

Major Historical Events from Kalingan War Till Orissa Became a Separate Province

Tarakanta Mohanty

A saint poet of Orissa Bhaktakabi Madhusudan Rao has said “Mata matrubhumi matrubhasa tini-Swargu gariyasi choubarga dayini - Seba tanku bhaktibhare divasa rajani.”

Meaning - “Mother, Motherland and Mother tongue are superior to heaven and bestows four results like Dharma, Artha, Kama (Desire) and Mokshya (salvation). Serve them with utter devotion uninterruptedly day and night.”

This has the significance when we think of our glorious past. Orissa has a glorious past. The art and sculpture of Orissa are unique and unparalleled in history. ‘Odissi Dance’ and ‘Odissi Music’ have been acclaimed across the breadth and length of world.

To-day’s Orissa in the past was known as Kalinga, Utkala, Kosala and Kangoda. It has a glorious and rich maritime past as Oriya merchants popularly known as ‘Sadhaba Pua’ were sailing in their boats to far eastern countries like Java, Sumatra, Indonesia and Bali islands for merchandise purpose and made Orissa opulent.

Orissa witnessed great Kalingan War in which Oriya Paikas fought valiantly with the mighty forces of Magadha in 261 BC at Dhauli in the banks of river Daya in which it transformed ‘Ashoka the Black’ to ‘Ashoka the Beloved, and converted him into a Buddhist. This has been

inscribed in the rock edicts of Dhauli. Being inspired by this edicts the Japanese have built ‘Peace Pagoda’ which has created sensation among the Buddhists of remaining world. Orissa’s maritime glory reached its height when Emperor Maha Meghabahana Kharavela of first century A.D. extended his empire to far border of Kashmir. After many rise and fall this empire was ruled by different dynasties such as Shailodvaba, Bhoumakara, Somavamsi, Ganga and Suryavamsi rulers. Lingaraj temple of Bhubaneswar, Sun Temple of Konark and Shri Jagannath temple of Puri bear ample testimony.

Orissa which was considered in the past as a super martial nation, its independent Sun was set when in 1568 AD Afghans conquered Orissa. Again Mughals and Marahattas ruled Orissa successively. In the year 1803 the Britishers occupied Orissa. Although stiff resistance was shown by Jai Rajguru in between 1803 he was hanged in 1805. Later on Paika hero Buxi Jagabandhu Vidyadhara entered in a fierce battle in 1817. After that Veer Surendra Sai of Sambalpur waged a valiant war against Britishers. He continued his struggle till 1883 when he died in Asirgarh Jail of Central Provinces.

From 1803 to 1903 for about a century many illustrious sons of Orissa have made untiring efforts for the rise of Oriya nation. To make Orissa

a separate province and to give status to Oriya language they had fought incessantly. Among those illustrious sons were in the forefront Utkala Gouraba Madhusudan Das, Utkalmani Gopabandhu, Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Senapati, Swavabakabi Gangadhar Meher, Kabibar Radhanath Ray, Shri Shashi Bhusan Rath, eloquent Biswanath Kar, linguist Gopala Chandra Praharaj, Krushna Chandra Gajapati Deb of Parala, Shri Ramachandra Bhanja Deo, Pandit Godabarish Mishra and firebrand critic Godabarish Mohapatra.

To enrich Oriya language Pandit Gopinath Nanda Sharma (1869 to 1924) had written 'Odiya Bhasa Tatwa, Gopala Chandra Praharaj (1864 to 1946) had written, 'Purnachandra Odiya Bhasa Kosha, the contribution to Oriya literature of Sambalpur was also important. Swavaba Kabi Gangadhar Meher (1862 to 1924) had written 'Tapaswini and Pranaya Ballari and other poems. He had said aptly to infuse grand Oriya feelings among the separatists that "*Matrubhumi Matrubhasara Mamata Ja Hrude Janami Nahin, Taku Jadi Gnyani Ganare Ganiba Agnyani Rahibe kahin.*" Meaning : In the hearts of those the love for motherland and mother tongue has not born, if we consider him among the wisemen, then where the foolish will remain. He also further said:- "*Ucha Heba Pain Kara Jebe Asha, Ucha Karaage Nija Matrubhasa.*" Meaning : If you want to become great in future make great your own mother tongue.

Raja Sudhala Dev of the then Bamanda State was patronising the paper titled 'Sambalpur Hiteishini' which was edited by Pandit Nilamani Vidyaratna (1867 to 1924) of Banki.

Kabibar Radhanath Ray (1848 to 1908) who was the author of poems like Chilka, Darabara, Mahayatra and Chandrabhaga had foreseen the prospects of Oriya literature and had

written '*Pahilani ghora tamasa rajani, phutiba Utkal bhasa kamalini.*' Meaning : The long mist night of Oriya language has seen its dawn and will blossom language lily.

Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Senapati (1840-1918) exhausted his pen by writing four novels in Oriya language like Chhamana Athaguntha, Mamun, Prayaschita, Lachhman and had avid Oriya readers. Had he not exhausted his pen during that time Oriya language could not have prospered.

Karmaveera Gouri Shankar Ray was editing 'Utkal Dipika' from Cuttack and Shashibhusan Rath was editing 'Asha' daily from Berhampur which had impact on Oriya readers remaining separated.

Utkalmani Pandit Gopabandhu Das was editing daily 'Samaja' from Satyabadi. He had extensively toured, Chakradharpur, Chainbasa and Ranchi to unite Oriyas remaining in Bihar province.

He demanded to open more Oriya Schools and introducing Oriya language in the curriculum. He opened night schools in Chakradharpur and Chainbasa to teach Oriya language to the dwellers of these areas who were deprived of education in Oriya language.

Godavarish Mahapatra (1898 to 1965) had written many satire poems and generated Oriya patriotic spirit. His famous poem 'Utha Kankala', Arise Oh Skeleton contained the age old glory of Oriyas. In the first couplets he had written 'Utha Kankala' Jaga Kankala, Chhidu Srunkhala ... Uthu Hruta Gouraba Raji Mruta Gouraba Raji. Meaning - Oh Oriya skeletons you arise again, snatch and free the fetters, the lost glories may once again appear.

Kanta Kabi Laxmikanta (1888-1953) in his famous poem 'Bande Utkal Janani' glorified

the motherland Orissa and inspired Oriya readers to inculcate grave Oriya feelings.

Firebrand lady novelist Kuntala Kumari Sabat (1901-1938) in her book 'Sphulinga' generated the spirit of Oriyahood in the minds of Oriyas who were separated and divided and living in Bengal-Bihar, central provinces and Madras. For the protection of divided Utkal and its development an institution namely 'Utkal Sabha' was constituted in 1878. The patrons of this organisation were Karmaveera Gouri Shankar and Madhusudan Das. Its objective was to create a separate Orissa province and create new awakening. In its aftermath in 1903 'Utkal Sammilani' was established at Cuttack under the dynamic leadership of Utkal Gouraba Madhusudana Das for the protection of Oriya language and culture. Utkal Sammilani was wider than 'Utkal Sabha'. The sincere efforts of the members of Utkala Sammilani was to instal love for Oriyas in the hearts of the Oriyas and to awaken them from the deep slumber. In between 1903 to 1934 due to the sincere efforts of the members of Utkal Sammilani this was capable enough to instill Oriya spirit in the hearts of Oriyas and enkindled the national spirit of Oriyahood. Each year by calling annual conference of Utkal Sammilani in different parts of the State it was successful in defeating the vested interest of those who were involved in routing the Oriya language. It also prepared charters to putforth before the Britishers demand for creation of separate Oriya Province on the linguistic basis.

In the year 1919, Maharaja of Parala, Krushna Chandra Gajapati Dev (1892-1974) met Montague Chelmsford Committee to put forth the demand the facility to the Oriya residents in Madras to cast special voting rights. As a result the Oriya residents of Madras were capable enough in electing ten Oriya members to represent in Madras Assembly. But the Government of

Madras vehemently opposed the demand to bring Oriyas under one province.

In the year 1922, Utkal Gouraba Madhusudan Das (1848-1934) while he was a minister of Bihar-Orissa, a resolution was approved in Bihar-Orissa Provincial Council in favour of bringing Oriya language dominating area under one Province. So in the year 1924 the then Government of India had constituted a Committee named Phillip-Duff Committee comprising the then political agent of Orissa C.I. Phillip and A.C. Duff, the then Collector of Visakhapatanam. To bring under one province the Oriya speaking tracts it was rested in one Committee its possibility. The Committee was to review this work. This Committee toured extensively Visakhapatanam and Ganjam areas and met Maharaja of Parala Krushna Chandra Gajapati. Krushna Chandra Gajapati influenced them on the recommendations of Montague Chelmsford Committee to annex all Oriya speaking tracts in one Province. The kings of Jeypore, Manjusa, Tikali Kalantara were unanimous with Gajapati and demanded before Committee for annexation of all Oriya speaking tracts in one province. Realising its justification the Committee opined for annexation of Oriya speaking tracts under Madras province. This was the first Government recommendation of the Committee to bring all Oriya speaking tracts under one province.

In the month of February 1928, Simon Commission visited India. Utkal Gouraba Madhusudan met Commission at Patna and put forth the demand to bring all Oriya speaking tracts under one province. In the same year Parala Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati Dev made similar demands before Commission at Madras and gave a call to Oriyas of Oriya speaking tracts to fully co-operate with the Commission. As per the advice of Parala Maharaja, Shashibhusan Rath and Braja Sundar Das presented similar

memorandum before the Commission. The Commission after due scrutiny of the memoranda opined that the demand of the Oriyas to annex Oriya speaking areas under one special province is justified. It also opined that all the Zamindari and Princely States be annexed under proposed Orissa province.

In the year 1930, Bihar-Orissa Government nominated Parala Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati Dev to represent on behalf of Oriyas in the first Round Table Conference. Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati presented firmly the justified and genuine demands of Oriyas and read thought-provoking statements. As a result in the Second Round Table Conference held in 1931 the proposal to make Orissa a separate and special province was approved. The Government in order to determine the boundaries of Orissa had constituted 'Odennel Committee'. The Committee opined about the annexation of the areas of Cuttack, Sambalpur, Angul, Khariar, Ganjam and Visakhapatnam and favoured for formation of Orissa province. But from the White Paper published from India Office the Zamindaris of Jeypore and Paralakhemundi were excluded from the proposed, separate and special province. But owing to incessant and sincere efforts of Krushna Chandra Gajapati Dev, the Home Minister of Britain Samuel Hore realised the justification of Oriya movement, constituted Joint

Parliamentary Committee to reconsider the proposed formation of Orissa province. The Joint Committee opined that the separate Orissa province can be formed by annexing Jeypore Zamindari, the hilly areas of Paralakhemundi and Jalantara Zamindari. As a result the formation of separate Orissa province took the real shape. On January 21, 1936 by the orders of Government of India (for formation of Orissa Province) was presented before the British Parliament and was approved in both the Houses of Parliament. After its approval on 7th March 1936 it was presented before the emperor of Britain for its final approval. After the approval of order by Emperor this order was executed on 1st April 1936 and the separate Orissa province was formed. Separate Orissa State was carved out with the merger of Oriya speaking tracts of Madras, Central Province and Bihar. The districts which were merged are Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Sambalpur, Ganjam and Koraput to make Orissa the first state formed on linguistic basis.

Tarakanta Mohanty lives at B-35, Star City, Patia, Bhubaneswar - 751024.