

Madhusmriti - The Abode of Oriya Nationalism

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Madhusmriti, being the hallowed residence of Madhusudan Das, the pride of the nation and the maker of the modern State of Orissa, is a glorious monument, from where the spirit of Oriya nationalism, resurged after a lapse of nearly four hundred years of subjugation which ultimately led to the creation the first linguistic province of Orissa. In fact Madhusudan Das was the history of Orissa incarnate for nearly a period of half a century, which resulted in cultural resurgence of Orissa, restoring the pristine traditions and values along with the emergence of the modern spirit of adventurism. Madhusmriti served as the nucleus for undertaking many pioneering nationalist ventures in the entire country, beginning from the rural based industrialization to the rehabilitation of the alienated untouchables and underprivileged classes of the society. This has drawn the attention of Mahatma Gandhi. While paying tributes Mahatma Gandhi said, 'Late Madhusudan Das was a great patriot and philanthropist of the country. He had opened my eyes to the great crime against a part of humanity. He sought to make reparation by opening what might be called an educational tannery. He was responsible for livelihood of hundreds of shoe makers in Cuttack (Harijan - 3.9.1934).

On returning from Calcutta in the year 1881 Madhusudan resided in the rented spacious

building at Biheri Bag, Cuttack till the year 1891. During the period, in the formative days of his historic career, he established the Orissa Association (Utkal Sabha) in the year 1882. He rescued Orissa in every front where its language, culture and economy were imperiled passing through a crucial phase of extinction. Madhusudan entered like beam of effulgent bright light which pierced through the darkness of despondency and dejection.

In the year 1887, he fought relentlessly against the ill motivated intrigue of the British Government for taking over the administration of Sri Jagannath temple, the nerve center round which the Oriya tradition and culture revolved. He filed an appeal in Calcutta High Court against the treacherous attempt of the government and ultimately came out successful. The supreme pledge was redeemed and the commitment for restoring the sacred rights of Gajapati dynasty was fulfilled. In the year 1887, he set up the first permanent stage of Orissa inside Beharibag with sophisticated and highly imaginative ultra modern stage management techniques thus heralding a creative age in writing of highly accomplished modern Oriya plays.

With these, he was not satisfied. He wanted to carry on novel experiments in the sphere of Swadeshi industrialisation. For this purpose he

wanted to have his own residence. During the year 1890, he purchased a dilapidated building near Cuttack Chandi Square by bidding an auction and started the construction of a new stately palatial building according to his own choice. With a spacious compound in the front, wherein a well designed tennis court was laid out, which was the center of attraction for the foreign dignitaries.

Madhusudan occupied the stately imposing building of Madhusmriti in the year 1892 and lived there till his very end of his life in the year 1934. From the year 1892 till the year 1934, Madhusudan as a symbol of indomitable courage and monolithic assurance stood steadfastly against any attack directed towards Oriya speaking people. For all these years the hopes and aspiration of Oriya people centered round a single personality - Madhusudan Das.

Unlike many nationalist leaders, Madhusudan was brought up in a remote village of Satyabhamapur and was well acquainted with the degrading state of rural economy and deteriorating state of village arts and crafts.

Madhusudan was grievously struck by the deepening crisis which the country was facing with the gradual influx of foreign goods and the manner in which indigenous industries were afflicted. With the squeezing of the market, rural industries were practically paralysed. Being trapped in the age old inflexities of worn out methods of production, these industries were losing their credibility. Madhusudan felt the process can be retrieved by launching a determined campaign for the committed use of country - made goods along with the effecting of the latest improvements in the production processes by partly introducing scientific mechanical devices without effecting its original tenor and artistic qualities of production. In the year 1894, Madhusudan was practically seized with an irresistible urge of using exclusively

country made articles. At the first instance he decided to wear only Swadeshi shoes. With this objective in view, he moved round the cobbler villages of Patia, Mancheswar and remote villages of Cuttack District and studied in detail the process of manufacturing the shoes. He recruited four cobbler families who permanently resided in Madhusmriti and Madhusudan carried on daily exercises and experiments with these cobbler families and ultimately by 1895, he was able to manufacture shoes which were far superior than the foreign made shoes. Later he delved deep into the method of tanning practiced by cobblers. He observed that leather of good quality was being prepared for manufacturing shoes by slaughtering live cattle, where as tanned leather extracted from dead cattle was available in large quantities from the feudatory states. Madhusudan carried on experiments with the leather tanned out of dead cattle, but failed to prepare quality goods.

Later on his attention was drawn towards the highly specialized filigree industries which acquired excellence in quality and symmetry in textural designs. Madhusudan being totally engrossed in the production processes had to embark upon the role of an impassioned artistic designer with delicate drawing of imaginative lines. He finally emerged as a zealous and prolific craftsman of tender and finer sensibilities. In the leisurely moments he was found in deep contemplative mood, in designing the delicate artistic products embossed with filigree workmanship and other craftsmanship. A fervour of lyrical tenderness of artistic exuberance pervaded in the entire atmosphere. In deep recesses of his mind emerged a spring of creative impulse which kept him surcharged and engrossed for hours together. For manufacturing filigree articles of superb workmanship, Madhusudan established the Orissa Art-hares inside the Masdhusmriti in the year 1896.

The products of Orissa Artwares gained international reputation. Madhusudan possessed a rare quality of superb mechanical skill. Madhusudan applied mechanical skill for bringing excellence in various metal products.

As a protest against the exploitative policies adopted by British colonial rules, Madhusudan visualised a liberated India by engulfing the entire country with organisation of Swadeshi industrial undertaking in an extensive manner.

Later on he applied the skill for production of artistic goods made out of steel, iron, brass, bell metal, aluminium, wood and other materials which were part of the production of Orissa Art wares, His mechanical skill had received wide recognition. On the death of Madhusudan Das in the year 1934, Laxmi Narayan Sahoo paid tributes in these words, "With the sad demise of Madhusudan Das, the country lost a mighty mechanic and a superb dexterous labourer."

By his repeated appeal made to the Government of India, a scheme was prepared for laying the railway line in the coastal Orissa and Madhusudan Das as the legal adviser to the railway company helped in acquiring land for the railway company from the year 1895 onwards, which resulted in laying railway line in quick succession. Hardly within a period of five years by the middle of the year 1900, the entire Orissan coast was covered with the laying of railway lines with the plying of trains, it was indeed a splendid achievement of higher calibre.

In the year 1895, Oriya language, as the court language was replaced by Hindi, in the western Orissa, which was under the direct administrative control of the Central province. Madhusudan as the president of Orissa Association launched a decisive battle in the teeth of all oppositions. Ultimately Oriya as the court language was restored in the year 1903.

In the year 1896, Madhusudan was elected to Bengal Legislative Council and in the year 1897, he left for England and other European countries leaving Madhusmriti in the charge of Anama Chandra Das and Sailabala Das.

During the first phase of his continental trip, on reaching London in the month of March 1897, Madhusudan was deeply moved by the amazing manners in which gigantic cooperative stores were functioning in England; and the way the price line was controlled, Madhusudan was propelled by an overwhelming urge, for setting up of a similar cooperative venture at Cuttack.

From England, Madhusudan left for Germany, the land of giant industrial undertakings. While moving round a factory manufacturing leather goods, he came across with a process in which hides extracted from dead animals were tanned. He sat dumb founded. It was indeed a new revelation for him. Every where in the world the hides extracted from the live animals slaughtered, were being tanned. Now the search had ended. He felt an incredible sense of excitement - a joy of exhilaration. Brimming with enthusiasm he studied the entire process of tanning to the minutest detail. Returning to Orissa, Madhusudan experimented at Madhusmriti with the process of tanning leather extracted from dead cattle, by replacing certain chemicals with the bark of specified trees. The result was a tremendous success.

Mahatma Gandhi studied in detail about the life of Madhusudan and recounted the same in a 'letter to Harijan worker' published in Harijan Bandhu in 3.9.1933.

"What did Madhusudan Das do". He gathered the tanners of Utkal and studied how they did their tanning. He was not satisfied. He went to Germany and saw leather work there.

He brought German experts and started a factory." (Harijan Bandhu 3.9.1933).

On return from England, Madhusudan Das started the first cooperative venture, "The Cuttack Cooperative Store" started on 11th June 1898 in the campus of Madhusmriti, wherein Madhusudan Das acted as the honorary Secretary and Babu Janakinath Bose (the father of Subas Chandra Bose) worked as the treasurer. This had created a wide stirring effect in the entire state, thus resulting in organization of a number of credit cooperative societies in the year 1903, much before the promulgation of All India Credit Cooperative Societies Act 1904.

Madhusudan was far ahead of Mahatma Gandhi in the spirit of Swadeshi Industrialization. Mahatma Gandhi first came across with charakha (Spinning wheel) and handlooms as late as in the year 1917.

Madhusudan salvaged the spinning wheel from the obscure past and gave it a rightful place in the system of Swadeshi industrialization. As early as in the year 1902, the spinning wheel were plying regularly at Madhusmriti associated with handlooms as a positive step towards the rural industrialization. The extract from the book of the 'life of Madhusudan Das' written by Sailabala Das is given below.

"To produce cotton cloth, Madhusudan Das cultivated cotton plant in his farm. The cotton from these plants was made into yarn and woven in his own factory. Various kinds of handloom were brought from different places, even from Japan. Hand woven cloth was manufactured as early as 1902."

Madhusudan met Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India at Simla during the third week of October 1900 and was able to put forth the pressing demands of Oriya people with a great

deal of forthrightness and overwhelming emotion, thereby communicating the deep sense of anguish and frustration of the Oriya speaking people. Lord Curzon was visibly moved and gave him an assurance for a well demarcated territory for Oriya people. Accepting the invitation extended by Madhusudan, Lord Curzon visited the temple cities of Puri and Bhubaneswar on 16th December 1900 and observing the architectural splendours of these temples he was deeply moved and overwhelmed. Ultimately he issued the 'Risley Circular' on 3rd December, 1903 with a concrete proposal for amalgamation of Oriya speaking territories.

Madhusmriti, was the main nucleus from which the organization of Utkal Sammilani was contemplated in right earnest. The first and the second sessions of the Utkal Sammilani were held on 30th and 31st December, 1903 and 28th and 29th December, 1904 respectively at Cuttack. The enthusiasm created due to holding up of these eventful and historic sessions was tremendous. It created a stir from which Oriya nationalism emerged with great sense of upheaval. The Utkal Sahitya Samaja was founded in the year 1903 as the literary wing of the Utkal Sammilani.

In the year 1904 Madhusudan set up the premier athletic institution under the name "The Orissa Sports Association" at Madhusmriti and organized seasonal and annual provincial sports and games competition in every winter season, which was drawing a large crowd. These were occasions to celebrate and rejoice and the successful participants were awarded with artistic cups and shields decorated with intricate embossed designs manufactured in the work shop of the Orissa Art ware.

For imparting training in playing of European games, Madhusudan establishing in the year 1904 'the Orissa Youngmen's Association' at

Madhusmriti by enrolling students from the college and schools. These students were also imbued with the spirit of patriotism.

For all these unique achievements as the forerunner in varied field of activities, Madhusudan was awarded with the title of C.I.E (Companion of Indian Empire) by the British government in the year 1904 along with the top ranking national leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale with identical citations.

On 16th October 1905 as per the provision in the Risley Circular issued by Lord Curzon, Sambalpur district alongwith seven western feudatory states namely Kalahandi, Patna, Sonapur, Rairakhol, Bamara, Bonei and Gangpur were annexed with Orissa Division, giving it a status of a sub province. This was a monumental achievement of Madhusudan Das.

In the year 1902, Madhusudan started a massive Swadeshi industrialization programme with the operation of spinning wheel (Charkha) and handloom weaving. In the year 1905 Madhusudan suddenly came across with the latest advanced weaving technique of fly shuttle loom weaving which resulted in speedier process of weaving. At Madhusmriti, Madhusudan opened a separate section for imparting training in fly shuttle loom weaving to weavers, thus revolutionised the weaving in the entire Orissa. To bring a breakthrough in weaving Madhusudan supplied fly shuttle looms on easy installment basis to rural weavers.

Madhusudan opened an art school in the campus of Madhusmriti, through which he introduced the queer delicate process of tie and dye pattern of weaving with the evolving of the intricate process of dyeing of yarn on the basis of highly imaginative designs contemplated through the process of deeper insight and calculative vision.

From the year 1894, Madhusudan experimented in shoe manufacturing and the latest process of tanning at Madhusmriti. But he shifted these units to the spacious extensive campus beyond the Railway station, Cuttack in the year 1905 and named it as Utkal Tannery which acquired world wide fame and reputation. The unit manufactured superior quality of shoes which surpassed in excellence compared to the universal standards and were worn by British militia during the first world war.

In the year 1907, Madhusudan visited England and returned with Henry W. Navinson the renowned representative of Glasgow Herald who stayed at Madhusmriti for a considerable length of time. After observing minutest details about the prolific and altruistic benevolent activities of Madhusudan Das, he incorporated the same with lively communicative narrations in his unique book "New spirit in India" which was highly applauded by foreign press and public.

As a measure for bringing awakening in the women folk of Orissa, Madhusudan converted the Ravenshaw girls' school into a High School in the year 1908, bearing the entire expenditure for the school. In the year 1910, Narmada Kar and Chandramukhi Sarangi passed matriculation from this school. Ultimately the management of the school was taken over by the Government in the year 1913. During the process of converting it into a high school Sailabala Das the adopted daughter of Madhusudan Das acted as Principal and Secretary. In the year 1915 the high school was converted into a College, thus heralding an age of progress stepped up incredibly for the woman folk of Orissa.

In the year 1912, the rights of the impoverished peasants of Orissa were jeopardized and the stringent measures were proposed to be introduced in the Orissa Tenancy

Act 1912. Accordingly a bill was introduced in the Bengal Legislative Council to keep the process of gruelling exploitation of the Zamidars unabated. At the hour of peril Madhusudan organized the Praja Parishad at Madhusmriti taking the peasants of Orissa Division as members and pleaded valiantly and fought steadfastly for their cause in the Bengal Legislative Council. On behalf of Praja Parishad, Madhusudan fought relentlessly for immediate abolition of Zamindari system without paying any compensation to the landlords. With this the radical and the revolutionary concept of socialism had taken its root in the Indian soil thus heralding an age of the end of notorious exploitation and grueling tyranny by the feudal lords.

The Bihar and Orissa province was created in the year 1912 and Madhusudan Das as the President of Praja Parisad was nominated to the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council. From the year 1913 to 1916 Madhusudan Das was elected to the Imperial Council as the representative from Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council. Madhusudan had a very brilliant and outstanding records as a legislator in the imperial council and his outpouring of biting criticisms against British imperialism remained unparalleled as a symbol of uprightness.

In the year 1916, Madhusudan attended the annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Lucknow as the sole representative from Orissa.

In the year 1917, Madhusudan edited the paper "The Oriya" an English weekly from Madhusmriti as the organ of the Utkal Sammilani. In the same year he submitted a memorandum before the Montford Reforms Committee at Calcutta demanding for the creation of the separate province of Orissa.

In the year 1921 Madhusudan was appointed as the Minister of Bihar and Orissa Government under Montford Reforms, holding local-self government, PWD and health portfolios.

From the precincts of Madhusmriti, Madhusudan started his struggle for conferring inalienable rights on women of India to practice as the lawyer in the legal courts of India. According to his overriding claim the Legal Practitioners Act was amended in the year 1923. This was a victory unparalleled in dimension. In the same year Sudhansu Bala Hazara, the sister of Sailabala Das appeared as the first woman lawyer in the Patna High Court as the junior to Madhusudan Das.

In the year 1923, Madhusudan resigned from the post of Ministership pleading to make the post honorary and returned to his residence at Madhusmriti at Cuttack. During the period he was away at Patna, the affairs of Utkal Tannery was mismanaged. The debt burden was mounting up. In the year 1924, Madhusudan proceeded to Sabaramati Ashram at Ahmedabad to meet Mahatma Gandhi. After an interval the relationship between Mahatma Gandhi and Madhusudan was revived, Madhusudan appraised about the affairs of the Utkal Tannery to Mahatma Gandhi and invited him to come over to Cuttack to visit the tannery.

Mahatma Gandhi reached Cuttack during the morning hours of 19th August 1925 and stayed as a personal guest of Madhusudan at Madhusmriti. The welcome which awaited for him was tremendous.

On this occasion, Madhusmriti was converted into a building of artistic excellence. The entire building was very aesthetically decorated with Khadi fabrics bearing exquisite designs. Each room turned into an ornate gallery of Swadeshi Products which was a visual treat

for Mahatma Gandhi. The same day after taking a little rest Mahatma Gandhi left for visiting the Utkal Tannery.

Mahatma Gandhi moved into different sheds of the Utkal Tannery along with Madhusudan. He was practically studying the entire process of tanning with a sense of inquisitive eagerness of a learner. Madhusudan explained him the entire process of tanning with an expression of rare ingenuity.

Mahatma Gandhi resided at Madhusmriti on 19th & 20th August 1925. While addressing to the congress workers at Madhusmriti he repeatedly confirmed his noble message for creation of the linguistic state of Orissa and exhorted them for struggling for the merger of the Singhbhum district along with the Orissa Division. This was certainly a pious duty as running of Charkha.

In fact on return from Cuttack, Mahatma Gandhi carried on experiments, in the right earnest in respect of tanning of hides extracted from the dead animals closely following the instructions imparted by Madhusudan Das. Two years after visiting Cuttack, Mahatma Gandhi published a statement on 19.3.1927 issue of "Young India" highly admiring the activities of Madhusudan Das. The statement was as follows.

"It is true that now leather is tanned from the hides of the slaughtered cattle. Madhusudan Das of Cuttack carried an experiment on preparation of leather of good quality out of the hides from the dead cattle since many years. He told me that his experiments has been highly successful. At present I am also carrying on experiment on these lines.' (Young India 19.3.1927).

Mahatma Gandhi had left Cuttack on 20th August 1925. A shadow of calamity had fallen

on Madhusmriti. A disaster had struck. Madhusmriti was put to auction for redeeming a debt, he owed to the Maharaja of Paralakhemundi. However Sailabala Das and his younger brother Chandra Kumar Hazara could able to collect the amount by selling their parental property and were able to bid in the auction. Being homeless Madhusudan stayed at Madhusmriti as a tenant by paying monthly house rent.

Later on the Utkal Tannery was writhing in trouble. Time was running out. Mounting debt burden had severely hit the institution and crippled its functioning, ultimately bringing it to a halt. The Utkal Tannery was finally auctioned on 22nd November 1926. With this the mighty national enterprise faced a closure. The dream of Madhusudan lay shattered. He had invested his life's fortune in the tannery. The property which was valued at Rs.2.65 lacs was auctioned for a paltry sum of Rs.65,000/-. Madhusudan was present at the site of auction. Completely dejected, Madhusudan returned to his own residence Madhusmriti. Stress of the life had emotionally paralysed him. Under the gapping jaws of crisis he had been completely crushed. Exhaustion had brought him to a breaking point. At that moment he dropped down lying unconscious.

Six hours passed. Suddenly he got up completely refreshed and relaxed looking like a newly blossomed flower in early dawn. The entire shock of dejection being completely drained away, he was feeling inviguated.

Misfortunes came to Madhusudan in quick succession. After the closure of the tannery, another misfortune hit the career of Madhusudan. He was declared as insolvent on 4th August 1927. He did not yield to the misfortune. He was a man of indomitable energy and unflinching courage.

Mahatma Gandhi arrived in Orissa on his marathan tour, covering for a period of nearly a fortnight. He entered Orissa on 3 December 1927 finally reached Cuttack on 18th December 1927 covering long distances in the journey. The prolonged heavy entourage and the whirlwind tour had completely exhausted him adversely affecting his health. With Blood pressure running high and with a slight temperature in the body, he reached Cuttack and looked for Madhusudan. Congress Workers had made arrangements for his stay. But Madhusudan joining Mahatma Gandhi at the point of arrival had practically snatched him. On reaching Madhusmriti, the residence of Madhusudan, Mahatma Gandhi felt relaxed. The very touch of the fingers of Madhusudan gave him immediate relief.

It was 18th December 1927, a day for observing silence. But coming near to his mentor, Mahatma Gandhi was determined to talk and seek guidance. He broke his silence. Talking with Madhusudan had always been of a thrilling experience and a new revelation.

Mahatma Gandhi was steadily convalescing under tendering care of Madhusudan and all the programmes of Mahatma Gandhi were cancelled excepting a token one. Mahatma Gandhi stayed with Madhusudan for three days and left for Madras on 21st December 1927. Mahatma Gandhi's speech on Madhusudan was published in Hindu (Newspaper) on 4th July, 1927.

"Madhusudan Das was a brilliant lawyer at Cuttack. The poverty of Orissa woke him from his dreams and he saw that necessary as the work with plough and oxen in our fields was, we should soon be reduced to the status of bovine species unless we add to our agriculture some industry which called forth the cunning of our hand and he has himself become a finest artisan. (Hindu 3.7.1927)

The year 1928 marked a dividing line in the eventful and historic career of Madhusudan Das. His long cherished dream of making Orissa speaking area as a province of its own become a probable reality. The Statutory Commission (The Simon Commission) had arrived India in the year 1928 to make wide spreading changes in the political set up of India. Madhusudan deputed an Oriya delegation headed by Braja Sundar Das to represent the case of Orissa, before the Simon Commission at Patna, The Oriya team reached Patna in due time and welcomed the Simon Commission at the Railway station at Patna in the early morning of 12.12.1928 and submitted the memorandum on 14.12.1928 at the Patna Secretariat. After submission of the necessary recommendation by Atlee Committee in the year, 1930, the chances of the formation of the Orissa province became brighter, Madhusudan deputed the Maharaja of Paralakhemundi to attend 1st Round Table Conference at London. He submitted the memorandum on 16.1.1931, on the basis of which O'donell committee was constituted for the demarcation of the boundary of the proposed Orissa province. The O'donell committee reached Cuttack in the month of December 1931. Madhusudan welcomed the team of the committee at Madhusmriti by arranging a gala garden party accompanied by the grand show of fire works. The formation of the province of Orissa was declared on 24th December 1932, the concluding day of Third Round Table Conference. Along with this declaration an administrative committee was set up in the year 1933 taking Madhusudan Das as a leading member to lay down the frame work for the creation of the province of Orissa. Madhusudan inspite of his failing health conditions actively participated in the deliberations by taking lively interest and on the concluding day of the functioning of the Committee, Madhusudan

offered a party at Madhusmriti to celebrate the momentous occasion.

His lifelong endeavour associated with impassioned sustaining effort of unremitting zeal had led to the creation of the State of Orissa which became a reality. After the final proclamation relating to the creation of the province of Orissa with well demarcated boundary lines in the year 1933, Madhusudan passed away on 4th February, 1934 having his life's most cherished dream fulfilled.

Without any responsibility of raising the family of his own, his entire life was placed at the altar of the motherland as a prayerful offering. The last words which rang out from his lips with a voice dynamic and compelling were exuding a message of his total and integral dedication for the cause of the motherland. The words were,

'Here was an Oriya who never feared power and who was never lured out of his right path. Independently he only sought the help of the God.'

On his sad demise the tributes paid by Mr. E.S. Hornale, the Commissioner of Orissa Division faithfully reflected the sublime purpose for which Madhusudan had dedicated his life. The words were: 'He ever obeyed the command 'fight the good fight, with all the might' the fight against the power of evil against injustice, humiliation and inhumanity. Manfully he led the way towards the promised land of self-Governing Orissa and it was not given to him to enter it, at the end he stood, like dying Moses on the highest peak of Pisgah, in full view of it below him in the certain assurance that it should be the heritage of the people and so could cry'.

"O Grave, where is thy sting?
O Death, where is thy victory?
He is not dead : He layeth down,
His sword and cross to take his crown".

"Let us not forget that we owe him more than honour to his memory. He strove not for his own honour, but for the honour of his Nation, so to dedicate ourselves to the future of that Nation".

The new state of Orissa came into existence on 1st April 1936, as a living memorial to Madhusudan for his lifelong endeavour and dedicated service. Orissa found its rightful place in the Indian dominion.

Oh ! he is really the maker of Orissa and one of the founding fathers of Indian Nationalism. Yes ! here stands the effulgent spirit of Orissa in its entirety, glowing radiantly.

A Short history of Sailabala Women's College

The premier Women's institution of the State, the Sailabala Women's College had a humble beginning. It started in the year 1869, as a tutorial teaching class in the house of a Bengali gentleman at Balu Bazar, Cuttack. Later on it acquired the status of a lower primary school with two pundits as the teaching staff. The school was named as the Ravenshaw Hindu Girls' School and received a monthly grant of Rs.15/- from the government. By the year 1875, it was converted into an upper primary school and later on it was upgraded to the rank of Vernacular school with middle school standard. By the year 1900, the standard of the school deteriorated with very few students in the upper classes and no student passed the vernacular standard continuously for three years. The Deputy Inspector of the School reduced the rank of the school to U.P standard, with all the prospects of the school for further improvement remaining completely sealed.

In the year 1906 Reba Ray the niece of Madhusudan Rao, the Deputy Inspector of School started a high school for the girls and received a sizeable grant from the Government. But in the year 1907, it was learnt that most of

the inmates of the school were recruited from Brahma families of Calcutta and some students were the daughters of the recently posted Bengale Officials. The medium of teaching was Bengali. There were practically no Oriya student in the school. With the opening this high school for girls all grants sanctioned in favour of existing Ravenshaw girl's school were stopped. These facts were brought to the notice of Madhusudan Das by Gopal Chandra Praharaj, the famous lexicographer and the assistant secretary to the Ravenshaw girl's school. Madhusudan Das immediately converted the Ravenshaw U.P Girls' School into high school in the year 1908, by opening all the classes to make it a full fledged high school. Sailabala Das the adopted daughter of Madhusudan Das was appointed as the Principal and the Secretary of the school. Madhusudan Das met the entire expenditure for running the high school from his own generous contributions. He purchased horse driven carriages for bringing the girl students, even from the remote corners of the town. By personal contacts the strength of the high school exceeded three hundred in number. In the year 1910 Narmada Kar the daughter of Biswanath Kar and Chandramukhi Sarangi the daughter of Gangadhar Sarangi passed matriculation from the high school. The famous lady doctor and writer Kuntala Kumari Sabat passed from this high school. In the year 1913, the management of this high school was transferred to the government. By repeated persuasion of Madhusudan Das this high school was converted into a Women's College in the year 1915 with the starting of first arts classes. Later on it became a degree college and was known as Sailabala Women's College. In the year 1952, the college was shifted to the campus of Madhusmriti by a gift deed executed by Sailabala Das in favour of Orissa government on 2.2.1952.

After the formation of the state of Orissa in year 1936 various Chief Ministers tried to procure Madhusmriti as a memorial but in queer circumstances Madhusmriti came under the possession of the State Government by a gift deed executed by Sailabala Das on 2.2 1952. As per the conditions of the gift deed Madhusmriti is to be primarily preserved as a memorial to the sublime memory of Madhusudan Das and Madhusudan Museum would function in this building permanently with the displaying of all its exhibits. These treasured possessions should not be shifted to any other place. Sailabala Women's College functioning in a part of this building may be shifted to another place if spacious accommodation was available elsewhere. Some of the salient conditions of the gift deed are given below.

1. For effectuating to preserve the sacred memory of Madhusudan Das, the donor (Sailabala Das) transferred the property to the donee (State Government), this property being known as Madhusmriti (condition No 1 Page 2).
2. The donee (State Government) shall locate Madhusudan Museum in this building and the scheduled articles specified in the deed shall be exhibited and preserved forever in the rooms of the building (condition No.2 Page 3).
3. A short history of Madhusmriti would be engraved in a marble plaque which would be fixed in the building (condition no.4 Page.4).
4. A life size marble statue of Madhusudan Das shall be placed in the garden and in the front gates of the building marble slabs bearing the name of Madhusmriti and MADHU BARRISTER in Oriya shall be fixed (condition No.6 & 7 Page.4).
5. Sailabala Women's College, Cuttack, would function in the said premises of Madhusmriti until such time the Government may transfer the

same to a more spacious premises if they find it more convenient (condition No.2 page.2)

From these it is evident that Madhusmriti is to solely function as a memorial to Madhusudan Das.

After this year Madhusudan Museum and the Sailabala College functioned at Madhusmriti and the statue of Madhusudan Das was unveiled in the said premises on 13.2.1953 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India.

On this occasion, while paying glorious tributes to Madhusudan Das, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said "Madhusudan Das was a great leader of not only Orissa but whole of India as a great Indian leader, he did many pioneering works for the uplift of Indian social and economic conditions. I have been hearing his name for the last fifty years.

He was a great friend of my father and I have seen him from a distance. Whenever the affairs of Orissa came up for discussion and consideration, the name of Madhusudan Das also arises there with all sublime qualities he stands for" (13.02.1953).

Pandit Nehru also visited Madhusmriti in the year 1959, while attending the silver jubilee celebration of PEN conference at Bhubaneswar. At this time also Pandit Nehru paid glowing tributes to Madhusudan Das.

Madhusmriti still stands today as a silent witness to many eventful historic incidents, that had turned the destiny of the State as well as the country. It is really worth preserving.

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Khirachora Gopinath, Baleswar