

## The Paik Rebellion of Khurda of 1817

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The memorable year 1817 AD is a landmark not only in history of Orissa but also in Indian history. In this year Paiks of Khurda and people of some area of Orissa raised their strong voice against mighty Britishers, which is known as Paik rebellion. The rebellion 1817, according to some scholars is the first war of independence. Another group of intelligentsia regarded it as the resistance movement. A great controversy till now is continuing among the eminent historians and scholars for the nature of the revolution. The revolt of 1817 in history is the first direct challenge to Britishers by the people of Orissa. That heroic incident had happened forty years before the historic mutiny of 1857. Foreign historians as well as some native scholars do not give more importance to the nature of the rebellion. They also have not given proper place to that great rebellion of 1817. According to them it was only a revolt of some local Paiks. The Paik rebellion of 1817 was originally a revolt of Paiks under the leadership of Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mohapatra Bhramarabar Ray. The great Paik rebellion 1817 was a tremendous event which influenced the political situation of Orissa and created some nationalist leaders who fought vigorously against Britishers in later period. There is no need of doubt, it is national movement where several factors are responsible to say 1817

rebellion of Khurda is the first war of independence. Though the rebellion had its origin in the grievance of Bakshi Jagabandhu in particular and the Paiks in general. The Paiks of Khurda were worst sufferers by Britishers. So the Paiks had played a vital role for the outbreak of that revolt. But the revolt was widely supported by the feudal chiefs, zamindars and common people of Khurda. So, many kings, feudal chiefs, and zamindars had provided their hearty support to that movement. The common people had joined in that famous rebellion due to injustice, corruption of British Government. There was no cordial relation and good faith between the public and British authority. In the course of rebellion the general people had provided food, shelter and other helps to the rebellious Paiks. Without support of the common people that rebellion could not touch the top of the success. The rebellion of 1817 of Khurda is a mass movement. All supporting forts of Khurda had come forward to support the rebels in that critical period. Paiks as well as common people of remote places like Kanika, Kujanga and Pattamundai also had took part in that revolt. The revolt had started from Banapur and Khurda but later it spread to other areas like Puri, Pipili, Cuttack and remote villages. Bakshi Jagabandhu also got support from the Rajas of Kanika, Kujang, Nayagarh and

Ghumusur. Bakshi and his followers were affected by the land settlement after the British conquest. The important cause for rebellion in Khurda in 1817 was the land revenue policy of Britishers. The Paiks enjoyed rent free land tenures for their military service on a hereditary basis. Those service lands were taken away in the settlement by Major Fletcher as their service were not needed. The land revenue policy of the British affected the zamindars as well as ryots. Raise of the salt price is another main cause for that great event. The common people that time were unable to buy the salt with heavy price. The depreciation and abolition of Cowrie currency were the causes of the popular discontent before the rebellion of 1817. The tribals of Banapur and Ghumsur had accepted Bakshi Jagabandhu as their leader and they bravely marched towards Khurda to fight against colonial power with high ambition. It proves all sections of society were harassed by the British power. When the Kandha of Banapur started their revolutionary activities and they became successful, the English historian Toynbee pointed out that their success at Banpur had set the whole country in arms against us and seeing the hopelessness of resistance, the whole of the Government officers stationed at Khurda sought safety measures". The rebellion of 1817 of Khurda is a national movement due to various sections of society actively participated protesting the mighty Britishers. In that period many Muslim fighters also had supported to Bakshi Jagabandhu. Among them the prominent one was Dumuduma Dalabehera Mirhaidar Alli who was living in Jadupur. So it should say the rebellion of 1817 is the mass movement. Trower Saheb the Collector of Cuttack has described that many zamindars and tributary chiefs had joined the rebellion. So the success of the rebellion came out. The people particularly from Khurda area extended their support to the rebellion for the dissatisfaction with

the British administration. The rebellion of 1817 was a preplanning and well organised event. The zamindars of Karipur, Mrichpur, Golra, Balarampur, Budnakera and Rupasa joined hand with Paiks. The British historian Toynbee had given his opinion about the great rebellion of Khurda of 1817. "It was not long however before we had to encounter a storm, which burst with such sudden fury as to threaten our expulsion if not form the whole of Orissa at least from territory of Orissa." According to him another British officer named W.Ker, the Rebellion of 1817 of Khurda as a freedom movement in following words "Jagabandhu has given a lead in organizing a movement, no matter in how haphazard manner for ousting the newly established English from Orissa, he expected that other people who (were) also hit hard by the mal-administration under the English and the Orissa chiefs who had been deprived of all their freedom would follow up the lead to make a common cause with him for the purpose of liberating their motherland from foreign yoke." The rebellion of 1817 became a source of inspiration of nationalist leaders. The impact of the rebellion of 1817 was far reaching. The heroic performance of Paiks during the time of great rebellion created national awareness among the common people. The great sons of Khurda Godavarish Mishra, Godavarish Mohapatra, Pranatha Pattanaik, Sachi Routaray, Gangadhar Paikaray and Gokul Mohan Rai Chudamani and Purna Chandra Mohanty were greatly inspired and became fearless freedom fighters. The rebellion of 1817 is the landmark in the history of Indian freedom struggle and source of inspiration for the future generation.

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