CHAPTER - VI

TERRORIST VENGEANCE AND RELIGIOUS UPRISINGS IN ORISSA ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION (1757-1857)
TERRORIST VENGEANCE AND RELIGIOUS UPRISINGS IN ORISSA
(1757-1857)

(a) Guerrilla Warfare in Mayurbhanj: Origin and Evolution (1781-1796)

An attempt will be made in the present chapter to analyze the origin and evolution of two other categories of peasant movements in Orissa namely, "Terrorist Vengeance" and "Religious Uprisings". Under the "Terrorist Vengeance" it is proposed to cover the "Guerrilla Movement in Mayurbhanj (1781-1836)", and "The Kol Disturbances in Bamanghaty (1821-1836)", while under the "Religious Uprisings" it is proposed to analyze the "Kondh Rebellions (1836-1856)". As regards "Terrorist Vengeance", it refers to agrarian movements with avowed "ideas of meting out collective justice". The "Religious Uprisings" embrace "movements for the liberation of a region or an ethnic group under a new form of government".401 The first case study relates to the guerrilla warfare launched by the peasantry of Mayurbhanj against the British government beginning in June 1781. It comprised military rampages made by guerrillas on English possessions from Belorachar to Khunta. These attacks forced the British Collector of Midnapore to seek the help of Maratha Faujdar

401. For details see, Kathleen Gough's, "Indian Peasant Uprisings", in A.R. Desai, n.13, p.94.
of Balasore, Nana Mukunda Rao. These guerrilla attacks continued unabated till the end of the reign of Damodar Bhanja in 1796.

Mayurbhanj, a powerful and prominent native state in eastern India is located geographically between 22°33'45" and 21°33'0" north latitude and between 85°42'30" and 87°13'15" east longitude. The state is bordered on the north by Saraikala state and the districts of Singhbhum and Midnapore, on the south by the state of Keonjhar and Nilgiri and on its west by Singhbhum district and the state of Keonjhar. Mayurbhanj is regarded as the "largest most valuable of Orissa Tributary States".

The territory of Mayurbhanj was demarcated into three natural divisions. First, there are the two ranges of hills of lesser elevation dividing the plain portion of the state into two halves namely, Mayurbhanj proper and Bamanghaty regions. The latter region (Bamanghaty) was be subdivided further into two portions by another range of hills running on a western direction. The state was divided administratively into three regions: Mayurbhanj proper, Panchpir and Bamanghaty regions. Mayurbhanj contains a wide variety of soil and scenery. It not only abounded in rich valleys and dense forests, but rocky hills as well. Meghasani hills lies in the southern part of the state forming a "seat of clouds". But the vast natural resources of

403. Hunter, Orissa, n.174, p.87.
the state remained unexploited for a long time. Describing
the topography of Mayurbhanj William Hunter stated:

"... The heither to almost unexplored mountains
of Mayurbhanj are heaped upon each other in the
noble masses of rock ... which except at regular
passes are inaccessible to the beasts of burden ..."

Besides this, large of herds of elephants roamed
through the forests and mountains of Mayurbhanj. The state also
produces large quantities of cash crops, and minerals as well as
textiles. Mayurbhanj produced the largest and the best variety
of "tassar" in the whole country. This was recorded by the
British traveller Walter Clavell in his Account (1696) on trade
activities at Balasore. For instance, describing the quality of
"tassar" of Mayurbhanj, Clavell stated: "No where so good Herba
is procurable." True to such traditions, Mayurbhanj continues
to maintain an excellence in tassar textiles and thereby conforming
Clavell's Account of 1696.

The rulers of Mayurbhanj belonged to the Bhanja dynasty.
But historians held divergent views concerning the origin of the
dynasty. William Hunter, relying on native chronicles maintained
that Mayurbhanj or "Bhanja Bhumi" was established more than two
thousand years ago by a relative of the Raja of Jaipur.

406. Walter Clavell's Account as cited in Acharya, Studies in
Orissa History, n.150, p.216.
According to L.C.B. Cobden-Ramsay, the Bhanja dynasty was established some thirteen hundreds years back by one Jai Singh, a relative of Raja of Jaipur who visited Crissa on a pilgrimage to Puri with his two sons Ajit Singh and Jati Singh. During his stay, according to this source, Jai Singh married the daughter of the King of Orissa and was given Hariharpur (Mayurbhanj) by way of dowry. Another view expressed by a British official Beglar was that the Bhanja family was an offshoot of the glorious Maurya dynasty. During the British period, however, the Bhanja rulers deliberately sought to develop a new theory linking their origin to the Rajputs. Such a theory, however was regarded as "fallacious" by B.C. Majumdar. A more plausible answer however, was provided by eminent historian Paramananda Acharya who opined that the Bhanja rulers were descendants of ancient Bhanja Kings of Khiching. Such a view was well supported by eminent historians like R.P. Chanda and S.N. Rajguru.

An overwhelming opinion, seems to suggest that modern rulers of Bhanja dynasty owed their origins to the ancient Bhanja Kings of Khiching Kotte. In fact, the archaeological remains at Khiching bear ample testimony to the culture and civilizations of an

408. Cobden-Ramsay, n.349, p.239.
411. B.C. Majumdar, Sonepur on the Sambalpur Tract (Calcutta, 1958), pp.119-120.
412. Acharya, Studies on Orissa History, n.150, p.V-VIII.
413. As cited in Ibid, p.VIII.
During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the Bhanja rulers were subjected to consistent attacks first by the Mughals and later on by Marathas. In the process, Mayurbhanj passed through an anxious period of "chronic invasion, insurrection and internecine feud". But with the decline and degeneration of Mughal rulers and their inability to hold on to far-flung possessions like Bengal, the Bhanja rajas made repeated attempts to capture additional territories at their expense. In fact, one of the Bhanja rulers namely, Krishna Bhanja successfully extended his territory upto the Midnapore and Bhadrak. He further resisted the efforts of the Mughal Governor of Bengal, Khan-I-Dauran to bring him into submission. His successors, however, decided to submit themselves under the suzerainty of the Mughal Governors of Bengal. It may be mentioned that the Mughal Subedar of Bengal, Alivardi Khan made a series of military operations in Orissa during the period from 1740 to 1750.

415. See Ibid and also Hunter, Orissa, n.174, p.112.
416. See Hunter, Orissa, n.174, p.112.
417. For details see, R.D.Banerji, n.145, p.42.
after which he ceded the state minus Midnapur to the Bhonsle King of Nagpur. The ruler of Mayurbhanj during this period was Raghunath Bhanja (1740-1750), who, however, expired childless and was succeeded by his uncle Chakradhar Bhanja. An inglorious reign followed (1751-1761) after which Damodar Bhanja ascended the throne in 1761.418

The East India Company came into direct contact with Mayurbhanj following the battles at Plassey and Buxar as well as the British occupation of Midnapore in 1760. Midnapore shared a common frontier with Mayurbhanj as the Western Jungles (containing the jungles of Nayabassan, Rohini and Manbhanda) bordered Midnapore. Also, Mayurbhanj was required to pay the revenues for the area of Nayabassan to the British agents stationed in Orissa. Further the Maratha made a series of military attacks on Bengal from the side of Midnapore during the years 1760-1761 to collect "Chouth". They were equally determined to coerce the ruler of Mayurbhanj to pay tributes. Thus, the location of Mayurbhanj was significant as it occupied a strategic position between the British and Marathas possessions of Eastern India. Naturally therefore, both the Company and the ruler of Mayurbhanj felt prompted to forge an alliance in view of the common menace from Maratha quarters. The initiative for such an alliance, emanated from Damodar Bhanja immediately after his accession in 1761, which however, was reciprocated by the English government.419

418. For details see, Report on Mayurbhanj Census, n.404, p.18.

419. For details see, P.Acharya, "Two Centuries of British Connections: A Chapter from the History of Mayurbhanj", Mayurbhanj Chronicle (Baripada), April 1936, p.1.
Despite such warm response initially the bilateral relationship between Mayurbhanj and Company witnessed several ups and downs during the reign of Damodar Bhanja (1761-1796). It appears that both of them developed divergent perspective and conflicts over some key issues namely, the British response to the Maratha problem, Amarda and Nayabassan issues, the disputes over Belorachar and the rebellion of Jagannath Dhal. In fact, as events unfolded, the Company undertook a military operation against Damodar Bhanja beginning in July-August 1781 for the recovery of Jungle tract of Belorachar and that the ruler of Mayurbhanj responded through guerrilla warfare.

To elaborate, the first issue related to the changed British attitude concerning the Marathas and in particular the English aversion towards a trial of strength with Nagpur government for the conquest of Orissa. For instance, right since the days of Robert Clive, the British contemplated measures, short of war (through diplomatic measures) with the payment of "Chouth" as the basis for acquiring Orissa. At the same time they successfully induced Damodar Bhanja into their game plan of checkmating the Marathas from advancing towards Bengal (during military operations in November 1763 as well as in December 1764). To the great dismay of Damodar Bhanja, however, he found out that a secret understanding was evolved between the Marathas and the

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British. Further, he found out during the Marathas operations against Mayurbhanj that the Nagpur government was not inclined to antagonize the English and that the Marathas were taking special care to convey to the British the reasons for their attack on the territory of Damodar Bhanja. 421

Due to a series of Maratha incursions on his territory, Damodar Bhanja was forced to flee to the hills of Bamanghati and that Dasaratha Bhanja, his uncle was made the ruler of the state. But situation was not favourable for the British to exploit as they failed to entice the Marathas to their game plan concerning Orissa. Taking advantage of this, Damodar Bhanja decided to sort out problems with his uncle by assigning him with the territory of Bamanghati. In the process he was back in power by 1867. 422

The issue concerning the rebellion of Jagannath Dhal embittered relationship between Damodar Bhanja and the British. The British were involved in a series of military engagements against Jagannath Dhal during the year from 1768 to 1777, as the latter did not pay any revenues continuously. As Jagannath Dhal was in the constant habit of hiding in Mayurbhanj territory to evade detection, overtures were sent to Damodar Bhanja to help them in efforts to apprehend the Ghatshilla Zamindar. In this context the role played by Damodar Bhanja was both constructive

421. Calendar of Persian Correspondence No. 2665.
422. Imperial Record Department: Bengal Madras Papers, n. 420, p. 64.
as well as helpful. In a sudden transformation of situation, however, the British decided to install Jagannath Dhal as the Zamindar of Ghatshilla in 1777 after he made a promise to pay a reasonable revenue to the East India Company. This decision, became a sort of "anti-climax". It conveyed a clear message to Damodar Bhanja that the policy of resistance was more rewarding than the policy of reconciliation.

Damodar Bhanja's reign (1761-1769) can be divided into two phases: 1761-1776 and 1777-1796. During the first phase he sought to develop a policy of cordiality with the English government. The reason was to obtain their help against the Marathas who were determined to extract "Chouth" from him. A second reason was to make attempts to retrieve Amarda estate from the British hands. In the second phase (1777-1796), however, Damodar Bhanja pursued an independent and aggressive policy. During this phase Mayurbhanj decided to accept temporarily the suzerainty of the Marathas in a bid to outmaneuver the British.

During the second phase emphasis was placed on bilateral issues such as the disputes concerning Amarda, Nayabassan and Belorachar.

To begin with, the British troops forcibly occupied the Amarda estate in 1766-1767. It may be stated that when Thomas Motte passed through this territory in 1766 on his way to Sambalpur, it belonged to Mayurbhanj. But the East India Company

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sought to justify the annexations of 1766-1767 on the ground that the area originally was a part of the paragana of Belorachar, forcibly occupied by the ruler of Mayurbhanj fifty years back. Further, through the Company obtained Jaleswar as part of Midnapore in 1760 (in which the paragana of Belorachar is located), their influence did not cross as far as that paragana on the western side of river Subarnarekha. In fact, the Choudhuries of Belorachar were in occupation of only a small tract of paragana till 1764, while Mayurbhanj occupied a bulk of the paragana (some fifty two villages) besides the estate of Amarda. As for Damodar Bhanja, he did not provide much resistance to the English annexation over Amarda. One of the reasons was that during the period he was a fugitive, who wandered in the hills of Bamanghati. A second reason was that he felt inclined to maintain friendship with the Company. In fact, both the reasons seemed quite plausible.

The second major issue related to the settlement of revenues concerning Nayabassan. When Nawab Mir Kassim of Bengal decided to transfer Midnapore to the East India Company in 1760, it contained a portion called the Western Jungles. Nayabassan was a part of it consisting of the three parganas namely, Nayabassan, Rohini and Manbhandar, all under the control of Mayurbhanj. Nayabassan, which remained on both sides of the river Suvarnarekha, however, was inaccessible due to heavy and dense

426. Ibid.
forests in the region. As for the English, they were entitled to receive revenues of Nayabassan from the Mayurbhanj ruler, as he was the successor of the Mughals in Midnapore. But the physical inaccessibility of the region afforded Mayurbhanj to evade payments to the English, who initially fixed a revenue amounting to rupees twenty five hundred, which, however, was paid regularly by Damodar Bhanja during the years from 1758 to 1770.

But beginning in 1783 Damodar Bhanja announced not to pay any rent to the British as the assessment was quite exorbitant. When his example was followed by other Zamindars in the region, the British initiated a joint military operation against Damodar Bhanja along with the Marathas led by Raja Ram Pandit. This unnerved Damodar Bhanja, who proposed his terms for peace in July 1784. But these were not accepted in toto by the British. Thereafter, Damodar Bhanja withheld revenue payments concerning Nayabassan. In a retaliatory measure, a combined operation (consisting of the Maratha and British troops) was launched, which forced Damodar Bhanja to pay revenue both to the Marathas as well as the English.

Soon after Damodar Bhanja resorted to a guerrilla warfare against the British. He also defaulted on revenue

428. For details see, Selections From Official Letters on Mayurbhanj, n.423, pp.144-145.
429. For details see, Chandra, n.424, pp.49-50.
payments, which surpassed to over one thousand rupees by 1786-1787. But under strong pressures Damodar Bhanja pledged to make regular and full payments. But in actual practice he did not oblige to both the English and the Marathas.\footnote{Ibid, p.53.} At this juncture, however, Damodar Bhanja decided to soften his stance \textit{vis-a-vis} the Marathas.

As mentioned earlier, Damodar Bhanja incurred the wrath of the Maratha not because he was disloyal to them, but because he completely stopped payments of tributes to them, while paying partly to the English. Infact, the Marathas requested the English to exercise their good offices on Damodar Bhanja in this regard.\footnote{Selection From Official Letters, n.423, p.52.} But pressures of circumstances forced Damodar Bhanja to tender his submission to the Marathas, mainly due to two reasons: Firstly, like the Raja of Keonjhar, he made the calculation that it was futile to enter into a direct fight with the overwhelming Marathas. Secondly, he felt that he might require the blessings of the Marathas in his bid to wrest the estate of Amarda, illegally seized by the British in 1766-1767. Damodar Bhanja made a complaint before the Marathas that Amarda was dispossessed from his legitimate control by the Choudhuries of Belorachar with the secret connivance of the English. Such a move, clicked as he received approval from the Marathas concerning his plan to reoccupy the Armada estate. Thus, the silent support from the Maratha quarters paved the way for Mayurbhanj's reoccupation of Amarda in 1781. This was clearly evident from the
complaint lodged by the Choudhuries of Belorachar in letter to the Collector of Midnapore on 22 March 1781. Damodar Bhanja's attitude towards the English stiffened considerably. No longer apprehensive of any restraint from the Maratha quarters, the Mayurbhanj ruler resorted to increasing hostilities against the Company's territory beginning in early June 1781. Such a process was facilitated by the fact that the Maratha Governor Chimanji Babu departed for Nagpur along with his 30,000 horsemen sometime in May 1781.

Following the departure of Maratha troops, Damodar Bhanja went on a rampage on Company's territory commencing from June 1781. Starting from Ulmera, a pargana belonging to Mayurbhanj, he marched through the English territory, overrunning pargana Belibera, (under the Thana Janpur) and the neighbourhood of Nayabassan. After plundering and burning some villages in Belibera, he met a small party of English Sepoys led by the Thanadar of Janpur. He retreated towards Nayabassan without contesting the British forces. The English thereafter sent Lieutenant Broughton with a Company of fifty Sepoys to Janpur as reinforcement to provide protection to the tenants of Belibera and nearby areas. The Collector of Midnapore thereafter warned Damodar Bhanja (with a stern letter sent on 5 June 1781) accusing him of perpetrating atrocities in the English territory. Further, he directed Damodar Bhanja to return back to his own territory in

432. For details see, Ibid, p.59.
433. For details see, Chandra, n.424, p.32.
good grace.436 In response Damodar Bhanja affirmed on 8 June 1781 that the pargana of Beliabera belonged to him and that its Zamindar incurred his wrath by seizing four of his ryots as well by ill-treating his messangers.437 As for the British, they disputed the claim of Mayurbhanj over Beliabera and on 26 June 1781, the Council of Revenue authorized the Collector of Midnapore to start judicial proceedings against the Raja of Mayurbhanj for taking possession of the pargana of Belorachar as well as the three posts namely, Rajghat, Multani and Rani Sarai. The Collector also asked Major MacPherson to employ military measures to dispossess Damodar Bhanja from these territories.438

On 12 July 1781 the Collector of Midnapore served a notice on Damodar Bhanja directing him to appear before him personally on 22 July 1781 to answer the charges concerning occupation of Belorachar and the three ghats as well as the burnings and plunderings in Beliabera.439 Piqued and provoked, Damodar Bhanja decided not to appear before the Court. In a subsequent letter, Damodar sought to justify the righteousness of his cause as well as appropriateness of his conduct.440 The Collector of Midnapore thereafter instructed Major MacPherson to proceed immediately to Pataspur, two miles south east of the fort of Amarda, where the Tahasildar of Belorachar was located.

438. Ibid, p.68.
439. Ibid, p.70.
Further, the Tahasildar Nayanchand Ghose was directed to attend upon the Company's forces as well as to convey information regarding the British territories of Amarda, Kanpur and Multani which were annexed by Damodar Bhanja. Nayanchand Ghose was instructed further to take charge of the territories as wrested from the control of Mayurbhanj. In fact, Lieutenant MacGregor undertook a successful military operation against Damodar Bhanja in the last week of July 1781.

Following this, Damodar Bhanja made elaborate preparations to confront the English. He adopted the guerilla warfare, technique which became quite effective. MacGregor reported that the English efforts became redundant in the teeth of incessant guerilla warfare activities by the rebellious troops led by Damodar Bhanja. The English thereafter sent a reinforcement consisting of a Captain and 150 Sepoys to strengthen MacGregor's garrison. In fact the Mayurbhanj and British forces met each other on 27 July 1781 in a military encounter near Rani Sarai. The forces of Damodar Bhanja lost decisively in that battle. On the very next day Damodar sent an emissary to MacGregor indicating a desire to stop further hostilities until the matter in dispute was settled through negotiation. But subsequently, Damodar Bhanja directed his forces to go on rampage on the British territory near Pataspur. According to MacGregor,

441. Ibid, p.73.
442. Ibid, p.74.
443. Ibid, p.75.
444. Ibid.
the move by Mayurbhanj was prompted by a desire to buy time to congregate a larger force. This move, however, failed miserably.

Despite the resounding victory MacGregor discovered that he was placed in a tight corner due to depletion of his ammunition as well as scarcity of provisions. Coupled with this, he observed that the enemy's force swelled considerably due to arrival of some one thousand Maratha forces to assist Damodar Bhanja. In such a scenario, MacGregor concluded that it would be more appropriate to retreat to the banks of river Subarnarekha and to procure fresh provisions as well as ammunitions from Fort Knox. While retreating, however, MacGregor met on the way a English contingent led by Captain Fenwick. While the British troop faced severe shortage of supplies, they won marvellous victories over Mayurbhanj's forces. They recaptured Amardagarh. A combined military attack was launched in two different routes led by Captain Fenwick and Lieutenant Daniel Cunningham respectively. Following this, Captain Fenwick returned to Pataspur after the re-occupation of Amarda.

After reaching Pataspur Fenwick discovered that all inhabitants left enmasse along with their ruler. Such a situation became disastrous from the British point of view, as they were not able to keep these territories under control due to want of provisions as well as adverse climatic conditions. Thus, Fenwick

445. For details see, Chandra, n.424, p.35.
446. For details see, Ibid, p.77.
447. For details see, Ibid, pp.82-83.
concluded that expulsion of Damodar Bhanja from Belorachar was becoming virtually "an impossible task".\(^{448}\) Thereafter, Captain Fenwick escorted his forces along to Kanpur, Rani Sarai and Multani on 4 August 1789; but found no trace of enemy in these areas as Damodar Bhanja retired to Khunta after vacating the Amarda fort. He preferred to shift his operation to Khunta, as it was located within the Maratha territory as well as in the vicinity of British territory. Further, Damodar Bhanja felt convenient to operate from Khunta by sending the raiding parties towards of eventual destination namely, Belorachar.\(^{449}\) There was no doubt in Damodar Bhanja's mind that the people of Belorachar would side with him in his fight with the British. As stated by the Tahsildar of Belorachar. "Not a ryot will come near me. They are with the Raja people at Khunta."\(^{450}\) As for Damodar Bhanja, he neither demobilized his troops nor sent an emissary to the English for discussion concerning the Belorachar issue and in the process the British forces stayed in that Jungle Tract for a pretty long period.\(^{451}\)

But soon after Damodar Bhanja went on a rampage by attacking the English territory from Belorachar to Khunta. This prompted the Collector of Midnapore to request the Maratha Faujdar of Balasore, Nana Rao Mukunda to participate in a combined

\(^{448}\) Ibid.

\(^{449}\) For details see, Chandra, n.424, p.37.

\(^{450}\) As cited in Selections From Official Letters, n.423, p.89.

\(^{451}\) See, Chandra, n.424, pp.37-38.
military operation to chastise Damodar Bhanja. On the contrary, the Maratha Faujdar supported Mayurbhanj's cause by taking up the matter of Belorachar with the English government. He decided not to participate in any military operations against Damodar Bhanja. Nana Rao Mukunda further made a strong appeal to the President, Committee of Revenue to consider the case of Mayurbhanj rather sympathetically. Probably on the advice of Maratha Faujdar, Damodar Bhanja desisted from further depredations on Belorachar.

Mayurbhanj also made a representation concerning its claim over Belorachar. The Board of Revenue entrusted the task of inquiry to the Committee of Revenue headed by its Acting President Shore. The report of the Committee was further reviewed by the Board of Revenue, which, however, rejected the claim of Mayurbhanj over 81 villages of Belorachar.

The decision of the English government frustrated both Damodar Bhanja as well as the Marathas. In particular, it shocked the Mayurbhanj ruler. His faith in the English system of justice and fair play was greatly shaken due to the overt manner in which a partisan decision was handed out to him by the Honourable British Court. In desperation Damodar Bhanja decided to take recourse to military measures to re-occupy the Amarda

452. For details see, Selections From Official Letters, n.423*, pp.89-90.
estate with the help of the Marathas. In fact he succeeded toward the end of his reign. But he failed to occupy Nayabassan, as he died as a most bitter person in 1796. In desperation he created difficulties for the English government by throwing open support behind Zamindars and rebellious elements belonging to Mayurbhanj. This prompted the British to remain alert with troops.

Towards the fag end of his rule, Damodar Bhanja attacked the villages belonging to Hari Kishan Choudhury, the Zamindar of Datoon in a bid to recover the village of Mauldangry from his control. But he did not succeed as the new Collector of Midnapore, John Dynley took prompt steps to crush these rebellions. Also the Maratha army during this period invaded Mayurbhanj to subdue Damodar Bhanja and the latter fought gallantly to repulse the same. The single-handed struggle by Damodar Bhanja against two formidable opponents namely, the English and the Marathas as well as his love for liberty found few parallels in the history of Orissa.

By way of concluding observations it may be stated that the Mayurbhanj ruler received the unstinted popular support behind all his efforts against the invincible opponents namely, the British and the Marathas. In fact, all sections of Mayurbhanj (including its peasantry) rallied totally behind him. He was undoubtedly the most popular nationalist leader of Mayurbhanj

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455. For details see, Ibid, pp.119-120.
456. For details see, R.P.Chandima, n.424, p.47.
457. For details see, Selections From Official Letters, n.423, p.166.
458. For details see, Chandra, n.424, p.59.
who virtually sacrificed his life for preserving the integrity as well as independence of his country for long 18 years from 1778 to 1796.

(b) **Kol Disturbances in Bamanghaty: Origin and Evolution (1821-1836)**

The present section will deal with another case study relating to "Terrorist Vengeance" namely, the Kol Disturbances of Bamanghaty in the state of Mayurbhanj during the period from 1821 to 1836. These uprisings were spearheaded by the Kol Sardars of Bamanghaty (under the instigation of their Sarbarkar Madhab Das Mohapatra) against Jadunatha Bhanja, the ruler of Mayurbhanj. Due to strained relationship between the Sarbarkar and the Raja, the pargana of Bamanghaty became a battle ground, between the Commissioner of Tributary Mahals at Cuttack and the Governor General's Agent of South West Frontier Agency stationed at Hazaribagh. It may be mentioned that the tribal population of Mayurbhanj, comprising mostly Kols and Santhals, did not hesitate to take up arms against the ruling authority whenever demanded. As events unfolded, the disturbances in Bamanghaty formed part and parcel of a series of Kol insurrections that engulfed the Chhotanagpur region during the year from 1831 to 1833.

To begin with, it may be mentioned that following the establishment of British authority in the region, there occurred a general and more thorough oppression of tribal people. 459

The concept of "economic freedom" as introduced by the British Utilitarians as well as the indiscriminate enforcement of contracts by the Court of law attracted a large number of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh land-grabbers, jobbers, traders and usurers into the Chhotnagpur area. These external elements seized the lands from the tribals, which resulted "the break up of tribal solidarity and the disintegration of village community." This brought about the "ruination of tribesmen, the original clearer of the land who could not compete with the plainsmen in cunning or prestige."  

Following the British occupation Maharaja Govind Nath Sahi succeeded to the estate of Chhotnagpur. He described his tribal inhabitants as "wild mountaineers and robbers who were incapable of understanding any order" and who "would not listen to reason". Further, he described them as "nothing but a set of lawless mountaineers." The subsequent ruler of Chhotnagpur was Jagannath Sai who described the tribals as "low caste, turbulent wretches" who "in person resemble men, but in mind as wild beasts."  

In the years prior to the Kol insurrections, however, many plainsmen poured into the Chhotnagpur region as traders, craftsmen or priests. Besides them, the relatives of the local chiefs were provided with lands in the region. As a result the

460. Ibid, p.430.  
461. J.C.Jha, Kol Insurrections in Chhotnagpur (Calcutta, 1964), p.120.  
462. As cited in Ibid, p.120.
tribals suffered terribly due to the process of alienation. Naturally, therefore the dispossessed people (who became dispossessed from the inherent right over the land) developed a great hatred towards the foreign intruders.\textsuperscript{463} As far as the Kols were concerned, they strongly believed in the dictum of ancient Hindu philosopher Manu that the cultivable land was the property of him who cut away the wood, or who cleared and tilled it.\textsuperscript{464}

These outsiders, however, resorted to the system of subletting to small farmers or "thikaddars". These "thikaddars" and government officials, earned great notoriety in misusing their personal power and authority. For instance, the tribal women were seduced or often eloped to by the Muslim or Sikh "thikaddars".\textsuperscript{465} Besides them, the police officials were found notorious for their arbitrary exactions. Such a fact, was conceded by a British official \textsuperscript{Blunt} in 1832. According to him, "the most grievous oppression and exaction had been practised by the native officers of Government, especially the Police Darogahs."\textsuperscript{466}

A study of revenue administration in the region clearly indicated the fact that the Kols were subjected to a series of excessive as well as illegal exactions. These included, (1) Liquor tax on "Banoria" (rice beer, which was

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{463} For details see, \textit{Ibid}, pp.150-152.
\item \textsuperscript{464} "Kols of Chhotanagpur", \textit{Calcutta Review}, vol.59, p.124.
\item \textsuperscript{465} For details see, D.C.Jha, n.461, p.151.
\item \textsuperscript{466} Blunt Minute 4 April 1832.
\end{itemize}
almost a daily necessity for tribals), (2) "Abkari tax" (it was a major taxation which was most oppressive and tyrannical Excise tax), (3) "Forced Poppy Cultivation", (4) Exactions imposed by the "Nazirs", "Darogas" concerning fines for offences (real or pretended) described as the system of "Gunhagiri". Under the system if a person committed suicide or even died a natural death, some one in the village was made a scapegoat by the "Darogas" for murdering him. Such a person could escape only on payment of a bribe. (5) Forced contribution from the villagers: It was a common sight in the countryside to see the "Darogas" travelling in a palanquin carried by Kols with behangi-loads of rice, ghee and fowl following them. (6) Manipulation of the copper currency and Exaction of "Salami" (a yearly Nazar of Rs.1.5 realised from each village) (7) Dak Collection. Out of these taxes, however, liquor tax, forced labour and Dak Collections were legally sanctioned by the government. 467

The Larka Kols resided mostly in Singhbhum region. They lived mostly independent and remained far from being subdued or pacified. The outbreak among Larka Kols, however, began under the leadership of Bindrai, Singrai and Kharda Pater. One of the grievances of Larka Kols was against the non-tribal "thikaddars" of south Chhotanagpur for acts of exploitation and ill-treatment against female members of their community. For instance, one Jafar Ali of Gangira used to buy iron in large quantities from

Mortu bazar. But he was constantly in the habit of taking away all the iron places from Kol women rather forcibly. He used to throw into their baskets a paltry sum at the rate of only two pice for each seer of iron taken by him. Despite strong protests nothing was done against him due to his strong contacts. In fact, certain important developments such as the arrest and maltreatment of Sui Munda and the two brothers Bindrai Manki and Singrai Manki also led to the 1831 Uprising. Besides, the arrest of Baijnath Manki through trickery also contributed to the insurgency in Chhotnagpur region especially in its southern part bordering Mayurbhanj.

As far as the Kols of Bamanghaty, they encountered similar ill-treatment and oppression at the hands of foreign intruders. To begin with, Mayurbhanj was a powerful and prominent native state in eastern India. It occupied a strategic position in between East India Company's possession in Bengal and the Maratha stronghold in Orissa. After the occupation of Midnapore in 1760, the Company made overtures to the ruler of Mayurbhanj for friendship and that the latter warmly reciprocated such a gesture. Such contacts resulted in the conclusion of an agreement in 1774, by which the ruler volunteered to pay tributes to the English. Mayurbhanj came under the political sway of the British even prior to their conquest of Orissa in 1803. The history of Mayurbhanj during 1803-1836, forms an important chapter

468. For details see, Ibid, p.170.
469. For details see, Ibid, p.165.
in the history of Orissa, as it unfolds a significant developments like the evolution and crystallization of British policy towards the tribal population. Also, Mayurbhanj exhibited her own individuality by virtue of her strategic location, benevolent administration and mature leadership. The history of Mayurbhanj reveals further as to how the tribals \( \text{[who dominated its population]} \) intermittently caused political problems on major as well as minor issues. In fact, the tribals consisting of Kols and Santhals gave vent to their strong feelings in no uncertain terms and were not hesitant to take up arms against ruling authorities whenever demanded.  

Bamanghaty has a thick concentration of Kols as inhabitants. It was also the theatre of frequent tribal disturbances that during the whole of nineteenth century. Soon after their occupation of Orissa in 1803, they British discovered that Bamanghaty was a place of strategic importance as the Calcutta-Nagpur-Bombay mail route passed through the area. They became concerned for the safety of the "Dak" (mail route as depredation committed by Kol inhabitants often caused great inconvenience to them. Even ordinary travellers were not spared by Kol tribesmen. Further, the Kols used to plunder the local peasantry and carried away cattle. They often burnt villages to

create panic. Not withstanding these, Kols were also a primitive race of agriculturists who lived in villages and adopted animal husbandry as second occupation. 

As regards the record of Bhanja rulers, Queen Sumitra Devi (1796-1811) and Second Queen Yamuna Devi (1811-1814) reigned the state as regents. These queens were however, succeeded by Trivikram Bhanja, the adopted son Damodar Bhanja. The new ruler moved over from Keonjhar to assume the administration of the state in 1814. During the period of regency, Mayurbhanj had maintained extremely cordial relations with the East India Company. During Wellesley's military campaigns in 1803, Sumitra Devi rendered all possible help to the British troops. This was warmly acknowledged by the Collector of Midnapore. He testified the "great zeal and alacrity" with which the Rani helped the British and had been was honoured with a "Khilat". During the reign of Trivikram Bhanja (1814-1829), their bilateral relationship also reached a high water mark. On the death of Tribikram, the following appreciative observations were made by H. Ricketts, the

473. The Kols of Mayurbhanj, n. 471, p. 4.

Political Officer of Tributary Mahals in a letter to Captain Wilkinson, Governor General's Agent for South-West Frontier:

"... Trivikram, whose sincere attachment to British government and uniform good conduct won the respect of the highest authorities in the province and were more than once honourably noticed by the government ..."

During his reign Mayurbhanj was provided with a special status by the British government. The Special Commissioner Richardson in his report to Government on 20 December 1814 mentioned that, "they considered it highly important to proceed with great caution in any arrangement relating to Mayurbhanj."

He observed further that, "Its ^Mayurbhanj^ territory forms an important part of our frontier and it may be of some consequence to attach its proprietor by moderation and forbearance."

Tribikram Bhanja was succeeded by his son Jadunath Bhanja in May 1829, who entered into a treaty of friendship with the British government in June 1829. Jadunath, like his father, also maintained a policy of friendly relations with the British and was awarded with a "Khilat" in 1831 for "important services rendered".

The expulsion of Sarbarakar of Bamanghaty, Madhab Das Mohapatra, was the most important event during the

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477. Ibid.
early period of his rule. It led to the dispute between the Bamanghaty chief and his suzerain namely, the Raja of Mayurbhanj. This issue, however, was aggravated by the division of control between the Political Agent of the South-West Frontier and the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals at Cuttack. 478

The main issue was an attempt by Mayurbhanj Raja to recover some Kol villages from the Mohapatra Sarbarkars of Bamanghaty. To trace its origin, Bamanghaty paragana constituted a "lakhiraj" property extended to the ancestors of Madhab Das Mahapatra by the rulers of Mayurbhanj. The Mohapatras also recognised the authority of the Raja of Mayurbhanj and paid visits twice a year to Baripada to meet the ruler and to worship the goddess Khichingeswari on Dussehera and Sravana Purnima festivals. Their relations remained cordial till 1818 when Mohapatra expressed a desire to resume and assess all lands "held rent free" by Sardars and Paiks of Bamanghaty. As for the Raja, he wanted an annual tribute from Mahapatra, who refused to pay leading to the animosity between them. As the Raja remained firm in his decision, Mohapatra, with the help of Kol Sardars in 1821 organised the tribals to unfurl the flag of rebellion. 479

To narrate the events, the revolts by Larka Kols of Singhbhum spread to four Kol tracts namely, Thua Peer, Barbaria Peer, Oala Peer and Lallgarh Peers of Bamanghaty. The Singhbhum

479. Selection of Official Letters Relating to Mayurbhanj, Major M.Roughsedge to the Chief Secretary to Government, 30 April 1821.
Kols extended their predatory activities into the British administered territories and attacked one hundred "Barkandazes" sent by the British. An expedition under Major E. Roughsedge was sent to force them to pay regularly to respective overlords (Rajas of Singhbhum and Mayurbhanj, the Kunwar of Saraikela and the Thakur of Kharswan). A proclamation was thereafter issued by Roughsedge on 7 May 1821 which stated that the Larka Kol Sardars acknowledged the British authority and agreed to pay regularly a rent of eight annas per plough for five years. Further, the Kol Sardars promised not to disturb the outsiders (Diku) who settled down in their peers. They also agreed to keep the road communication safe and open by not resorting to armed interception even if pressed by hard circumstances or situation.

The proclamation created an impression that the local chiefs were the immediate overlords of the Kols and that the ultimate rulers were the British. Such a perception was strengthened by the fact that Major Roughsedge recommended to place the four Kol peers under the general superintendence of Governor General's Agent of South Frontier at Hazaribagh. But the Commissioner of Orissa N. Blunt opposed such a proposal and instead proposed to keep the four Kol peers under the direct supervision of the Magistrate of Balasore. An unhealthy rivalry

480. For details see, Ibid.
481. For details see, Ibid, Article 2 of the Agreement, 7 May 1821.
began to emerge between the Political Agent at Hazaribagh and the Commissioner of Cuttack. As for Bengal Government, it decided to recommend the proposal of Blunt. It further entrusted the Joint Magistrate of Balasore to check the frequent recurrence of robbery engineered by the tribal bandity. 482

Such British interference not only placed the Raja of Mayurbhanj in an embarrassing situation, but gave scope to further dissension between him and the Zamindar of Bamanghaty namely, Niranjan Das Mohapatra. In fact to escape himself from extra imposition by the Raja, Niranjan Das Mohapatra made a petition to the Magistrate of Jungle Mahals in October 1822 as well as in February 1826 requesting him to place the territory under his personal jurisdiction. But the British government maintained a dignified silence on the issue. 483

Very soon both the Zamindar and the Raja resorted to silent campaigning among the Larka Kols in respect of the dispute in question. As stated by one of leader of the Larka Kols :-

"... For a length of time we paid our rent to Niranjan Das Mohapatra (Father of Madhab Das) who was placed over us (in 1821) and adhered to the engagement. But lately emissaries of the Mayurbhanj Raja, having come to our village, gave us bad advice and tempted us, and we were prevailed on to desert the services of the Mahapatra and adhere to the Raja. Disturbances were the consequence ..." 484.


483. For details see, Ibid.

484. Wilkinson and Rickett, Arbitrators in the Dispute to Government, 1 April 1833, Bengal Criminal Judicial Cons. 1 of 6 April 1833 (140/31) para 22.
In the meanwhile Narendra Mohapatra expired and his son Madhab Das Mohapatra succeeded as the new Zamindar of Bamanghaty. Taking advantage of the protection and support received from the Political Agent at Hazaribagh, the new Zamindar took a defiant attitude towards the Raja. As a result, their relationship began to deteriorate. As for the Raja, he summoned Madhab Das to the capital for presentation of ceremonial umbrella and the royal flag as insignia, but actually arrested him at Baripada. The Raja thereafter sent his own man to collect taxes from the four Kol peers. As for Madhab Das, he secretly fled from Baripada and made a complaint to the Political Agent at Hazaribagh regarding the behaviour of Raja. The Political Agent arranged a meeting between them at Balasore on 3 March 1827 where the Zamindar made the allegation that the Raja extracted a Kabuliyat for rupees seventy by deceitful means from his father. Further, he complained that the Raja was coercing the Kols to pay his dues through two agents Ram Singh and Dina Singh.

During discussion the Political Agent Lieutenant Colonel Gilbert suggested to the Commissioner of Crissa to direct the Raja of Mayurbhanj to desist from acts of suppression against the Kols. Prior to the discussion Madhab Das made a request in this regard. He pointed out that ignorant Kols might resort to rebellion, if the Raja persisted with his acts of suppression against the Kols.

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485. For details see, P. Acharya, Studies in Crissa History, n.150, pp.537-540.
Also, he requested the Political Agent to declare the Zamindari of Bamanghaty as rent free. The first suggestion of Madhab Das appealed to Gilbert as he followed up by rushing a contingent under the Command of Jamadar of Rampur Corps at Binjhua to Bamanghaty. A compromise was reached thereafter between the Raja and the Zamindar, according to which Madhab Das would pay rupees five hundred as tribute to the Raja. In return he would receive the ceremonial umbrella and the royal flag from the ruler of Mayurbhanj. But the situation became complicated as the Raja immediately pronounced upon the Zamindar an arrear tribute for ten years. Further, the ruler declared himself as the lord of four peers as well as three hundred villages of Bamanghaty. Madhab Das protested strongly against such a declaration and petitioned for relief to G. Stockwell, the Commissioner of Cuttack. After reviewing the situation, the Commissioner opined that the British Government should initiate steps in helping the Raja to suppress the rebellion. In retaliation, Madhab Das instigated an incursion among his fellowmen beginning in April 1832. 486

In the meanwhile the British placed the four Kol peers under Cuttack and decided to remove the Binjhua guards immediately. As for Jadunath Bhanja following the British decision he decided to act unilaterally to solve the Bamanghaty issue. He proceeded to Bamanghaty with his followers and compelled the refractory Zamindar to seek refuge with the Binjhua guards. Further, he made

486. For details see, Aruna Das, n. 482, pp. 66-67.
a complaint to the British regarding activities of the Officer, commanding the Binjhua guards as well as the interference on the part of Kunwar of Saraikala in favour of Madhab Das Mohapatra. Stockwell promptly responded by asking the Raja and the Zamindar to assemble at Balasore once again on 10 January 1832 to sort out their problems. During discussion, as Stockwell supported the claims of Mayurbhanj to chastize Madhab Das, the latter quietly absconded himself from Balasore in the middle of the night of 11 March 1832. Jadunath Bhanja thereafter proceeded to Bamanghaty to chastize Madhab Das. He asked his two brothers (Routrai and Chotrai) to deal with the Kols. In response Madhab Das instigated his own caste men, the Dharmas and the Kols of Lallgarh and Aula Pir to organise themselves with a view to strike vengeance. As for the Kols, they plundered the entire countryside and the ryots were forced to run away in panic. In the process the security of government "Dak" (mail bag) became extremely endangered.

Analyzing the situation, Stockwell felt that the outbreak of disturbances was sheerly due to the insinuation and mischevious conduct of Madhab Das Mohapatra and especially due to his attempt to extricate from the control of Mayurbhanj Raja. At the same time he recognized the fact that the Raja of Mayurbhanj was not properly equipped with adequate troops to deal with the

487. For details see, The Kol Pirs, n. 471, p.27.
situation militarily. He decided to support the Raja in
enforcing legitimate authority over the Zamindari of Bamanghaty
through military means. The British supported him by authorizing
him to requisition its forces at Midnapore under the command of
Colonel Deveton.489

This infuriated Madhab Das as he instigated a fresh
outrage on 3 April 1832 with the loot of "Dak" (postal bag) and
the plunder of grain and cattle from the neighbouring tracts. As
the Raja expressed his inability to check such depredations,

Stockwell proceeded to Bamanghaty with a mission in April 1832
to settle the difference between Raja and his Zamindar. In the
meanwhile the Bengal Government authorised Captain Wilkinson
(the Governor General's Agent) to explore the possibilities of
keeping the four Kol peers separate from Bamanghaty. After an
inquiry on the spot, Wilkinson discovered that while Larka Kols
of Lallgarh and Oala peers supported the Zamindar, the Kols of
Thua peer and Barbaria peer were behind the Raja. Thereafter he
decided to urge upon the Bengal government to ask the Raja to
withdraw his agent from Bamanghaty as well as Madhab Das to pay
rupees five hundred annual tribute to the Mayurbhanj ruler.
But unaware of the steps taken by Wilkinson, Stockwell along with
Lt. Devonson resorted to stringent measures by burning the Kol
villages as well as by occupying the strategic places and ghats of

489. See, Aruna Das, n.482, p.67.
the Zamindari. Thereafter Stockwell suggested for direct management of the four Kol tracts by the British. On the contrary, Wilkinson favoured a discontinuation of the military operation in order to protect the Kols from devastation and pillage. He was also in favour of a conciliatory approach towards Madhab Das. The latter by then skillfully tendered his submission before Wilkinson. But Stockwell put forward the view that military activities be not suspended and that Madhab Das be arrested for imprisonment.

The initial response of the British was to use its armed forces in an anxiety to restore tranquility. But it instructed Stockwell to keep in touch with Wilkinson and to find out if the influence of other local Chiefs (Singhbhum, Saraikala and Kharawan) could be utilized for suppressing the insurrections. The Bengal government, however, changed its stance and did not favour Stockwell's suggestion for direct management of Kol peers. As they were desirous of peaceful adjustment, Stockwell tendered his resignation in disgust. Thereafter, under the supervision of Wilkinson, the military operation was suspended and the Zamindar was reinstated in his position at Bamanghaty. Arrangements were also made for the restoration of plundered property as well as for the safety of the "Dak" (postal bags) conveyance. As a result

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490. For details see, Selection of Official Letters Relating to Mayurbhanj, Stockwell to J. Thompson, 26 April 1832, p.82, Ibid, p.87.
491. Ibid, p.87.
492. Ibid, Stockwell to J. Thompson, 28 April 1832, p.85.
disaffected Kols returned back to their villages in course of time. In the process Madhab Das helped the British cause by checking the incursion from Singhbhum towards Bamanghaty. 494

But the bad feeling between the Raja and the Zamindir did not subside as the Mayurbhanj ruler instigated the loyal Kols of Thua Peer and Barbaria peer to petition against Mohapatra accusing him for collecting illegal rent and cesses. This prompted the Bengal government to instruct Henry Ricketts, ("Superintendent of Tributary Mahals") as well as Wilkinson to arrange a meeting between the Raja and the Zamindar at Dalbhum on 1 April 1833. It was decided there that the Zamindar would pay to the Raja an annual tribute of Rs.500/-, beginning from the year 1833, which, however, would increase by rupees three hundred after 1838. The British also instructed the Raja not to interfere in the affairs of Bamanghaty. As for the Mayurbhanj ruler, he considered the decision favourable to Mohapatra, which prompted Wilkinson to arrange an assembly of Kol Sardars. An oath was administered to the Sardars not to revolt as well as to surrender the plundered property. The Raja, became furious over this and began to instigate the Kols of four peers against Mohapatra by making a false promise of rent free tenureship to them. The plundering of "Dak" and property of peasantry (settled in Bamanghaty) as well as burning of Kol houses (loyal to Mohapatra) began in April 1834. In retaliation Mohapatra also

Mohapatra also organised the tribesmen and loyal Kols but failed as the Raja marched swiftly with his troops to Bamanghaty. He forced Madhab Das and his family to escape towards Ghatsila and established his sway over Bamanghaty.\textsuperscript{495}

In the confusing scenario that followed the Kunwar of Saraikala \textsuperscript{495} apprehending Mayurbhanj's forcible entry towards Khiching\textsuperscript{495} lent his support to Madhab Das. In fact the Kols were used by both sides and the situation became highly complicated. As for the British Officers, they also held differing views concerning the four Kol Peers. For instance, while Ricketts felt that the Raja alone could keep the Kols under control \textsuperscript{495} if helped militarily with small quantity of arms\textsuperscript{495}, but Wilkinson did not concur with such an analysis and preferred to patronise the cause of Mohapatra. Both the officers, however, decided that the best arrangement was to place the Kol Peers under the direct management of the British.\textsuperscript{496}

The British eventually decided to adopt drastic measures to restore law and order in the area through a military operation. This began on 3 December 1835 and continued till August 1836. In the process notorious plunderers were arrested and the daks and stolen cattle restored. Further, all Munda and Kol Sardars were forced to remain under direct management of the British.\textsuperscript{497} As a permanent solution, however, the Bengal government decided to a

\textsuperscript{495} For details see, Aruna Das, n.482, pp.67-68.
\textsuperscript{496} For details see, Selection From Official Letters Relating to Mayurbhanj, p.423, p.257.
\textsuperscript{497} For details see, Ibid, pp.427-429.
create a "Kolhan" region by keeping the Kol population of Bamanghaty, Singhbhum, Saraikala and Khar swan under its direct management beginning on 13 May 1837. Lieutenant Tickell was appointed Assistant to Political Agent and was given in charge of the newly-formed administrative unit. 498

To conclude, the Kol disturbances took place in three phases, 1821-1836, 1866 and 1881. The present case study is restricted to an analysis of the first phase from 1821 to 1836 in view of the time period of the present study (1757-1857). Speaking generally, it may be concluded that the tribal movement was directed against the British interference in the Kol tracts. It was also the outcome of contest for power between the Raja and the Sarbarkar. As regards the second phase (1866), the uprising was directed against outsiders. But in the third phase (1881), the movement was against arbitrary imposition of illegal cesses and rents. As a whole, the Kol disturbances in Bamanghaty followed the pattern of movements in Singhbhum. However, they assumed ruthless character, as the tribal peasantry consisting mainly of Kol population perpetrated a reign of terror while conducting military activities against the British as well as the rulers of Mayurbhanj and the Zamindar of Bamanghaty.

498. For details see, Aruna Das, n.482, pp.68-69.
(c) **The Kondh Rebellions: Origin and Evolution (1836-1856):**

The third case study under "Religious Uprisings" relates to the "Kondh Rebellions in Orissa" (1836-1856). The origin of the rebellions is traced to the "Ghumsar Uprisings (1753-1835). The Kondh rebellions in fact constitute its second phase. A definition on "Religious Uprisings" has been provided by Kathleen Gough. According to her, "Religious Uprisings" refer to "movements for the liberation of a region or an ethnic group under a new form of government". To begin with, the Kondh rebellions followed the death of Ghumsar's ruler Raja Dhananjaya Singh on 31 December 1835. His death was marked by widespread disturbances especially among his Kondh subjects at Ghumsar and in the surrounding region for the restoration of Bhanja dynasty and for the retention of the practice of "Meriah" (Human Sacrifice). The Kondh rebellions formed an important part of the tribal resistance movements in Orissa.

There were many tribal resistance movements in the princely states of Orissa during the nineteenth century. Prominent among them were the Kondh rebellions in Ghumsar, Kol and Santhal uprisings in Mayurbhanj and Nilgiri as well as Bhuyan Uprisings in Keonjhar. But British historians have not analyzed these movements properly. While some historians like W.W. Hunter and L.S.S. O'Malley took some interest in the study of

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tribals, they hardly recognised the messianic nature of these movements. They regarded them as "noble savages". But they displayed their clear prejudice concerning the nature of these movements. As stated by L.S.S.O'Malley "one of the most fascinating and least-known chapters in the history of British rule was the pacification of semi-savage races and the conversion of restless marauders into quiet cultivators". 500 A proper perspective, however, has been provided by M.S.A.Rao:

"... These uprisings were the powerful expression of collective protest by the tribals against conditions of economic exploitation and social oppression. They were not mere sporadic outbursts of the crude instincts of the semi-savage tribes but the outcome of a long course of oppression silently and patiently submitted to by these unsophisticated people unaccustomed to fight for their own rights in the legitimate ways of their neighbours ..." 501

It may be mentioned that the feudatory chiefs ruled according to their whims and caprice. As the paramount power, the British merely acclaimed the right to supervise the internal government of the princely states. But such supervision was too inadequate and quite ineffective as the Superintendent of Tributary Mahals were instructed to interfere only in extreme cases involving political nature. As a result, the internal administration of feudatory states went from bad to worse. 502

The tribals were mostly agriculturists, who suffered miserably. They were highly ignorant about proper utilisation of the forest areas in which they mostly lived. In view of their impoverished conditions, they sought to supplement their income partly by working as labourers and partly by collecting fruits and jungle products. The tribals practised both settled as well as shifting cultivation. While in the open country, regular plough cultivation was followed, in the forest and hill areas, shifting cultivation was the common method of cultivation. However, they continued to practise shifting cultivation as they did not find any other alternative method which they could embark upon to improve their economic condition. Further, they lacked the necessary agricultural inputs such as plough, plough bullocks, seeds and manures etc. to undertake cultivation in the plains. Also, they were compelled to raise crops in order to pay in kind and to the money-lender. The unproductive agriculture was, in fact, the major cause for the miserable conditions of the tribals. Finally, in years of bad harvests, the tribals were forced to depend solely on jungle fruits, roots, herbs, insects, fowls and games etc. for their livelihood.503

The tribal people were by nature simple, innocent, orthodox and religious-minded. These qualities prompted them to

503. For details see, K.S. Singh, ed. Economics of Tribes and Their Transformation (New Delhi, 1982), pp.266-267.
They regard debt as a sacred obligation to pay back their debt irrespective of its burden on them. Yet they were mostly in deep debt. Their condition worsened because their creditors wanted payment not in cash, but the produce raised by the tribals. The rate of interest was not stipulated in terms of money, rather each rupee advanced, a specific quantity of produce in the form of paddy, cereal, pulse or tamarind had to be paid towards interest. Thus, the tribals had to subsist on the meagre quantity left for them after the major share of produce was seized by the ruler and money-lenders. Besides this, unjust and improper agrarian innovations had an oppressive impact on the poor tribals, a process that broke their economic backbone. These agrarian abuses, contributed to the origin of tribal uprisings in Orissa.

In addition to these causes, which were economic or agrarian in nature, some resistance movements were influenced by religious considerations. The "Meriah Sacrifice" and the resistance movements of the Kondh tribes (1836-1862) were important examples in this regard. The Kondhs were one of the most important indigenous tribes of Orissa. They lived in the mountaineous and inaccessible hill country bounded by Baud on the north, Daspalla on the east and Ghumsar on the south within a territorial belt known as the Kandhmals extending over 2500 square miles.

miles. The Kondhs were very religious and conservative and guided by ancient superstitions. One feature of their religious life was human sacrifice known as 'Meriah Sacrifices'. The practice prevailed extensively in a wide tract of territory inhabited by the Kondhs. They included Ghumsar, Baud, Daspalla, Chinna Kmedy, Maji Deso, Patna, Kalahandi and Jeypore. Also, the "Meriah", Human Sacrifice system prevailed among other tribes, the Kols, Santals, Gonds and Bhuyans.

The origin of meriah sacrifice can be traced to legendary accounts as well as to the Kondh's religious belief. For instance, the Tari Pennu sect of the Kondhs believed that their unconquered Earth Goddess, Tari Pennu had once appeared in a famine form called "Umbally Bylee" and in that form she introduced the art of agriculture. According to the legend, while slicing vegetables one day in the form of "Umbally Bylee", she accidentally cut her finger and from her blood drops fallen on to the soft barren mud, formed dry, firm earth. Thereafter the Goddess asked her followers to cut up her body and to fill the earth in view of the miracle. Her adherents, however, refused to carry out her order and instead resolved to purchase human victims from other places for the purpose. This was the origin of what has come to be known as the "Meriah", or the "Tokki" or the "Keddi" sacrifice. The practice came to be

505. For details see, Prasanna K.Mishra, n.160, pp.79-96.
506. E.T.Dalton, Tribal History of Eastern India (Delhi, 1973) reprint, p.147.
followed by all Kondhs, both the followers of Tari Pennu and Boora Pennu sects. 507

The Kondhs strongly believed that human sacrifice would give them good crops and production against all diseases and natural disasters. Further, they believed that shedding human blood was necessary to obtain an excellent turmeric crop, an important product of the Maliahs (hill tract). The Meriah victims were both male, female, irrespective of caste, religion and age. The practice, however, was carried into operation with the help of two classes of people namely, the "Panas" and "Dambas". These people supplied victims after kidnapping human beings from the plains and selling them to the highland Kondhs for sacrifice. 508 As for the British, they sought to stop such barbarous acts completely. The Kondhs strongly resisted all such moves by invoking a claim that the Rajas sanctioned the practices under whom they had been loyal subjects prior to the British annexation of Orissa. These uprisings continued from 1837 to 1856. 509

To trace the origin of British involvement, it may be recalled that Raja Dhananjaya Bhanja of Ghumsar revolted against the British government and had been decisively defeated in 1835. To escape apprehension, however, the Raja had taken refuge amongst his Kondh subjects. The British started their military operations

507. For details see, Maltby, n.186, pp.75-77.
against him with G.E. Russel as the commander. The operation began in cold season of 1835-1836 and that the British troops ascended the Ghats of Ganjam for the first time. This was how they made their first acquaintances with the Kondhs and the hill country in the Maliah tracts of Ghumsar. It was only then that Russel discovered the existence of human sacrifice among the Kondhs and brought the matter to the notice of the British government.\(^5\)

Also, Charles MacPherson of 43rd Madras Infantry, who was involved in the suppression of Ghumsar rebellion, took great interest in studying the practice from a close angle. Captains Miller and Stevenson, who belonged to his Regiment, actually rescued 29 Meriah victims in February 1836 during their Ghumsar operation. These developments, formed the basis of Act XXIII of 1836 under which Ghumsar and Surada, including the tribal tracts were removed from the jurisdiction of ordinary regulations and placed under the special administration of the Collector of Ganjam.\(^6\)

But the suppression of the "Meriah" system created a great dilemma for the British government in view of the sensitive nature of the problem. To begin with, the inhuman practice had been in vogue among the Kondhs for centuries owing to the inaccessibility of the tribal areas, and also due to the indifference of the local authorities to the issue. The Raja of Ghumsar had never questioned merit of the practice and had indirectly allowed the system to

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continue. In fact, there were always close contacts and relations between him and his Kondh subjects. This became evident when they arose in revolt against the British in support of their Raja in 1836. In view of this Russel, in his second report to the government submitted in May 1837, suggested extreme caution in abolishing the "Meriah Sacrifice". He further warned against any hasty measure of coercion and intimidation which, according to him, "would arouse the jealousy of the whole race, who possessed strong feelings of clanship". However, he emphasised the exercise of moral influence as well as the establishment of rapport with the Kondhs based on good will and understanding. 512

In December 1837 Captain Campbell, Assistant Collector of Ganjam, sought permission from the British government to climb over the hill tracts of Ghumsar to persuade the Kondhs to desist from the practices. From 1837 to 1840 he remained in the region and resorted to pleading against the practice among the five or six of the oldest and most influential Kondh Chiefs. In the process he rescued about 130 victims destined for sacrifice. 513 Following this, Lord Elphinstone, the Governor of Madras, recommended the government emphasizing "steady, progressive and systematic" steps to deal with the situation. According to Elphinstone, "the deep-rooted superstition of the whole nation should be eradicated with the least display of force" in view of

513. For details see, Maltby, n.186, p.75.
the fact that, "the best hope of success is in cautious and gradual measures, by which, without any direct attack upon religious customs, the natural march of civilization might surely be facilitated". These suggestions were readily accepted by the British government.514

In the meanwhile Captain William MacPherson had been asked by Madras government to succeed Captain Campbell as the Assistant Collector of Ghumsar. He had thereafter been entrusted with the task of suppressing the Meriah Sacrifice in the Maliah tracts. In his first report on the subject sent on 24 April 1842, MacPherson conveyed to his government the response of the Kondhs, and the effect on the British who were not inclined to take up any decisive measures to suppress the sacrifice. He further pointed out in subsequent reports sent on May 1843 and July 1844, that the task was indeed formidable in view of the wildness of the tracts and the barbarous nature of their people. He concluded that "any interference with the age-old socio-religious customs and practice would certainly set the whole of the Maliah highlands abalze". 515

Following these reports, the British government, in a resolution on 19 July 1845, decided to form a Meriah Agency with Captain MacPherson as the first Agent to deal with the situation. Accordingly, Act XXI of 1845 was passed under which the Ghumsar Maliahs were separated from the Ganjam district. Baud was


similarly taken from the jurisdiction of the Superintendent Tributary Mahals to be placed under the new agency. As for MacPherson, he assumed his new position in November 1845 with headquarters at Russell-Konda. Codehead, the Assistant Surgeon, was appointed to act as Principal Assistant to MacPherson. But the activities of MacPherson were severely criticized by Brigadier General Dyce, the Commanding Officer of the British troops, on the ground that he was unable to deal properly with the situation. As a result the British government placed both MacPherson and his Assistant Cadenhead under suspension.

The charge of Meriah Agency was entrusted to General Dyce. In course of time, however, the British government initiated measures towards the suppression the practice through a band of sincere and selfless officers belonging to the Meriah Agency. The process heralded a new era of great humanitarian welfare and progress.517

In reviewing the sequence of developments called the Kondh Rebellions (1836-1856), it may be recalled that these uprisings followed the death of Raja Dhananjaya Bhanja on 31 December 1835 in the hill tracts of Ghumsar. As mentioned earlier, his illegitimate brothers Brundaban Bhanja and Jagannath Bhanja, along with Dora BisoI had organised a resistance movement among the Kondhs to support the Raja beginning in

517. For details see D.Behera, Freedom Movement in Ghumsar, n.306, pp.71-72.
November 1835. Following the movement as well as the death of Raja, however, the Collector of Ganjam, Stevenson, strongly recommended annexation of Ghumsar by the British as well as for the appointment of an officer with special powers to deal with the situation. In course of time, these suggestions were accepted by the British government. They had appointed George Edward Russell (who had successfully suppressed the Paralakhemundi uprisings earlier) as Special Commissioner for Ghumsar on 11 January 1836. Upon joining the assignment, Russell began to prepare a detailed military plan to effect the surrender of the rebel leaders as well as the family members of the deceased Raja Dhananjaya Singh, who had been kept under close vigil as well as protection by Dora Bisoi, the loyal Kondh leader. A reward of Rupees five thousand was declared for apprehending Dora Bisoi. But despite their poverty, the Kondhs extended no assistance to Russell in this regard.\textsuperscript{518}

The rebellion thereafter took a violent turn with the insurgents commencing guerrilla warfare against troops as well as government establishments from their secret hideouts inside the jungles and hills. They also urged upon the British government to instal Varadaraja Bhanja as the Raja of Ghumsar as well as to grant a general amnesty to all rebels. In response, Russell initiated strong military measures beginning in February 1836 with his troops surrounding the ghats and entering the Maliah region. But the Kondh insurgents, at the instigation of Dora Bisoi, attacked the British contingent rather successfully with

\textsuperscript{518} For details see, W.W. Hunter, Imperial Gazetteers, n.305, p.229.
an element of surprise and daring act. They apprehended one
British detachment escorting prisoners in the Kurmingia mountain
pass and had killed thirteen of them including two English
officers namely, Lieutenant Bromley and Ensign Gibbon. Further,
the insurgents, under the stewardship of Dora, created fear and
consternation among the British officers and soldiers by their
terrible and daring acts. But being pressed severely by the
British forces, the insurrectionists took refuge in the
mountaineous region on the borders of Daspalla and Nayagarh.
The British troops thereafter pursued the rebels unsuccessfully
in view of lack of cooperation from the rulers of Daspalla and
Nayagarh quarters, as well as due to the onset of the rainy
seasons.  

Russell in the meanwhile resorted to negotiating with
the rulers of contiguous states to extend active support to the
British troops in their bid to chastize Dora Bissoi. He had
in fact become successful in winning over to his side Sam Bissoi,
a Kondh leader and with latter's support he had convened a
conference of tribal aborigines to persuade them to lay down
their arms. He had further installed Sam as the Chief Bissoi in
place of the refractory Dora Bissoi. Beginning in November, he
attacked the rebel strongholds at Ambajhara and Jharpada in a bid
to apprehend Dora Bissoi and his adherents. As for Dora, he

519. For details see, D. Behera, "The Ghumsar Rebellions:
thereafter resorted to trickery to incite the Kondhs against the British. For instance, he had his supporters float a rumor that the British government would impose several obnoxious taxes on the Kondhs as a mark of their authority on them. The rumour provoked the Kondhs to rebel at different parts of the hill tracts. To counter such rumours, the British issued a proclamation in the Kondh language that they had no intention to do so. The government further appealed to the Kondhs not to be carried away by such false rebel propaganda. They also urged the Kondhs to desert their leader Dora Bissoi, which, had no impact on them. On the contrary, it infuriated them further to carry forward with arms against the British under their charismatic leader namely, Dora Bissoi. Eventually, the government was left with no alternative but to resume military operations against Dora and his men on a massive scale. 520

In the meanwhile Russell maintained a policy of conciliation and good will among the local militia of Ghumsar consisting of the Sardars, Naiks and Paik. With the help of Wilkinson (the Magistrate of Puri) he had eventually succeeded in persuading the Rajas of Daspalla, Nayagarh and Baud to hand over the hiding rebels of Ghumsar to him. Following this, his troops made a military attack on the rebel-strongholds at Ambajhara and Jharpada and occupied them successfully. Thereafter the rebels retreated to the territory of Boud, where they took refuge under

the protection of Nabaghana Kahanara, the local chief. In fact, with the connivance of the Chief of Boud, these rebels were apprehended by British troops. Thus, by the end of the second military campaign in December 1836, the whole of Ghumsar Zamindar, along with the hill tracts, had been brought under the direct authority of the British government due to the effective initiatives and pursuit made by the Special Commissioner G.E. Russell. The British government thereafter succeeded in capturing almost all the followers of Dora Bissoi except their leader. In fact, all his relations, Sardars, Waiks and Paik were either killed or captured and a considerable number were either been hanged or transported.\footnote{521. For details see, Maltby, n.186, pp.185.}

The plight of Dora Bissoi became most miserable thereafter as he wandered as a fugitive from place to place in search of support. To his utter dismay, his influence had waned in the Maliah tracts as well as in the low country, while he was constantly pursued by the British forces. In desperation he made an escape to Balangir in Patna state from the jungles of Korada and Ranabha lying on the west of Ghumsar estate. But the situation became hostile for him at Bolangir Patna. So he moved over to Angul state for shelter. Unfortunately, the ruler of Angul, Somnath Singh, lost no time in making arrangement for his apprehension by the British in 1837. After his arrest Dora Bissoi was sent away to Gooty near Madras, where the valiant Kondh Chief
had finally expired in 1846. As for the Angul ruler, he received from the British government the stipulated reward of rupees five thousand which had been placed on the head of Dora Bissoi for apprehension. The valiant fight by the irresistible Kondh leader came to an end leaving behind an immortal legacy of bravery which had few parallels in the history of Orissa. The demoralised Kondhs put a temporary halt to their uprisings by listening to the persuasions made by their British loyalist Chief, Sam Bissoi to reconcile themselves with the English government.

After the end of these military operations, Ghumsar witnessed a period of remorseless tyranny unleashed by the British army which struck terror in the hearts of the Kondhs. The rebel leaders were publicly executed and the family of the deposed King was removed to Vellore near Madras on pension. The rebel Kondhs were whipped mercilessly and sent to prison. The army was stationed at different parts of the hill tracts to maintain law and order and touring British Officials thereafter resumed the rent free lands previously being enjoyed by the Kondhs. Efforts were made to bring the Kondhs of the hills into intimate contact with the people of the plains.

The aftermath of the revolt was also very tragic as the Kondhs, who had joined the rebellion (without reserve grains at their disposal) suffered terribly due to a bad harvest in 1836. The Kondhs, attributed the crop failures to the British for their

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522. For details see, Prasanna K. Mishra, n.160, pp.58.
523. For details see, Maltby, n.186, p.185.
interference to suppress the Meriah Sacrifice. They made Captain MacPherson (the first Meriah Agent) responsible for their misery, in view of his coercive measures such as burning Kondh villages and arresting their leaders. This provided the spark for another Kondh upsurge under the leadership of Chakra Bissoi, the nephew of the displaced Chief Dora Bissoi, and Nabaghana Kuanr, the Chief Kondh Sardar of Baud beginning in 1846-1847. 524

The Kondh resistance did not end with the capture and imprisonment of the mercurial Dora Bissoi, for his place was taken over by his nephew Chakra Bissoi. Chakra Bissoi, was the son of Ram Singh Bukshee, who was killed during a skirmish against the British troops in 1837. This incident left a bitter memory in the mind of Chakra Bissoi, who nourished a deep sense of revenge against the British government. Being extremely loyal to his uncle, Chakra Bissoi accompanied his uncle to Angul where both of them received underground training. He received his military baptism and political indoctrination under his uncle while wandering the jungles as fugitives. 525 He then organized a massive revolt against British authorities in support of his demands for the restoration of Bhanja family to power in Ghumsar and the retention of the practice of the Meriahs beginning in 1846.

525. For details see, Maltby, n.186, p.186.
In fact, he carried on a heroic struggle against the British from the day of his uncle's death in 1846 till his disappearance into the jungles of Central India sometime in 1856.\footnote{526}

Chakra Bissoi, popularly known as the staunchest "Champion of Meriah" all over the Khondmals, belonged to Ongole in the Ghumsar Malliah. He was an inveterate enemy of the British. Apart from his determination to avenge the death of his father at British hands, he took up arms because his family had been deprived of their hereditary rights, privileges and power under the English rule. Thus, in a bid to restore the family privileges and rights, he fanned the fire of revolt along with his determined supporters namely, the Chokapaud Paiks and Bissois, the Kondhs of Western Mutha and the Paiks of Ghumsar who had all earlier possessed military service lands. His supporters, in fact consisted of a group of war-like people who habitually lived through plunder and violence. He also exploited age-old prejudices and superstitions among the Kondhs by urging them to take up arms for the cause of the Meriah sacrifice as well as for steering a widespread uprising to restore the Bhanja family rule. In the process he was able to re-establish the influence of his own family, particularly among the Kondh aborigines.\footnote{527}

\footnote{526. For details see, History of Ganjam Malliahs, as cited in D. Behera, Freedom Movement in Ghumsar, n.306, p.90.}

\footnote{527. For details see, Ibid.}
In the course of the Kondh uprisings, Chakra Bissoi and his adherents made a victory march into Kullada, where, they installed, one "Raja Pilla", named Pitambar Bhanja, a twelve year old illegitimate son of the late Dhananjaya Bhanja, as the ruler of Ghumsar. His militant supporters thereafter resorted to pillaging the plains of Ghumsar by "burning villages" and "committing violence and depredations". As a result the civilian inhabitants were forced to leave their homes in search of hide outs inside the surrounding jungles. Unfortunately for the rebel leader, the "Raja Pilla", (who had been considered by the Kondhs as the young Raja of Ghumsar) decided to defect to the British side "being tired of the jungle life and the tutelage of Chakra Bissoi". In the process he had "exchanged his life in jungle for a better life with a government pension". This unfortunate episode, far from demoralizing Chakra Bissoi, reinvigorated his spirit as he unleashed another spell of uprisings with secret support of the people and rulers belonging to the states of Angul, Baud, Sonepur, Madanpur, Kalahandi and Parlakhemundi. Thus, he maintained his heroic exploits against the British authorities notwithstanding heavy odds that were pitted against him. 528

To begin with, Chakra Bissoi made a strong plea before MacPherson, the Meriah Agent as well as his Assistants Cadenhead, Captain Hicks and Lieutenant MacVicar to refrain from suppression. But when his pleading proved unavailing, he incited the Kondhs to

rise in revolt by convincing them that they would incur the wrath of their Earth Goddess, Tari Pennu, if they surrendered the Meriah victims to the British government. He had also successfully propagated a rumour that the Kondhs would be kept under the direct control of the government after which they would be subjected to "taxation and forced labour." ⁵²⁹

The situation began to assume threatening proportions after MacPherson had captured some 170 Meriah victims, as mentioned earlier. This development provoked the Kondhs under Chakra Bissoi to break off all communications with MacPherson and to assert that the British government clearly intended to interfere in their ecclesiastical and temporal affairs. In such a scenario, "Chakra Bissoi further convinced the Kondhs that "the Government intended to assess their lands, subject people to forced labour and punish their leaders for the past sacrifices". Consequently, a large mob of Kondh began to congregate before MacPherson's camp at Bissipur, six miles south of Phulbani to demand the restoration of Meriah victims with the promise that their lives would be spared. As for MacPherson, he agreed to the proposal rather reluctantly only after the rebels solemnly promised that the victims would be redelivered to the government as and when required. ⁵³⁰

But soon after the hand-over ceremony, the rebels being "flushed with success" attacked the camp of MacPherson and had put it to ransom and damage. As for MacPherson, further insults were

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⁵²⁹ For details see, Ibid, p.200.
⁵³⁰ For details see, Ibid, pp.200-201.
waiting for him, as he could not march up to his headquarters on account of the outbreak of the rainy season. In the process his camp had remained under the custody of the rebels for a long time. In November 1846, however, he proceeded with a large force to recover his camp once again. As a retaliatory measure, MacPherson resorted to burning some villages belonging to the Kondhs in the Kondhmals. This, however, had been replied to by Chakra Bissoi in the plains of Ghumsar by plundering and burning of British property in every direction. The British Commander at Baud in the meanwhile resorted to burning and destroying Kondh villages on the orders of the MacPherson to bring sense to the insurgents. All these developments, prompted the Madras government to depute Major General Dyce of Northern Division to quell the rebellion with an iron hand. On his arrival Dyce took adequate steps to restore tranquility in the region after undertaking a few skirmishes with the rebels. But far from being disgraced, Chakra Bissoi and his supporters raised another rebellion in December 1846. Once again, General Dyce suppressed these revolts with stern measures. 531

Following these operations, Dyce made caustic observations to the British government concerning the role of MacPherson. As a result, MacPherson was soon replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, who joined as the new Agent by the end of April 1847. Thereafter Campbell and his Assistant, Captain MacVicar, adopted a more conciliatory policy (by taking recourse

531 For details see, D. Behera, Freedom Movement in Ghumsar, n. 306, pp. 91-92.
to persuasion rather than force and violence) against the advice tendered by Dyce in his report to the British government. Such a tactful policy yielded results as Campbell became successful in winning over some of the Kondh Chiefs who promised to abstain from offering human sacrifice.  

During the subsequent period, however, the revolts spread far and wide with Chakra still maintaining his sway over Ghumsar Malliahs. As for the British, they sought to force the ruler of Angul to hand over the two rebel leaders Chakra Bissoi and Nabaghana Kuanr of Baud, who seemed to have taken refuge in his estate. But the Angul ruler firmly denied the presence of these rebels. Dyce thereafter offered pardon to both the leaders and Nabaghana Kuanr responded to the gesture positively in the hope that Chakra Bissoi would follow suit. But Chakra continued to evade arrest under the British in view of his strong support among the people in the Kondh tracts.  

The whereabouts of Chakra Bissoi thereafter remained uncertain as the British continued to goad him for apprehension. In fact, the rebel leader successfully escaped capture with a display of rare courage and daring actions until the British were forced to give up chasing after him. This is evident from

532. For details see, P. Mukherjee, History of Orissa, n. 202, p. 207.

the following observations of C.F. Cockburn, the Commissioner of Orissa in 1856:

"... It is nearly certain that Chakra Bissoi has entirely left his former haunt where he could no longer be safe and no one appears to have the least idea as to where he has gone. My impression is that he has abandoned this part of the Country, had sought refuge in the Central parts of India, where he is comparatively unknown and without influence ..."

Thus, Chakra Bissoi was never captured, unlike his illustrious uncle Dora Bissoi, and he remained a prominent figure in the history of Ghumsar and the Maliahs from 1846 to 1856. His brave adventures and daring actions, coupled with his indomitable courage, uncommon vigour, inordinate zeal and towering personality contributed both lustre and glory to the name of Ghumsar.

In conclusion, it may be observed that the role of Chakra Bissoi has been ignored because of his obscure birth. In fact, he richly deserved to be ranked along with Jagabandhu Vidyadhar as well as Surendra Sai, the heroes of Khurda and Sambalpur rebellions respectively. It may be observed further that the popular uprisings among the Kondhs under the leadership of Dora Bissoi as well as Chakra Bissoi in the Pre-1857 period constituted a glorious chapter in the struggle against British power. In fact, these valiant Kondhs leaders along with their

534. As cited in P. Mukherjee, History of Orissa, n° 202, p. 204.
tribal fraternity had fought an unequal battle against the formidable British government. In the process, they carved a glorious place among the Kondhs of Ghumsar as well as the people of Orissa.