Throughout the nineteenth century Garjat Western Orissa raised the standard of revolt against the Raj. The intensity of revolt was heightened during the rule of Dalhousie since his main aim was annexation of the native states and consolidation of the British grip over the western Garjat. The tribal chiefs and Rajas were supported actively by the peasantised tribal chiefs since their position was threatened by the new comers, improved cultivators who resumed land holdings on enhanced rent and pauperised the peasant cultivators. In this chapter from Sambalpur to Kalahandi and Patna at least seven resistance movements would be taken into consideration to analyse the nature of British annexationist policy in western Orissa and the consequent collapse of the peasantised tribal movements.

1. Sambalpur Rebellion

The district of Sambalpur, in the farthest corner of western part of Orissa division, lies between 20°44' and 22°4' North Latitude and between 82°29' and 84°23' East Longitude. The British East India Company established its indirect rule in Sambalpur by releasing its Chauhan ruler from the prison of the Bhonsle of Nagpur after a protracted negotiation in November 1817. First, it was kept under the supervision of an Agent of Governor-General in South-West
Frontier stationed at Ranchi. Then in 1860, it was transferred to Cuttack division. But again in 1862, it was retransferred to the newly constituted Central Provinces to which it was attached till 1905.

The peasants of Sambalpur district played a significant role in resisting the consolidation of British rule in Sambalpur in the nineteenth century. They had the special distinction for keeping the revolutionary ember enlightened under the leadership of Surendra Sai even after the suppression of great Sepoy Mutiny in India. As a popular hero, Surendra Sai was admired, helped and supported by the peasant land-holders at first to overthrow an unpopular, infirm and indolent rule of Narayan Singh, and later, to challenge the annexationist policy of the alien rule of the Raj when Sambalpur was attached to British empire.

A state of anarchy was prevailing in Sambalpur ever since the occupation of this state in 1800. The mode of governing the people by the Bhonsle of Nagpur was full of coercion, exaction and threats. The peasantry whose condition was none the good suffered hard and looked for the restoration of the former Chauhan rule. The Company's Government, on the other hand, looked for the proper opportunity to annex Sambalpur to complete its sway over Orissa. But it was not possible in 1804, though Maratha army was defeated and driven away on January 2, 1804 by the
British troop. By the treaty of Deogaon, Sambalpur was restored to the Bhonsle of Nagpur. However, the Company's Government failed to release the aging king Jyoti Singh and his son Maharaj Sai from the confinement of the Marathas. After Maratha power was crushed in the third Maratha war on November 27, 1817, the Company's Government successfully freed Maharaja Sai and Jyoti Singh and established its indirect rule in Sambalpur. As a vessel ruler Jyoti Singh ruled Sambalpur till his demise in 1818. As his son Maharaj Sai was a minor, the state of Sambalpur passed to the Court of Wards in the same year. After attaining majority Maharaja Sai in 1820 became the ruler and he was granted a zamindary tenure for a period of five years on 31 March, 1821, which was subjected to the payment of a rent for tribute exceeding 1/3rd of the gross estimated revenue. Thus the rule of Chauhan was not declared permanent and hereditary.

After ruling for a short period of six years Maharaj Sai died in 1827 leaving no heir to the throne. The Company's Government, finding it financially disadvantageous to take over the state, permitted Mohan Kumari, the queen of the deceased, to rule over the state. The accession of the Rani, which was against the local custom, marked the advent of internal strife and dissension in Sambalpur. She ruled the state by remaining in her veil by the help of her favourites who endeavoured to accomplish their own ends.
They unlawfully collected extra impost from the peasants and occupied best lands of the tribal Gonds and Brinjals, who started spreading disaffection against the Rani's rule under the leadership of Balaram Singh, the Zamindar of Bargarh, a scion of Chauhan family. Soon several zamindars supported Balaram Singh.

Wilkinson, the Governor-General's agent, finding the discontent against Rani's rule universal finally marched with four Companies of infantry and two hundred horses to Sambalpur with dual motives to enquire into the real grievances of the peasants and to suppress the disaffection. He after inflicting severe loss to the rebel peasants and zamindars, made a declaration promising to prohibit collection of arrear rent and to restore the expropriated zamindary to the former zamindar. He made adequate arrangement for strengthening the police force at Sambalpur. But he sowed the seed for the future rebellion by recommending Narayan Singh the Diwan of Sambalpur State, to the government of India as a heir to the Guddee of Sambalpur and outright disapproved the better claim of Surendra Sai, the Chauhan zamindar of Khynda. After restoring the Dak service with the help of the feudatory kings of Bamra, Bonai and Gangpur, he returned to Ranchi, thinking that administration would improve.

But the queen was a titular head, and Narayan Singh the Dewan, a worthless person, utterly failed to save the
The inability of the Rani to pay the salary of her troops led to mounting disorder as the troops disobeyed the administration. The peasant bandits joined them. Now Wilkinson, who was entrusted with the task of an amicable settlement of Bamanghatty affair sent Lt. Haggin with a contingent of army to Sambalpur to bring the condition to normalcy. Lt. Haggin, on reaching Sambalpur, sent his troops to disturbed tracts and soon was able to control the situation. To eliminate the anarchy and banditry which was rife in the countryside, he immediately recommended the deposition of the queen and for the attachment of the state with British territory. But the Governor-General-in-Council thinking it unprofitable decided not to take over the administration though it resolved to depose the queen and to bring back Maratha regime to Sambalpur. When the offer was made to the Bhonsle on 13 June, 1833, he refused to take over the administration as it would multiply difficulties to his rule. So captain Wilkinson by now a trusted officer, was instructed to select a Chauhan to replace Queen Mohan Kumari. Among the host of claimants he declared Ranjit Singh, Govind Singh, Bhawanee Singh as illegitimate successors. But for reasons best known to him he finally recommended Narayan Singh declaring him a better candidate and legitimate throughout.

It was accepted by the Governor-General-in-Council promptly and Narayan Singh became the king. He agreed to
maintain tranquility in his state to secure safe transmission of Dak, to remit Rs.8000 from the treasury for the support of the deposed Rani and to pay annual tribute to British government regularly. For the safety of Narayan Singh the British Government stationed a contingent of police force at the headquarters.20

The accession of Narayan Singh, an amiable oldman, of ninety years, caused a wave of protests of peasants. They expected nothing but to check rise of rent, rule of favourites and anarchy from his regime. They looked for leadership from Surendra Sai who had placed his better claim to the Guddi.21 Narayan Singh made a feverish attempt to win over the Brahmin and influential people of his state by allowing them lands on maufi (remission) grants.22 But his inability to rule was proved when in 1838 he failed to solve the boundary dispute between two petty zamindars.23 This led to rising of number of supporters of Surendra Sai day by day.24

Narayan Singh now to create fear in Surendra, instigated Duryo Singh, the zaminder of Rampur, to attack the village Khynda and set the ancestral house of Surendra ablaze. But Surendra who was not a man to be humbled down, with a band of peasant militia attacked the house of Duryo Singh at Rampur, killing his two sons. Narayan Singh who was in search of light opportunity to ostracise
Surendra Sai with his brothers from his state by declaring them outlaws, seized this opportunity and appealed to Major Ousley, the agent of Governor-General, to arrest Surendra Sai on the grounds of the crime committed.

Major Ousley immediately proceeded to Sambalpur with a contingent of Ramgarh battalion to check the disaffection of peasants. Before Surendra Sai could amass his peasants to resist the British troops Ousley, after a grim duel, successfully killed Balabhadra Das, a rebel zamindar, and arrested Surendra Sai, his brother Odunta, and his uncle Balaram. Without further enquiry and evidence he sentenced Surendra, Odunta and Balaram seven years of rigorous imprisonment in the distant Hazaribag jail. Strangely after the expiry of the sentence, at the instance of Narayan Singh, the sentence was again extended by another nine years. The petitions of Surendra Sai was disregarded by Lt.Governor of Bengal. Thus the myth that the British Government established impartial judicial administration in India is not true. They made it a handnote of their imperial motive.

After the arrest of Surendra, Narayan Singh made no attempt to check the economic deterioration of the state. The peasants without a leader now turned to be social bandits to protest against the weak, inefficient rule of Narayan. When the disaffection became widespread the British Government decided to take over the management of
the state. But the timely help of Narayan Singh to British troops during Angul campaign in 1848 led to a sympathetic decision by the President-in-Council, where it was decided to defer the direct management of the state till his death.

Worn out by works, the aged king Narayan Singh was taken into a serious illness in the first week of September, 1849. He finally died on 10 September, 1849, leaving no heir to the throne. Immediately the Government of India decided to take over the management of the state temporarily by appointing Crowford as the assistant to the Agent Cusley.

The establishment of British rule brought about some far-reaching changes injurious to the position of the peasantised tribals. The customary payment of rent in kind was changed in favour of cash rent. The Abakari (excise) tax was replaced by Octroi duties. The police force was strengthened and sent to the countryside to arrest peasants reluctant to obey the British rule. A Civil court was established for the trial of pending civil cases. The former Dewan Rai Roop Singh was made its judge. The widow of Narayan Singh was neutralised by giving pension. The headquarters of Ramgarh battalion was shifted from Hazaribag to Sambalpur. A proclamation was issued by which Gaontias and peasants were informed about the Government's decision to take over the management and their co-operation was invited. To avert
disturbance in the matter of cultivation, police posts were established in twelve different places. The unpaid paik militia was disbanded after payment of their arrear salary. The permanent lapse of Sambalpur to British empire was finally decided in February 1858 by Government of India.

After the dust of confusion subsided, the Company's Government in its attempt to raise the income of the state indiscriminately raised the rent by 1/4th and resumed most of the Mafi and Jageer grants in the settlement of 1854. It did not make any provision for agricultural development. This led to increase of total collection which reached a staggering amount of Rs. 74,000/-. After spending Rs. 25,000 for general administration, the Company's Government got a large surplus of Rs. 49,000. These changes made the peasants most disturbed. They now looked for the leadership of a gentry to stage a fresh upsurge against the alien rule. The demand for the return of Chauhan rule in the person of Surendra Sai to end the economic exploitation renewed, when they heard that Surendra Sai was proceeding to Sambalpur by escaping from Hazaribag jail damaged by mutinous Sepoys in June 1857.

Surendra Sai's progress towards Sambalpur and the mounting enthusiasm of peasants at the news of his release caused a great alarm to the British authority. Leigh, the
Deputy Collector of Sambalpur, immediately appealed to Cockburn, the Commissioner of Cuttack, to send two companies of troops considering that the contingent of 8th BNI stationed at Sambalpur would not be able to suppress a large scale movement of peasants. He also suspected the loyalty of Ramgarh battalion kept at Sambalpur. The march of two companies of BNI sent from Cuttack was precluded due to high flood in the river Mahanadi and because of the muddy road. When they finally reached Sambalpur after a long and tedious journey, they found that Surendra with his brother Odunta Sai and rebellious peasant supporters had encamped six miles away from Sambalpur town.

At first Surendra Sai did not show any sign of hostility towards British authority. With his peasant followers he marched to Sambalpur town to hand over a petition to Leigh demanding his accession to the throne. Leigh finding the pacifist attitude of Surendra followed a temporising method and agreed to send his representation to the Government. So Surendra hopefully waited at Sambalpur for a favourable decision. But the government rejected the petition of Surendra Sai outright and granted a liberal pension to Surendra and Odunta on condition of agreeing to spend the rest of their lives at Cuttack. Meanwhile, the unusual delay to communicate the decision to Surendra made him and his restive peasants suspicious. They in the night
of 30 October 1857, escaped from Sambalpur and started a bloody upsurge which continued till 1864.

The rebellion was divided into two phases. The first phase started with the assassination of Dr. Moore in December 1857 and ended with the submission of Surendra Sai before Impey in May 1862. The second phase began with the death of Impey and change of policy of conciliation in June 1862 and came to an end in January 1864 with the arrest of Surendra Sai and his principal aides.

Surendra after his escape from Sambalpur in the fateful night of May 1859, encamped near the village Kudopalli and invited all peasants and gaontias (village leaders) to join the rebels. In response to his call many peasants, some Sepoys and prominent gaontias like Karuna Naik, Khuggo Naik, Dhun Singh, Arjan Singh, Hathi Singh, Chandra Gaontia, Manhar Sai, Markand Behera, Dyal Sardar, Dhyan Singh, Omut Sai, Khageswar Deo, Mahadeo Gaontia, Abdul Gaontia, Krupasindu Behara joined him at his camp. Many peasants, remaining in the villages defied British rule by refusing to pay rent and taxes and by forcing the British officials to go away from their villages. The peasant leaders like Kunjal Singh, Govind Singh and Kamal Singh Deo who were members of the prominent zamindar families, gathered around them bands of peasants and started plundering Daks (postal caravans), burning thana and looting the rent collected from the peasants. When the British
doctor Dr. Moore with his assistant Hanson was coming to Sambalpur to attend the ailing soldiers, was killed on the way at Jujomura on 17 November, 1857, by a group of rebel peasants under the leadership of the goontia of Jujumura.53

After the murder of Dr. Moore, the British authority retaliated by attacking the rebel camp at Kundopalli. In this operation conducted by captain E.G.Woods, fifty eight rebels were killed which included Chabillo Sai, the brother of Surendra Sai. Most of the rebel leaders with Surendra and Odunta successfully escaped from the camp.54 To check the further spread of revolt many peasants and sepoys were arrested at the singular sign of disaffection. They were sent to already overcrowded jails, and some of them were hanged publicly.55 Troops were sent to the jungles to apprehend the rebels. Inspite of the elaborate military operations the upsurge continued unabated and spread to nooks and corners of the district. The fugitive rebels, adept in jungle warfare, found little difficulties to evade arrest. They were supplied with food and given occasional shelter at their homes by the peasants.56 When Sambalpur became a British military base, Surendra Sai with his principal aides and the peasant rebels fled to the safe refuge of Manikgarh hill, situated in the heart of the inaccessible jungle of Khariar.57
All the efforts of the British troops between 1858 and 1860 to suppress the movement turned to shred. The appointment of Major Impey as the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur in April 1861 marked the change of administration from one military operation to that of conciliation. As an experienced and able administrator Impey carefully enquired into the grievances of peasants and found that Surendra was unjustly arrested in 1840. So to appease the rebellious peasants he promised to redress their grievances. He sent a letter to Surendra Sai assuring a fair deal if he would surrender. Soon his efforts bore fruit when many principal adherents of Surendra submitted themselves before him. This had a demoralising effect on Surendra, who with brother Odunta on 3 May, 1862 surrendered before him. On his recommendation the Government of India sanctioned Rupees 1100 per annum to Surendra and Rupees 4000 per annum to his brothers as pension to maintain their family. They were further allowed to stay at their ancestral village khinda.

The rebel leaders like Kamal Singh Deo, Kunjan Singh and Salik Ram preferred to remain at large as bandits demanding the return of Chauhan rule. Surendra Sai, on the other hand, never lost hope to get the guddee of Sambalpur. In March 1863, after the transfer of Sambalpur district from Orissa division to a newly constituted central provinces, its chief commissioner Richard Temple
visited Sambalpur. A delegation composed of local gentry and peasant leaders met him and demanded before him the return of native rule. But Temple rejected their demand. At this critical juncture, in December, 1863, Major Impey succumbed to illness with which he was afflicted in course of his operation in Barpahar forests. So Captain Cumberleg was appointed as the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur on 15 January, 1864. Cumberleg always disliked the policy of conciliation of Impey. He implicated Surendra Sai, for having a hand in the deccities and loot from 1862 to 1863. He with J.N. Berill, the new superintendent of police, insisted before the chief commissioner, Temple, to allow them to arrest Surendra Sai and his brother Odunta on the charge of instigation to banditry.

Surendra and Odunta, who were at that time at Sambalpur, smelt the queer fish, surreptitiously escaped from their house evading the police guard to start a fresh upsurge by organising the peasants. But he was promptly arrested on the night of 23 January, 1864 with his three brothers Odunta, Dhruba, Medini and eleven others. They were sent to Raipur on 26 January for trial.

With this, the hope of the peasants to replace British rule in favour of a popular Chauhan Government had met an ignominious end. On 1 June, 1863, the trial began in the sessions court at Raipur and on 23 June the judge
sentenced Surendra Sai, Odunta, Khageswar Deo to transportation for life under section 122 of Indian Penal code for collecting arms with the intention for raising a rebellion against the British Raj. Sindhu Mallick and Jagabandhu Hota were sentenced to life imprisonment for assisting Surendra Sai, Dharani Meher, Minketun Deo and Mohan Deo were sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment. However, an appeal against the sentences was filed by the accused in the court of Judicial Commissioners J.S. Campbell, the highest court of appeal of Central Provinces. After a thorough enquiry judge Campbell freed the accused from all charges and dismissed the sentences of the lower court. But the Chief Commissioner of Central Provinces and supreme government of India did not accept the decision of Campbell and upheld the decision of the lower court in the interest of administration and tranquility of Sambalpur district. Thus, justice was sacrificed in favour of colonial motives and the peasants were pacified. Surendra Sai was kept in confinement of Asirgarh fort till his demise on 28 February, 1884. Contiguous to Sambalpur revolt the peasantised tribal movements were also witnessed in Duspullah within the same period with similar results.

2. The Peasant resistance Movements of Duspullah (1854-1884)

The peasants of Duspullah state in the second half of the nineteenth century were the most ill-used segment of
the peasant society of Orissa. They were most exploited by the king and his non-official agents, through collection of non-volitional tributes, cess, and demand of free labour.

Duspullah state is noted for its picturesque Barmul gorge. It lies between 20°11' and 30°33' N and between 84°7' and 85°7' E. It was skirted by Angul and Narsingpur states on the North, on the East by Khandpara and Nayagarh states on the south, by Ganjam and on the West by Bandh states. This state was carved out of the ancient domain of the Khonds and has had no long history of settled cultivation and development. During Maratha rule, kurmi, a class of superior cultivators, came to Duspullah and occupied the fertile tracts near Mahanadi river pushing the Khonds to the mal area.

The Khonds whose number preponderates the aboriginal population of the state soon learnt the new technique of cultivation from the new settlers. And their contact with them began to shed their ferocity and wild life. But many of them turned debtors at the intrusion of the Mahajan (money-lenders) to their society who ultimately grabbed their lands cultivated by them on quit rent and new resumption of settlements made them divested of land ownership and threw them into servitude in their own lands.
Prior to 1853, the rent was paid by peasant Khonds in kind. The taxes paid by peasants were known as Kardhan and Rakumat respectively. The peasants paid their rent to the agents of Rajah and the Khonds paid through their chieftains. In addition to this khonds paid cesses to the Raja in the form of goats, forest produces and free labour. These cesses were known as Magan and Tandi. In 1853, when the Raja, introduced the system of collection of rent in cash and raised the amount of cesses, the peasants sent a petition to the Superintendent of Tributary Mahals denouncing the charges introduced by the Raja. But the Superintendent turned down the appeal of the peasants since enhancement of revenue necessitated that of rent. As a reprisal measure peasantised tribals began to express signs of disaffection and murdered the oppressive dewan Gopinath Pattnaik. But the vigilant Raja Madhusudan Deo Bhanja handled the situation efficiently and stamped out all signs of commotion. The peasants waited till the succession of Narasingh Bhanja. Narasingh after becoming the king of Duspullah in 1861 found the state treasury empty and a huge standing loan to be paid to the Mahajan (money-lenders). So to save the state from financial bankruptcy and to repay the loan he, without consulting his peasant leaders, immediately raised the rent to 50% and demanded more magan and tendi. The peasants protested against this measure of the Raja and sent a delegation to meet the superintendent to express their protest against this
enhancement. With the memory of Athmallick rising fresh in the mind of the superintendent, he despatched his assistant Brahmananda Das to execute an agreement between the Raja and the peasant of Duspullah to fix payment regarding rent and cess.

After reaching Duspullah, Brahmananda Das declared the enhancement null and void and successfully framed an agreement to enable the peasants to pay rent in kind. Besides, all cesses except cesses paid during the time of Bibah, Doorbul, Jumo, Pyta (thread ceremony) of the king's family, were made illegal. It was acceptable to the peasants. But when the Raja opposed it, the superintendent summoned him to Cuttack to put his signature on the Rajinama. The Raja finding no other alternative, met the superintendent at Cuttack and put his signature on the Rajinama, which immediately got the sanction of the Lt. Governor of Bengal.

The Raja learnt nothing and forgot nothing. Again in 1864, he raised the rent and cesses and harassed his subjects who were unwilling to pay. So many Kurni peasants left Duspullah for Nayagarh state where they got better terms. But some Khonds and Chasa, in the month of February, under the leadership of Brahmachari, assembled in the border of the state to start a fresh commotion. They were persuaded by the Tahasildar of Duspullah to go back to their respective villages and to wait for the government's
The superintendent, R.N. Shore, proceeded to Duspullah to investigate the real grievances of the peasants. On reaching Duspullah he found the Raja reluctant to abolish the bethi, Beggari Magan, Tanda which had already been abolished by the agreement of April, 1863. As a result of this Shore ordered him to abide by the agreement of 1863 and ordered him to maintain a register to keep the account of income and expenditure of the state. Through his assistant, on 31 March, 1864, he drew out the terms of a fresh agreement by which the peasants agreed to pay rent in kind and to pay rent and cess fixed by the agreement of April, 1863. In addition to this, they consented to repair the house and roof of the palace annually, to supply fuel to the Raja free of charge, and to provide free labour to cultivate the land of lord Jagannath Temple of the state capital.

During the famine of 1866, the peasants of Duspullah suffered hard. Many of them could not pay their rent to the state. So the Raja in return neglected to pay his tribute to the British Raj. This strained relation between the Raja and the peasants continued till February 1873 when Narsingh Bhanja died and was succeeded by his son Chaitanya Bhanja. The new ruler was not properly educated and had little knowledge of administration. He, without feeling the importance of the agreement of March, 1864, raised the quantum of rent and cess and demanded its payment in Cash.
arbitrarily arrested many Khond sardars and peasants who were against the imposition of the new taxes. When the peasants petitioned to Lt. Governor of Bengal against it the Raja sent his paiks to loot their houses.

This news of general discontent reached Ravenshaw, the Divisional Commissioner, who immediately proceeded to Duspullah to study the situation. He found that the Raja had inherited a vast debt, had actually confiscated the property of many peasants and had punished some of the peasant leaders. On 24 March, 1874, after summoning the village headmen, sardars, and peasant leaders, he took an agreement from the Raja that he would conduct a Nazarkut settlement in four years and collect rent in four instalments. Further, he also agreed not to punish the defaulters and would return the confiscated property of the peasants.

After Ravenshaw returned to Cuttack, some peasants expressed their dissatisfaction over the proposed Nazarkut Settlement expecting further enhancement of rents. As Ravenshaw was on leave, the officiating superintendent deputed Harekrishna Das to make an enquiry on the spot. He found the Raja incompetent, credulous and extravagant. He always was surrounded by a gang of evil advisers. He finally reported in favour of a settlement which was to be conducted by the British Officials. Beams accepted the reports of Harekrishna Das and ordered the Raja to deposit Rs.6000 in his office as fee for the settlement.
Raja deposited the money, Ramnath Ray, an experienced officer was appointed as settlement officer. The superintendent also appointed a committee of five members including the Raja to run the administration of the state properly.

Soon the Raja developed differences with the committee and dismissed its members. He reappointed Madan Mohan Pattnaik as his dewan and with his help tried to increase the total rent collection of the state by manipulating the amins and settlement officials. This led to pouring of complaints of the tribal peasants to the superintendent’s office throughout 1879 against rampant corruption of bribery of settlement officials. After an enquiry the superintendent reprimanded the Raja.

Between 1880 and 1891 seven Managers were appointed by the superintendent. But all of them failed to work harmoniously with the Raja. One of the Managers, Fakir Mohan Senapati, in his autobiography vividly described the sufferings of the peasants due to frequent indecision of the Raja. In 1889, a severe famine broke out in Duspullah. Owing to the inability of the Raja to deal with the situation, the government temporarily took over the administration of the state. This saved the life of many peasants. After the famine Rs.76000 was distributed as, tacovi loan to the peasants by the Raja.

After the famine, on 15 September 1890, the government restored power to the Raja on an experimental basis and
appointed a dewan for judicial and revenue administration of the state. But the Raja failed to cope with the new Dewan. After the Keonjhar rebellion in January 1884, to protect the interests of the peasants of Duspullah, the Lt. Governor of Bengal superceded the authority of the Raja and appointed Munshi Mohammad Akbar as the government's agent to the state. In spite of the best efforts of the Raj for the improvement of administration, the oppression and exaction of the Raja continued unabated till 1914, when the Khonds and the peasants of Duspullah unfurled the flag of a revolt, which took the shape of a bloody zackeria.

3. Explosion of Khonds in Baud (1862)

The Baud State, the most western of the Orissan tributary states lies between 20°53'20" and 20°12'6" North latitude and between 83°36'45" and 84°50' East longitude. It is bounded on the North by Mahanadi river separating it from Sonepur and Athmallick state, on the East by Duspullah and on the south by Ghumsur and on the West by Patna and Sonepur. It was a state chiefly inhabited by the Khonds who mostly lived in the hill territory situated in the southern part of the state known as Khond Mahals.

Previous to the British annexation of Orissa, the king of Baud was ruling his state by maintaining cordial relations with the khonds. The khonds rendering occassionaly military service and loyalty to the Raja acknowledged
his superior social rank. For general accessibility with the peasantised tribals the Raja appointed an agent from among the tribal chiefs who were known as Sardars. He selected one Chief Sardar from them conferring on him a title Kunar. The Khond patriarch attended annually or once in two years the capital of Baud to make a small offering of agricultural produce and to perform his simple obeisance to the Raja. The act of ceremony was being repaid by a gift of superior value.

Under the British rule in Baud all went well till 1837 when Russel discovered the prevalence of human sacrifice among the khond tribes of Chumsur during the course of military operation in that state. On his recommendation British government passed Act XXIV of 1839 to abolish the rite of Mariah Sacrifice and to establish general administration of civil and criminal justice to facilitate the collection of revenue from the khonds. These khond tracts were placed under an agent who was to be appointed by the government of Fort St. George. Thus, the British rule made the tribals revenue paying tenants and was determined to take serious measures to suppress the Mariah Sacrifice.

The prevalence of such rite was also discovered at Duspullah, Baud, some parts of Kalahandi and Patna state. So the Government induced the Raja of Baud and Duspullah to rescue Mariah victims from the Khond Sardars in 1839. It created exasperation among the Khonds of Baud who looked to their chief Sardar Nabaghana Kunuar, the principal ally of
Chakra Besoi to stage a commotion. In 1843 Lt. Hicks was appointed as the agent of Superintendent of Tributary Mahals to suppress the Meriah rite in Baud and Duspullah. He failed to persuade the khonds to give up the rite. As a result, the government placed the khond tracts of Baud and Duspullah under a special Meriah agent and named this tract as Hill tracts of Orissa. The agent was vested with enormous power.

The first Meriah agent captain Macpherson issued a proclamation to the khonds to surrender the Meriah victims through their Sardars. When his policy of persuasion failed, he followed coercive measures by burning Khond villages and arresting the khond sardars. It excited the khonds who began to organise themselves under their chief Sardar Nabaghana Kunuar. They finally rose in a body in 1846 and attacked the camps of captain Macpherson and Lt. Dunlop to assassinate them. But the revolt failed to gain ground. After the appointment of Captain Campbell in place Macpherson, and after deposition of Somnath Singh from the guddi of Baud temporarily tranquility returned to Baud.

From 1848 to 1855 the Company's government strove hard to appease the khonds to give up the inhuman rite of human sacrifice. Many Meriah victims were rescued by armed forces. The arrest of some of the refractory sardars like Rando Majhi in 1855 arranged the Khonds who openly defied
the authority of the Raja of Baud. Even the Khonds extended their helping hand to the fugitive rebel Chakra Besoi to stage a fresh upsurge. But when by prompt military action and by the proclamation of 15 February, 1855 the Khond Mahals passed under the direct rule of the Raj, it threw cold water to the peasantised tribal unrests. However, another Khond tract called Barabhaya desh remained under the administration of the Raja of Baud. In 1862 the Khonds of this tract exhibited their strong resentment and their opposition to the impact of Oriya settlers into their tracts.

Barabhayadesh was situated in the border of Sonepur and Baud. It was divided into twelve desh. Each desh was under a sardar. This territory was stretched over twenty Kos (40 miles). A long standing quarrel over the possession of Barabhaya desh between the Rajah of Sonepur and Baud led to its division in 1830. The then Commissioner of Orissa, G.F. Cockburn, divided this territory into two parts, giving one part called Pucheta to Sonepur and the rest of the portion to Baud. The Khonds of Barabhayadesh had a strong feeling of rationality. They were extremely unhappy at the decision of the government. So Narayan Mullick, the head Sardar of Puchera, with his uncle Kundaloo Mallick tried to raise disaffection in Puchera to unify the tracts. The conspiracy was discovered by the Raja of Sonepur who immediately expelled Narayan Mullick. The Raja of Baud seized this opportunity and from Puchera invited Narayan Mullick.
with his family to his state and gave a village called Padmapada for their maintenance.

After 1855, the Khonds of Baud felt the burden of heavy taxation. The Raja after losing the Khond Mahals constantly raised the rent and imposed various cesses on them. Those Khonds who expressed this reluctance to pay more were arbitrarily arrested and sent to the prison. Even the Raja's paik militia regularly camped at the Baud, parts of Barabhayadesh and forced the poor peasantised tribals to supply provisions free of charge. Together with these, the Raja's expulsion of the Khond sardars from the posts of village headmen in favour of the Oriya peasantry to collect regular rent and cess from the disaffected khonds created a great indignation in their hearts. Thus the prescriptive right of the Khonds to elect their own sardars was on the rocks. Besides these, the Khonds regarded the Oriya settlers who had penetrated into their tracts after the British annexation to introduce trade and market system, and to exploit them through usury, as the hated foreigners (Diku).

What provided the spark for a bloody upsurge in 1862 was the expulsion of Narayan Mullick with family from the village Padmapada by the Raja of Baud. The Raja justified his act by accusing Narayan and Kundaloo Mullick for exciting the khonds with the displaced khond sardars. The news of expulsion spread in the Khond tracts within no time. Many ex-Sardars and the Khonds came forward to help
Narayan Mullick to organise the Khonds to overthrow Raja's rule from Barabhouradesh and to bring about reunion of the tracts to be kept under the administration of Narayan Mullick. Now Hari Majhi, Sarthi Mullick, Taluk Mullick, Balaram Mullick, Kurtea Dehury and Manboth Mullick took leading roles to organise the restless khonds. In March 1862 receiving the news of the combination of the khonds, the Raja of Baud sent a contingent of paiks to Doonger Pudder, the stronghold of the rebels to disperse them. The paiks met the rebels in a pitched battle leading to the retraction of the khonds from Dugger Pudder. The paiks then laid waste the khond tracts. Meanwhile, the Tahsildar of Khond Mahal Dinabandhu Pattnaik, with a force of sebendy paiks arrived at Barabhouradesh to check the disaffection. On his request the Major Rattary from Sambalpur sent a force at fifty police men.

The Superintendent of Tributary Mahals finally arrived at the scene with the 8th police battalion. He at first tried to bring about settlement between the Khonds and the Raja. But many displaced khond sardars who met him pleaded for the reunion of the tracts and for the restoration of his old post to Narayan. When the Khonds remained adamant Shore decided to coerce them by planning an elaborate military expedition at the command of Major Smith and Lt. Dolmage who were kept incharge of Sambalpur battalion and 8th police force respectively. When Lt. Governor
of Bengal approved the proposal in May 1862, Major Smith proceeded to the eastern part of Barabhayadesh and attacked the stronghold of the rebels and burnt the khond villages which fell on his way. He succeeded in arresting Narayan, Kundoolo Mullick and Hari Majhi. Lt. Dolmage on the other hand, marched with 8th police force, passing through the centre of southern boundary of Barabhayadesh. He encountered the rebels at Phulphungi Khol causing severe loss to the rebels and arrested Balaram Mullick, their leader. This led to complete demolition of the Khond organisation.

The military operation had completely ravaged the tract. So to appease the Khonds, Shore decided to give compensation to the khonds whose houses were set ablaze. The leaders of the upsurge were tried and imprisoned for terms varying from fourteen years transportation to one year rigorous imprisonment. The rewards to the extent of about Rs.1200/- were distributed to those whose services merited distinction. Shore, with Dinabandhu Pattanaik enquired into the real grievances of the Khonds. The Raja of Baud was held responsible for the commotion and was fined Rs.1000/- and ordered to pay the total cost of the military expedition. The Raja of Sonapur, who remained indisposed to take part in the operation against the Khonds, was warned that for future leniency he would be punished.
Though the quantum of rent was lowered some illegal cesses were abolished and displaced sardars were restored, yet the Khonds of Baud had never relinquished their wish to get back Pucheta. But before the superior military power of the British Raj they were helpless to fulfil their dream and even failed to check the penetration of the Oriya land-holders to their tracts.

4. Athmallick Disturbances

The Athmallick rising was organised by a Surbraker Bala Biswal challenging the authority of the Raja of Athmallick to impose arbitrary taxation on the peasants prior to 1819. Athmallick was a part of Baud state. On May 30 of the same year Rajah of Athmallick severed all connections with Baud state and declared its independence. To strengthen his position he established good relationship with the Raja of Angul and with his Surbraker. In course of time these surbrakars became powerful and neglected their duty to collect rent and cess for the Raja and even did not deposit the feudal dues in royal exchequer. However, by 1840's, the Raja successfully curbed the power of all Surbrakars except refractory Bala Biswal, a friend of Raja Somnath Singh of Angul.

After the attachment of Angul State in 1848 the influence of Bala Biswal came to an end and he was dismissed from the post of Surbrakarship after a court verdict. But Bala Biswal was against oppression and arbitrary enhancement
and finally organised a series of disturbances of the peasants.

The Athmallick state derived its name from eight owners Mullicks (Surbrakar) with whose help the state was established. It lies between 20°37' and 21°5' N and between 84°16' and 84°48' E with an area of 730 square miles. It was bounded by the state of Rairakhol on the North, by Angul district on the East, the Mahanadi river on the South and by Rairakhol and Sonepur state on the West. The country in the nineteenth century was covered with inaccessible jungle with a fertile tract between the range of hills and the river Mahanadi. 115

In spite of their refractory habit the Khond of Athmallick never revolted till 1863. The rising of the Khonds in Ghumsur and Baud had expurgated their hearts. They were equally dissatisfied at the British government's interference in Meriah sacrifice through coercive measures.

The khonds and Gonds of Athmallick were the original reclaimer of the land. But in the first half of the century they were supplanted by the superior cultivators Chase and Kurni, who were invited by the Raja to generate agricultural surplus which the new state required for its modernisation. 116 So the Khonds and Gonds wanted the leadership of a person to organise themselves to raise a commotion to get back their lost lands. The tribal peasants also suffered because of the imposition of arbitrary taxation.
and cess. One village headman was whipped publicly when he had defaulted to pay his cess.\textsuperscript{117}

To these inherent causes, the difficulties arising out of Bala Biswal's refusal to pay rent on reclaimed land and his subsequent banishment from the state became the immediate cause.\textsuperscript{118} Bala Biswal protected against his banishment by organising the already excited Khonds and peasants to stage a fresh upsurge with his principal aides, Dinabandhu Gaontia, Chamru Naik and Pareswar Deorhi. He attacked and plundered the villages near the Mahanadi making the Raja a helpless spectator. Finding the movement gaining ground, the Raja created a fabricated story that the movement aimed at killing him and appealed to the superintendent to send military force to suppress the movement.\textsuperscript{119}

Dinabandhu Garnaik, the Tahsildar of Khondmahals was first to march to the disturbed tract with a battalion of Angul paiks. He was followed by R.N. Shore, the superintendent with 43 M.N.\textsuperscript{120} The superintendent found Bala Biswal a popular leader and that oppressive taxation was the cause of the revolt.\textsuperscript{121} The government troops in course of the operation found that the Khonds were deserting their villages with their reserve grains and cattle. When the troops approached the rebels many of them fled to the hills by deserting the camp of Bala. So Shore instructed the force not to attack the retreating Khonds.\textsuperscript{122}
On 27 April 1863, a large body of the Khonds submitted before Dinabandhu Pattnaik. After this submission efforts were made to check the spread of the movement to neighbouring tracts of Baud and khond Mahals. The troops were posted at different places of the state to bring about tranquility in the state. Finally at the recommendation of Shore, the government decided to attach the state and held the king responsible for the movement. Bala Biswal, however, continued his fight single handed. He attacked the government patrol at Ambopol with a small body of followers. But his strength declined day by day. Two of his side, Pareswar Deorhi and Chamru Naik submitted before Shore finding little hope of success. On the basis of their information an expedition was led to Pithurgarh, the stronghold of the rebels. After a feeble resistance of the principal adherent of Bala, Nandi Biswal was captured. But Bala successfully escaped to Bamara state with his followers. Shore appealed to the chiefs of Bamra, Reirakhol and Sonepur for his immediate arrest.

In response to this, Raja of Bamra state sent a party of paiks which on 17 August, 1878 captured Bala Biswal at Khunta. After the arrest Bala with forty one rebels was sent to Cuttack for trial before the court of the Superintendent. On 16 October, 1863 Shore delivered the verdict giving Bala Biswal fourteen years rigorous imprisonment. His principal adherents were sentenced to two years and three years rigorous imprisonment.
Unlike other peasant movements of Orissa, the Athmaliick rising had the record of being carried out without blood shed. It was due to Bala Biswal's intention to abstain from dipping his hands into bloods of the principal enemy of the peasants. After the suppression of the movement special attention was given to safeguard the interests of the peasants and to bring about improvement of administration of the state. It was temporarily attached to the British domain.

5. Patna Rising 1869

The bloodiness and cruelty of rising of the Khonds of Patna state in 1869 revealed the fact that the tribal peasantry resented the interference of the British rulers who wanted to abolish the age-old rite of human sacrifice and to open their inaccessible tracts with roads. They also protested against the imposition of rent in cash, taxes and casses by the king on them.

The state of Patna lies between 20°9' and 21°4' N and between 82°4' and 83°40' E and is bounded on the North by Borasambar, Zamindars' of Sambalpur district, on the East by the state of Sonepur, on the West by Khariar, and on the South by the state of Kalahandi. The tribal Khonds formed the majority of the population of the state. These tribal farmers for their predatory nature during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were peasantised and were
slowly brought under subjection. Later with the coming of the superior cultivators of the plains, like Kurmi, Kultas and Chasas they were pushed to the southern part of the state which was full of jungles. This tract was named as Khondmal and remained as the stronghold of the Khonds. According to an estimate in 1869 the total number of tribal peasantry living in that tract was 20000. These tribals in the first half of the nineteenth century were never punished with corporal punishment and were often condemned by the king for punishable offences on payment of fine for the fear of the spread of disaffection among them.

By the treaty of 1826 between East Indian Company and the Bhonsle of Nagpur, British established indirect rule in Patna by releasing its ruler Maharaja, Hira Braja Dev from the confinement of the Bhonsle ruler. The king with the support of the British ruler, tried his best to make the tribals law abiding citizens of the state. He died in 1866 and was succeeded by his son Sur Pratap Dev who was physically and mentally unfit to rule. His second son Lal Biswanath Singh, on the other hand, was a cruel and timid person. He exploited the weakness of the king to amass huge wealth by collecting rents and cesses from the Khonds forcibly giving full vent to his cruel and tyrannical nature. He sent his agent to threaten the tribal sardars to collect rent and cess both in cash and kind.
regularly from the Khonds who were previously paying feudal dues in kind. When the Khonds resisted, in March 1869, a contingent of militia was sent to collect the dues. This led to a bloody fight between the Khonds and state militia resulting in the death of many from both the sides. But the Khonds succeeded in forcing the state militia to leave their tracts. Then they started plundering merchandise of the traders and property of the cultivators living near their tract.

To check the Khonds from their plundering spree, the king invited the army of Kalahandi state. The united army of Kalahandi and Patna state at the command of Lal Biswanath Singh proceeded to suppress the revolt in July 1870. The rebels gave way after a feeble resistance opening their tract to army who started burning houses and plundering the property and reserve grains of the Khonds. Many rebels were killed in the operation with their families. Even cattle and girls were snatched away. The khonds were virtually left without grains to eat, seeds to sow and cattle to plough.

On hearing the news of disturbances, Captain Bowie, the Deputy Collector of Sambalpur proceeded to the Khondan to find the pitiable condition of the Khonds. After an enquiry he found that the Raja had unjustly raised the rent and cesses and collected them by using force from the Khonds.
He also found the Khonds reluctant to reclaim fertile and vast waste land lying untilled in the Khandhan fearing heavy assessment. So far the improvement of agriculture and general administration was concerned Captain Bowie recommended temporary suspension of the Raja's power which was acceptable to the Government of India.

Under shrewed management of the British Agent, various measures were taken to appease the Khonds to settle down in their tract. The rent and cesses were reduced and it was replaced with indirect taxes in forms of Abkari, Patki tax and forest taxes. Schools were established to encourage the Khonds to renounce their disloyal predatory life and to settle down into a steady and industrious cultivation process. To check the oppression of the hostile outsiders, the Kultes were not allowed to reclaim waste lands in the Khandhan.

6. The protest Movement of the peasants of Narasinghpur (1879)

The protest movement of peasants of Narasinghpur in 1879 was against the imposition of innumerable cesses on them by the king, which was a practice prevailing since the Maratha rule. Unlike the system of the Maratha rulers who paid least attention to check the system of arbitrary taxation of vassal states the British Government intended to limit the oppressive taxation in the tributary states. This stimulated peasants in 1879 to rise against the imposition of illegal cesses by the king.
Narasinghpur state with its excellent riverine communication due to the Mahanadi formed a frontage to the south, lying between 20°23′ and 20°27′ N and between 40°58′ and 85°17′ E with an area of 179 square miles. Its fertile lands, good communication was more favourable for agricultural prosperity than any other state. But it failed to attain that prosperity because of the collection of various kinds of taxes and cesses from the peasantry which pinned them down to appalling poverty. There was also frequent rising of rent of lands and the peasants were forced to pay the following cesses.

Purin Cowrie, Gownika Tanda, Aratanda, Patra
Panjia, Chaumukhasania, Darsane, Hatidana, Goradana, Toila,
Mehaprasad, Ghar Tanda, Suerso Karaj Tanda, Ratha Katha,
Pate Cowries, Anka Marzar, Nuakhia, Bada Cowraies, Khupurikhar, Mali Tanda, Kanti landa, Magan, Durbal, Hal Tanda, and Gaudi Ghar. From this cess system it is evident that the peasants were paying cess to the state for their house, even for cultivating waste lands, for their bullocks, for maintenance of Raja's elephants, horses and servants, for salaries of Raja's officials, for the payment of Raja's loan, for worshipping god, to meet the Raja (Darsan).

In spite of this heavy load of taxation there was no security of the land, crop, property of the peasants. This discouraged them to reclaim waste land, and to undertake trade. The Raja was a man of feeble mind, surrounded
by a group of sycophants and evil advisers who were interested to get handsome presents and to encroach upon the best land of the peasants. The Raja had a strange belief that all land of his state were under his own possession and that he could allow his favourites to occupy any piece he used. But the dispossessed peasants found it difficult to convince him for the fear of punishment.

Sumanta Pattnaik, one of the principal advisers of the Raja, was managing the state shrewdly by persuading him not to go against the peasantry. His death in 1876 left the state in the hands of a group of evil advisers who made bribery, corruption, intrigue, intimidation, injustice, oppression rife in the court. When the patience of the peasants waned out in December 1878 they began to organise themselves to stage an insurrection against the king.

While on an official tour to the neighbouring state of Duspullah, the superintendent of Tributary mahals came to know about the peasants discontent. He hurried to Narasinghpur and to his utter dismay he found that the rent had been enhanced 50% over the previous fixation. After cursory enquiry he dismissed Raja's adviser Fakir Daulat Singh, Nach Pattnaik, and Anant Paikray and appointed Raja's brother Hari Chatra Singh, a good Samaritan, as the Chief adviser. For final settlement of rent and cess, he sent his assistant N.K. Das to bring about an agreement between the Raja and the peasants.
Nanda Kishore Das, finally affected an agreement after dismissing oppressive agents of the Raja engaged in the collection of illegal cesses. Out of the total Jumma of Rs. 17500 which people considered too high the Raja consented to remit Rs. 836.11.0, leaving the total Jumma fixed at Rs. 16000. With the exception of some cesses like Anka Marzar, Nuakhia, Khupurkar, Mali Tanda, Kanti Hariida Mangan, Durbul, Hal Tanda and Gaudi Ghar, all other cesses were abolished. The Raja was warned not to restrain a peasant from ploughing his land.

The restoration of peace was short lived. In April 1879 the Raja developed difference of opinion with Harihar Chatra Singh and dismissed him from his post. He reappointed his former advisor and reimposed all abolished cesses. He also went to the extent of dispossessing the surbrakars and ryots from their holdings who had been opposing him. The leaders of the last meli (revolt) were arbitrarily arrested and were jailed. To protest against this move a group of peasants sent a petition to the Superintendent, Smith informing the Raja's revocation of the agreement and requested him to take prompt measures to save them from the oppressive Raja. So N.K. Das the arbitrator of the first agitation, was again sent to Narsinghpur who immediately brought the situation under control and drew the terms of an ekrarnama (agreement) to which both the Raja and the ryots gave their consent. By this agreement the
headmen of villages were given power to distribute the Jumma (rent) fixed by each ryot of the village in consideration of the land now owned. They were to collect rent but it was to be delivered to the king through the peon. It was decided to collect the rent in four instalments in a year which were as follows:

1st instalment on Kumbh (March), 2nd instalment on Mithuna (July), 3rd instalment on Kanya (September), 4th instalment on Makara (January).

The Ryot agreed to pay the rent to headmen on the above kists and cesses were collected on the following prescribed rate:

Hal Tanda of two annas, Furma Cowrie of one anna, Gounika Tanda to supply vegetable to Raja, Ara Tanda - to supply one basket load of fire wood to the Raja each peasant household.

Patra Panja at the rate of 3 pice per rupee of land rent,
Panja Sarria at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ pice per rupee of land rent,
Darsarri four annas to one rupee.

It was also decided to collect 2100 seers of rice from the peasants for maintenance of Rajah's horses and elephants. The tenants who were cultivating sugarcane agreed to give three pots of molasses free of charge to the Raja and to give separate charges for cultivation of Toila land. A cess amounting to Rs.87-8 was to be collected for anka Marzar. The peasants were allowed to give present to Raja during
Bua Khia festivals. The zamindars were instructed to give Rs.5/- each at the time of birth, death, thread and marriage ceremonies, observed by the royal family. The Mali Tanda, a kind of cess was given to the worshipper of the temple of the capital. The washerman, barber, blacksmith and carpenter were to work free of charge for the Raja for some days in a year. The Raja, on the other hand, agreed to pay money for the rasad (supplies) if he would collect it for his troops. The assistant superintendent also dismissed the evil adviser Nishi Pattnaik from the post of Surbsekarship. Daulat Singh and Anat Patnaik were debarred from meeting the Raja. Harihar Chatra Singh, the Raja's brother, was reappointed as Raja's adviser. Hadi Mohapatra, a completed Umlah, was permitted to conduct the administration of the state. The Raja was ordered to make the court open for his subjects.

The Raja agreed to appoint a dewan nominated by the superintendent on the monthly salary of Rs.1000/-. To regain the confidence of the peasants, the Raja was not allowed to alter the system of rent collection and to declare a new settlement. These above terms of the agreement were finally sanctioned for the interest of the peasantry of Narasinghpur.

7. The Khond Rebellion of Kalahandi (1882)

The native state of Kalahandi lies between 19°3' and 20°28' N and between 82°32' and 82°32' and 83°4' E. It was
divided in the nineteenth century into two distinct areas, the plain and hill tracts. The plain country was undulating and closely cultivated, chiefly occupied by the Kultas, migrant superior cultivators. The hilly country was known as Dangasola covered with dense sal forests. Most part of this tract was given over to Pody or dahi cultivation practised by the Khonds. 154

One Raghunath Sai Dev, a Nagsbansi Rajput of Chhotanagpur line established Koronde state in the eleventh century A.D. In the eighteenth century it came under the sway of the Marathas of Nagpur in 1853 it became a province of the British rule. It was kept under the jurisdiction of the chief commissioner of Central Provinces. 155

The Khond insurrection of 1882 in Kalahandi took the Raj by surprise. The tribal Khonds rose against the Kultas, a class of superior cultivators who were brought in Kalahandi by the Raja, settling them on enhanced rents to answer enhanced revenue to the Raj. The Kultas knew the technique of transplantation of seeds and certain improved methods of cultivation of crop unknown to the tribal peasantry. So the Gond, Nagsbansi and Chero kings of Orissa in the nineteenth century invited them to their states for agricultural development, eventually evicting the tribal Khonds. The Khonds of Kalahandi are known as Kutia Khond because they were fierce and brave. Among the Kutia Khonds who settled in the plain were known as Kacharia Khond and
those settled in the hills were called *Paharia* or *Donguria* Khond. These Khonds true to their tribal nature were against any foreigner who entered their society to exploit them.

What made it inevitable for a sanguinary rebellion of the Khonds in 1882 in Kalahandi was undoubtedly the political uncertainty arising out of succession problem but the main cause was the loss of land of the Khonds and their sovereigns caused by usurious *Kultas*. The peasant rebellion was defensive in nature as it aimed at restoration of re-claimed lands. From the vivid and colourful account of the European officer C. Elliot, the then commissioner of Chattisgarh who first visited the Kalahandi state, it is apparent that the bulk of the population were the Khonds. He found that the Khonds were restless and never settled at one place for a long time to pay rent to the king. It was perhaps due to this migrating nature the king was encouraged to invite the *Kultas* from Sambalpur. Raja Udit Pratap Deo succeeded to the throne in 1853 as an ambitious ruler. He not only wanted to control the unruly Khonds but also to allow the Kultas to occupy the best land of the Khonds. His marriage with Asha Kumari, the princess of Sambalpur materialised his dream. The *Kultas* of Sambalpur were invited to settle down in Kalahandi to replace primitive cultivation of the Khonds. At first the Kultas were given the blocks of waste land. But later on the Raja replaced the
Khond Majhis (Sardars) by the Kultas. The Khonds became easy victims of usurious Kultas. Their low income and extravagant nature encouraged them to mortgage their lands to the Kultas. Inability to pay the loan made the Khonds dispossessed of their lands but were condemned as bonded labourers of the Kultas. A new practice of Goti was introduced by the Kultas under which Kultas lending money to the Khonds could hold them as bonded labourers for a certain period.

This policy of the Raja became financially a great success. At the time of Colonel Elliot's visit in 1856 the total income of the state was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land revenue of Khalsa (less maufi grants &amp; takoli)</td>
<td>Rs.9379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahsil duty</td>
<td>Rs.7363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine, Nazarana, Misc.recept</td>
<td>Rs. 520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Rs.17753</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Revenue records, Elliot Report.

After the Kultas settled in the state the income of the state rose to Rs.127517 in 1881. The Raja imposed taxes on everything which was susceptible to taxation and systematically drove the Khonds to the level of helpless
drudges. He even went on blaming the Khonds as lazy and treacherous and abolished payment in kind in favour of cash payment forcing the khonds who had no market choice to sell their produce at a cheaper rate to the kultas to pay taxes. The British Raj finding the state prospering, promoted the king to the rank of Maharaja in the Delhi Durbar of 1860 with nine gun salutes. It encouraged the Raja to strengthen his grip further. Some Khonds finding no other alternatives had to retreat to inaccessible hills and the other members of their tribe remained as bonded labourers of the Kultas. The Kultas controlling the production of the state raised the price of rice, the staple food of the Khond. The decline of salt production and heavy ferry duty on salt also contributed to the rise of the price of salt. It exasperated the Khonds. Already dissatisfied at the government interference in their life style to suppress human sacrifice they now found the new monetary system challenging their very roots of existence.

The demise of the Maharaja in April 1881, leaving a complicated succession problem was high time for a rebellion. Before his death, the Maharaja had cancelled the adoption of Rambhadra Sai due to some reasons only known to him and restored to adopt Raghu Kesari Deo, with the sanction of the government. Raghu Kesari was merely a child at the time of the death of Maharaja. It encouraged Rambhadra Sai to create confusion through depredation to
capture the throne.\textsuperscript{161} He found the khonds highly dissatisfied with the new system. To get their support he promised them to return their evicted land and to restore old customs\textsuperscript{162} and privileges. With the help of his followers he virtually kept the senior Rani Asha Kumari, the guardian of the minor Raja, under house arrest. He also disgraced the Dewan in October, 1881. On 8 December, 1881, some Majhis representing 121 villages met the Commissioner of Chattisgarh who was touring the border states to apprise him of the civil disturbances arising out of exaction of Nazarana, and collection of illegal cesses.\textsuperscript{163} But the Government failed to take prompt measures.

Dissatisfied Khond sardars already excited by Rambhadra Sai started to organize themselves to drive the Kultas by violent means.\textsuperscript{164} In the first weeks of January 1882 they began to assemble in a group, by holding their sacrificial axes and promising to drive the Kultas out to get back their own land.\textsuperscript{165} They also claimed that the succession of Raghu Keshori Deo was invalid since the deceased Raja had not consulted the Kondh Sardars.

At first they started plundering the property of the Kultas. Ismay, the Commissioner of Chattisgarh, hearing the news, at once proceeded with Colonel Lucie Smith to Kalahandi to suppress the upsurge without waiting for the government order. On reaching Kalahandi on 10 January 1882, he issued a proclamation for the surrender of the
rebels and assured to enquire into their grievances. But plundering of the Khonds continued unchecked and between 13 and 31 January about 35 Kulta villages were ransacked. So Ismay issued an warrant to arrest the rebels in accordance with regulation III of 1818 for causing depredation.\textsuperscript{166}

The movement began to crumble down soon after the arrest of the principal adherents of Rambhadra Sai by Lucie Smith. To appease the Khonds, Ismay released some of the Khond leaders receiving their assurances not to plunder in future. With the approval of the chief commissioner of Central Provinces Berry, a civil servant took over the administration on 31 March, 1882. At the assurance of Berry soon the Kultas returned to their villages and immediately started demanding the outstanding loans lent to the Khonds and even went to the extent of harassing their Goti by seizing their cattle and grain. The Khond Majhis who had been assured of a fair deal, finding the cool and calm attitude of Berry again organised themselves to punish the Kultas by eviction from their holdings. As a sign of the Khond unity, they sent a branch of tree to all villages with the message to assemble at Asurgarh to renew their old hatred against the Kultas.\textsuperscript{167}

At Asurgarh, the khond assembled in the first week of April, 1882. Under the leadership of the Majhi of Balwalpur, they swore to drive out both the Kultas and the European officers from their state. After kissing their
sacrificial tangi as a token of their resolve they began to massacre the Kulta headmen of Asurgarh, Iswar Geontia. The movement spread to every nook and corner of the state. Even Khonds from the neighbouring state came to help their brother Khonds. But Berry's prompt military action was sufficient and timely to check the massacre. About 300 to 400 Kultas were killed and more than twenty Khonds lost their life while fighting against the loyal troops. 168

The first rising of the Khond aimed at plundering but the second rising was characterised by bloodshed and cruelty. It was directed against the Kultas to capture their land. After the suppression of the upsurge, Berry followed the following measures to appease the Khonds: (1) The villages where the post of Gaontias were held by caste Hindus other than the Khonds for less than twelve years were restored to the old Khond Majhi. (2) The ousted Gaontias were given suitable block of land. (3) Where the Kulta Gaontias had acquired the posts of headmen for more than twelve years the former khond Majhi got a suitable block of land. (4) It was decided to enquire into the over assessment. The payment of rent in kind was reintroduced. (5) The cesses introduced by the king during the last ten years were abolished. (6) The tuccav loan was granted to agriculturist for the improvement of their land. 169

The military operation eliminated the armed band of Khonds and drove many disaffected rebels to the hills.
Throughout 1882 the Kultas did not dare to return to the villages and left their land untitled, which resulted in local scarcity. The deterrent punishment given to the Khond sardars, burning of the Khond villages by troops provoked the people of Kalahandi who protested to the Governor-General of India requesting to give concession to the suffering Khonds. The Government after a brief inquiry discontinued public whipping. Found the charges levelled against Berry without foundation and praised Berry for his sound judgement, patience and forbearance in restoring order.

The Khonds though settled gradually, never forgot their old hatred against the Kultas and harboured grudge against them. When one Khond chief was asked whether the Khonds expected to be hanged for massacring the Kultas and harboured grudge against them, when one Khond chief was asked whether the Khonds expected to be hanged for massacring the Kultas and harboured grudge against them, he replied, "Yes, you cannot hang the whole race, you will hang us, we are prepared for that, our sons will hang the land. The Khonds are like a bamboo clump. You may cut down the stick but sprout will spring up from the root."
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