weekly paper called Sarathi to propagate the revolutionary ideas of agrarian reforms. In 1935 a full-fledged Kisan Sangha was founded to organise the peasants against the oppressive Zamindars. Here Krishna Mahatab, who was more disposed to be on the right side of the Gandhian ideology, saw no contradiction in becoming its president. He also chaired a peasant’s conference held at Bhagalpur early in 1936 which demanded the establishment of agricultural marketing organisations and debt reconciliation banks to save the peasants from indebtedness. However, Harekrishna Mahatab soon retreated to his Zamindari at Agarpara in Balasore to devote himself more to the constructive work of Harijan emancipation.
(vii) Gandhiji’s Orissa tour for promotion of Harijan works.

Mahatma Gandhi came to Orissa for the fourth time in May 1934 on Harijan tour. Before his visit, Sri Jivramji Kalyanji Kothari along with his wife and Purubai were already working among the Harijans in the Bhadrak area. Despite his contracting leprosy he had not left the place. To create a conducive atmosphere for his work and to spread Gandhiji’s message in Orissa he was encouraging educated people to subscribe The Harijan newspaper. In certain cases he had personally paid on behalf of some people for such subscription. However, his effort to persuade the Panda of Puri to lift the ban on temple entry for Harijan’s could not be successful even after Pandit Nilakantha Das established the fact of entry of Harijans from other provinces into the Sri Jagannath temple.

Gandhiji arrived at Puri on 8th May 1934. From the next day onwards in course of his Padayatra he was appalled to see the plight of the Harijans in Orissa. In between Puri and
the village of Harekrishnapur he found the Harijans living in the cluster adjacent to the Municipal service latrines. They were not allowed to fetch water from the same bank of the village pond which was reserved for the caste Hindus. For namesake the Harijans were entitled to collect water from the municipality wells. The few Harijan children studying in the District Board School used it sit separately from other caste children. Even to his surprise there Gandhiji found the Brahmins enjoying monopoly rights over plantation of coconut trees. the non-Brahmin castes for fear of divine reprisal were not doing so.

At Birapurushottampapur, where the Brahmin were largely in favour of the removal of untouchability but had no courage to do so, he advised them to accept every one as equal especially under the changed circumstance when the Brahmins themselves were adopting all kinds of jobs for earning livelihood and for getting richer. On 15th of May he inaugurated the Kunjabihari temple at Balianata for all Hindus including the harijans.
At Kalyanapur in the district of Cuttack, Gandhiji got a complete picture of the social stratification that prevailed among the Depressed Classes in Orissa. In their representation the inhabitants apprised Gandhiji that there were three grades of untouchable caste in their village.

1. The most polluting castes were Panas, Kandaras and Hadis. They were untouchables at all times of the day and in all places.

2. The polluting castes who could be touched in times of taking works from them were Gokhas (fisher men), Dhobas (washer men) and Chamars (toddy tapers).

3. Other polluting caste who could be touched certain times in the day were Radhis (rice huskers) and Telis (oilmen). The laws of purity and pollution operated differently in case of each of these castes. The Gokhas were generally untouchables but the fish caught by them would be consumed by men of all castes including the Brahmins. Dhobas could be touched only at the time of accepting washed cloths from them. But generally the womenfolk used to receive cloths from the Dhobas venturing the risk of pollution. It was not polluting even for the Brahmins to
accept a coconut pierced by Chamars. Radhis and Telis would be touched by a man of pure castes only before taking bath. flattened rice prepared by the Radhis could be polluted if touched by men of any other untouchable caste.

However, such laws of pollution were not confined only to the relationship between the pure and untouchable castes. These laws operated equally amongst the various grades of untouchable castes. The higher castes among the untouchable maintained the same distance from lower untouchable castes as much as any clean caste would do in relation to a higher untouchable caste. Among the Chamars there were four grades and even among the Hadis there were two such grades.

The lowest among the untouchables such as Hadis, Kandara, Panas, Gokhas etc. were landless. They earned their livelihood by giving wage-labour. In addition the Hadis serviced the latrines and also did bamboo-works. It was incumbent upon them not to enter the temple or use the village wells. They could use the bathing ghats, village roads and go to village schools but carefully so as not to touch other
caste people. Similarly it was incumbent upon them to live outside of the village in segregation. It was forbidden to the men of cleaner castes to visits their habitations. Specific penance were to be undertaken for violating such norms. The Harijans themselves were reluctant to touch men of cleaner caste for fear of divine repraisals. They eat the flash of dead animals and were not inclined to lead a hygienic life.

Mahatma Gandhi noticed similar disabilities suffered by the Harijans through out his tour till Bhadrak. At Bhadrak, on 8th June 1934, he advised the Harijan workers to concentrate more on villages where the stigma of untouchability was greater. Gandhiji's month long tour roused the people to the necessity of the removal of untouchability. Some prominent Congress-men inspired by Gandhian ideals, devoted themselves to build congress center in remote rural areas for taking up the cause of Harijans, Hadis and propagation of village construction. In the district of Balasore in addition to Jivramji's Bhadrak Ashram, Marekrishna Mahatab set up a Karma Mandir at Agarpara to engage himself in Harijan works.
(viii) Experience of provincial administration

By 1936 the political climate of India had decisively changed with the advent of Government of India Act, 1935. The civil disobedience movement having been left behind the All India Congress Committee was preparing for the ensuing elections to the Central and Provincial Legislative Councils. For Orissa, the general election to the newly created sixty-member Provincial Assembly, was first such experience. There had already taken place vast changes in the political complexion of the new Province. Not only that a distinct battle-line had been drawn between the landed aristocracy and intellectual torch-bearers of the Congress but also a kind of uneasiness among the top-ranking leaders had come to prevail within the Congress. Under such circumstances the priority before the Pradesh Congress Committee was to sail through the troubles waters of provincial polities to victory.

In the election held in January 1937 the Congress won 36 seats out of a total 56 elected seats, 4 being nominated ones. The Orissa
National Party and the United Party mostly representing the Rajas and Zamindars could manage to secure only 10 seats, the rest 10 seats went to the independent candidates. Pandit Nilakantha Das who then headed the Pradesh Congress Committee earned for his party this laurel of electoral success through innovative methods of electioneering and promise for radical agrarian reforms. The visit of Jawahar Lal Nehru to Orissa just before the election and the natural influence which Mahatma Gandhi had on the people also helped swaying the voters in favour of a the Congress. But the Pradesh Congress had yet several issues to resolve.

The first important issue that cause a stand-off within he party was the question of leadership. Nilakantha Das with his organisational skill and recent electoral success would have been the natural choice. But unlike other prominent provincial leaders he had not sought election to the Assembly. His decision to head the Congress Legislative Party was an after-thought. A section of the congressmen led by Harekrshna Mahatab objected to the back-door entry plan of Nilakantha Das. Even in their first trial of strength over the Pradesh
Congress Committee election Nilakantha Das lost out to Harekrishna Mahatab by one vote. Though in the immediate context the row on leadership was resolved with the election of Biswanath Das as the leader of the legislature party yet the factional feud that began in 1937 for the control of the party and thereby the Government continued ever after.

The second issue revolved round a directive from the All India Congress Committee which permitted congress men to accept office in the province provided the leader of the legislative could declare that the special powers of the Governor would not be used to overrule the advice of the ministers with regard to provincial administration. In case of Orissa Governor Sir John Austen Hubback refused to give such an assurance. In the eventuality the Governor invited the National Party Leader Krishna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Dev, the Maharaja of Parlakhemundi to form the government. It was a constitutional aberration created by the Congress party's refusal to accept office. However, after an interlude of three months the Governor realising the untenability of the situation made a solemn assurance to exercise his powers in
accordance with the advice of the council of ministers. Thereupon Biswanath Das with two colleagues, Nityananda Kanungo and Bodhram Dube as ministers and four members as parliamentary secretaries were sworn into the office on 19th Juyaly 1937. Forming the first Congress ministry in Orissa. Mukunda Prasad Das and Nanda Kishore Das the two Congress Legislators from Balasore were duly elected as Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House.

The ministry from the beginning faced formidable administrative and political challenges. On the side of administration the ministry had generated great expectation among the cultivators and the common people to do something drastic on the agrarian front. It was a difficult proposition with the peasantry backed by the Kisan Movement on the one hand and the powerful Zamindar community supported by the imperialists on the other. The government was also always threatening to go on the offensive hamstrung by scarce resources. Speaker Mukunda Prasada Das announced a voluntary cut from his salary in consideration of the general poverty of the people. Prime Minister Biswanath Das on his part asked the officers to accept voluntary cuts
in their pay. But notwithstanding these constraints, the Congress ministry took a number of progressive measures.

In the Orissa Tenancy Bill the Government proposed to grant the raiyats of north Orissa the right of free transfer of occupancy holidays, abolition of mutation fees and the reduction of the rate of interest on arrears rent. However, the Bill failed to get the Viceroy's assent to the great disappointment of the peasants, politically though, the measure won for the congress continued peasant support in its struggle against the foreign yoke.

In Balasore, the Government implemented a comprehensive programme to tackle the problem of opium addiction. Excepting the border outlets, a majority of opium shops were closed down in the district. An officer was also appointed to enforce the programme. Balasore which ranked second in the country in terms of volume of opium consumed, benefited immensely out of this drive against opium addiction. Besides, during this time the Balasore port was opened with the help of a Calcutta-based company and the local businessmen.
Other progressive measures which the Government took included (1) the Orissa Money Lenders Act, (2) the Orissa Small-holders Relief Act, (3) the Orissa Prevention of Adultration and Control of Sale of Food Act and (4) the Orissa Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank Act. The middle class constituency of the Congress benefited greatly out of all these Act.

Politically it was a trying-time for the Biswanath Das Government. Soon after the installation of his government group alignment within the congress changed dramatically. Nilakntha Das and Godavarish Mishra, the two Brahmin politicians holding allegiance to the Satyabadi group arrayed themselves against the predominantly Karan group led by Nityananda Kanungo and Harekrishna Mahatab. having failed to contain the ascendance of the Karan group within the party, they virtually played opposition to the ministry. In March 1938 at the annual conference of Gandhi Seva Sangh held at Delang in the Puri district, the dissident submitted to the Sardar Patel a charge-sheet against the ministry. Though the charge-sheet was found baseless by Patel, still for breaking the impasse, Harekrishna Mahatab had
to step down from his post of President of a the Pradesh Congress Committee.

Apart from the intra-party problems the ministry had to overcome a serious constitutional crisis over the issue of the Governor's leave. In December 1937, the Government in Britain while accepting the leave application of Governor Hubback announced the appointment of John Daine, the Revenue Commissioner, in his place. The Ministry peeved at the supercession of a subordinate staff threatened to revive the old constitutional deadlock ultimately canceled his leave and the Ministry, in effect won a political victory. On the issue of the relationship between British Orissa and the native states also the ministry asserted its primacy over the Governors prerogatives. The measures gave a fillip to the State People's Movement. The ministry, however, resigned on 4 December 1939 in pursuance of a the Congress resolution not to co-operate with the British War effort. While Orissa passed on to the Governor's Rule, the Indian National Congress in March 1940 from Ramgarh called upon the congressmen to launch Individual Civil Disobedient
However, individual civil disobedience did not take off for apparent reasons. In Orissa the Satyabadi group criticised the movement as a "selfish electioneering by a set of leaders who had lost the faith of the masses". Under the garb of capturing power they wanted to assist Subhas Chandra Bose who sought to forcibly drive the British out of India with the help of the axis powers\textsuperscript{67}. But this was achieved at a tremendous cost amounting to a permanent loss of face. For the loyalists, the Satyabadi group became a "bunch of opportunities"\textsuperscript{68}.

Opportunism or otherwise, the first coalition ministry headed by Maharaj of Perlakhemundi formed on 24 November 1941, created a strange combination in state politics by bringing the Congress dissidents and the landed aristocracy together. Inner contradictions among the coalition partners were bound to surface sooner than later. On the issues related to the export of rice to the famine-stricken Bengal, personal differences cropped up between Nilakantha Das and Godabarish Mishra. In the meantime the Prime Minister resigned from the Government causing imposition of Governors' Rule for the second time in Orissa
from 1944 to 1946. Among the achievement of this ministry, the notable thing was the establishment of the Utkal University in November 1943.

(ix) Towards Freedom

In the meanwhile, the Congress strategy shifted from individual civil disobedience to mass revolt. Under extraordinary circumstances Mahatma Gandhi asked the British to "Quit India". The confusion emerging out of the rapid advance of Japanese forces towards India, willingness of a section of the Indian National Congress led by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad to assist in the alley's war effort if a national Government in India was installed and the motivated proposals of Sir Statford Cripps to break India's unity came to an end with his heroic call. The historic resolution was passed by the All India Congress Committee in the night of 8th August, 1942 at Bombay. With all the resolutionists taken into immediate custody the "August Revolution" became a spontaneous people's movement for final liberation.

In Orissa despite a vicious campaign set off by the Government and its native stooges against the Congress call, thousands of men and
women joined the struggle. Meetings, processions and hartals became an everyday phenomena.

In Balasore the movement often took violent turns. On 17 August 1942 score of villagers attacked a police station at Bhandari Pokhari in Bhadrak and set fire to it. The villagers also destroyed a road-bridge to prevent police from reaching the disturbed areas. The Government took strong action and imposed a collective fine of rupees six hundred upon the 12 surrounding villages. In places like Dhamnagar and Khairadihi also the police came under attack and took to retaliatory measures killing at least 8 people and injuring many. But the most ghastly action of police was committed at Eram in Basudevpur. On 28 September 1942 the police swooped down upon a gathering of five thousands people and killed 26 persons on the spot recreating another episode of Jalianwala Bagh in Orissa. General patriotic fervour apart as the Eram Enquiry Report revealed there were important local factors of price rise and storage of essential supplies of food which contributed not the least in fomenting discontent.
In the wake of intense oppressive measures the August revolution demurred in a matter of months. But the sheer untenability of further British colonial hold on India was exposed in no uncertain manner by this movement. The election of the Labour Party Leader, Sir Clement Atlee in the post-war British general election quite sensibly underscored this fact. On 20th February 1947, he declared the British decision to quit India by June 1948. On a preparatory note provincial elections were held to constitute the electoral for the Constituent Assembly in 1946. In Orissa the congress party secured majority of seats in the Provincial Assembly and formed ministry under the Presidentship of Harekrishna Mahatab on 23 April 1946. Finally the sun set on the British empire in India in the mid-night hours of August 15, 1947. The dawn of a new era of Freedom was beaconing the nation.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Utkal Dipika* reported in 1867 that there were by then about twenty to thirty thousand followers of Mahima Dharma in Orissa. *Utkal Dipika* (Undated) Vol.ix.No 3, 1960.


5. Ibid, 15th Boli, couplet No.1.


10. Fakir Mohan’s *Atma Jivan Charita*, (Tr. from Oriya by John Boulton), Cuttack:Orissa Sahitya Academy, 1985, PP.41-42.


13. *Proceedings of the Lieutenant governor of Bengal*, general Departent (Education), June 1862, No.15; Commissioner of Orissa to Govt. of Bengal, No.180.
14. Ibid. June 1863, No.143; Inspector of Schools South-West Division to D. P. I. No. 1475, 16 April 1863.
15. Ibid. June 1863, No.147; Commissioner of Orissa to Govt of Bengal No. 78, 9th June 1863.
16. Ibid. November 1869, No.6; Inspector of schools, South-west Division to D.P.I. No.2625.
   30th March 1868.
17. Vide. Utkal Dipika, 22th June,1875.
29. Utkal Dipika, 25, December 1886.
30. Ibid. 26 May, 1883.
31. Ibid. 25 December 1886.
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33. Ibid. The Oriya, April 10, 1918, P.73.
34. Ibid. P.74.
49. Ibid, PP.55-64.
50. Ibid, P.94.
51 Ibid.
53. Pt. Godavarish Mishra, Ardha Satabdira
58. . . . , Gandhiji O Odisa (in Oriya), Cuttack: 1971 (2nd Edn), PP. 44-58.
60. The Samaja, 16-4-1930.
63. . . . , Ibid, P. 166.