



Oriya Speaking Feudatory States

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The origin of the Feudatory States of Orissa is obscure. Over the years historians have developed different hypotheses. But none of them has been able to prove its validity. The first hypothesis in this direction tried to graft 'Rajput origin' to the founders of such States. It was assumed that having come on pilgrims to Sri Jagannath, Puri, a few ambitious Rajput pilgrims stopped on their way back and carved out principalities for themselves. But this hypothesis lacks universal application. However this is applicable to the Feudatory States of Patnagarh and Sambalpur. The Kingdom of Patnagarh was founded by a member of the Chauhan clan of Delhi, named Ramaidev. The Kingdom of Sambalpur was founded by a Chauhan King named Balaramdev. The second hypothesis stands on the aboriginal origin of the Feudatory Chiefs. But if a careful analysis of the customs and traditions of the princely Courts is made, little tribal attributes can be observed there on. Such a hypothesis is not supported by sufficient historical evidences and naturally failed to get the unanimous agreement of the historians. The third hypothesis brought the origin of the princes back to the Fifteenth Century A.D. when the Gajapati Kings were ruling over Orissa. According to this tradition, Kapilendradev, the first Gajapati king of Orissa ruling from 1435 to 1468 AD had as many as eighteen sons who contested with Purushottamadev, who happened to be the

youngest of them. At last when defeated in that fratricidal war, they submitted to the victorious brother, who in his magnanimity forgave them all and gave each of them a piece of territory to rule independently. It is believed that these eighteen brothers ultimately became the founders of the eighteen small princely States of the future Orissa. But this hypothesis is still doubtful as it is based on legendary half-truth and lacks historicity.

These States constituted one of the dense forest areas in the country, forest revenues being for some of them the largest item of their income. An irregular mass of forest-covered hills broken by river valleys with here and there a wide rice-growing plain and covered for the most part with dense forest, they were probably in the wildest and least accessible areas. Nonetheless these States particularly the Northern ones were situated in a mineral rich belt.

Politically these States were insignificant as long as strong central rule was in vogue at Katak. With the downfall of the 'Suryavamshi Gajpatis', the central authority of Bidanasi Katak, the capital of the then Orissa declined. The Feudatory Chiefs started violating their allegiance to the central rule of Orissa. They kept themselves busy in wars and tried to enhance their sphere of influence. By this act they further weakened the military power of Orissa and ultimately due to their apathy the Afghans conquered Orissa in 1516 A.D.



During the Afghans and Mughals particularly till Akbar (1556-1605) the Feudatory Chiefs of Orissa were not disturbed. Their territories came to be known as the "Garjat", whereas the territories under the direct control of the Mughals were called '*Mughalbandi*'. During the rule of Jahangir and Shahjahan the Feudatory Chiefs of Orissa were enjoying a great deal of independence. After paying their tributes (tributary dues) to the Mughal rulers they were free to rule their States according to their sweet will. No *Subahdar* of Orissa felt it necessary to interfere in the internal affairs of these States. But such an apathy led to insubordination in the part of the Chiefs and when Aurangzeb became the Mughal *Badshah* of Delhi the Feudatory States were in a state of anarchy and confusion.

Aurangzeb appointed Khan-i-Dauran as the *Subahdar* of Orissa. In 1660 when he came to Orissa, the *Zamindars* or the *Rajas* were in a refractory mood and were trying to spread their sphere of influence. Raja Mukundadev of Khurda ceased to pay tribute and was hostile to the Mughal authority.

The *Zamindars* of Ranpur, Saranga, Dompara, Khallikote joined him. Raja Krishna Chandra Bhanja Deo of Hariharpur (Mayurbhanj) had occupied a large tract of land from Medinapur to Bhadrak. Laxminarayan Bhanja, the Raja of Keonjhar, had occupied the fort of Panchira.

Khan-i-Dauran, the new *Subahdar* sent for Krishna Chandra Bhanja of Mayurbhanj to come to Jaleswar and pay him homage. At Jaleswar, when both of them met, the Raja of Mayurbhanj got excited and attacked the *Subahdar* with sword. He was captured and by the order of Khan-i-Dauran was put to death. After his death Jaya Chandra Bhanja, the brother of Krishna Chandra was recognized as the Raja of Mayurbhanj.

Khan-i-Dauran also put down the revolt by *Zamindar* Uddanta of Narasinghpur, *Zamindar* Hari Chandan Krishna Bhanja of Nilgiri. As mentioned earlier the *Zamindar* of Ranpur with others joined the rebellious Raja Mukundadev of Khurda. Khan-i-Dauran captured the seven forts around Khurda. Mukundadev fled. His brother, Bhramarbar Ray was made the Raja of Khurda. Khan-i-Dauran plundered Keonjhar, defeated the Raja Laxminarayan Bhanja and recovered the fort of Panchira. The *Zamindar* of Ranapur was also subjugated by him. The *Zamindars* of Dompara, Hijli, Malipara, Patia, Sarangagarh, Kanika, Kujanga and Khallikote were also subjugated by him. Khan-i-Dauran informed Aurangzeb that he had punished all the usurpers, oppressors and lawless men of the province and made them obedient.

After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 the Mughal empire started to disintegrate. The Mughal *Subahdars* became independent and asserted their power in the far-away provinces. In 1713 Murshid Quli Khan made himself the *Nazim* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Orissa was kept under a *Naib Nazim* or Assistant *Subahdar*. Sujauddin was appointed the first *Naib Nazim* of Orissa. Thus the *Nazims* of Bengal ruled Orissa from 1713 to 1751. In 1715 Aliverdi Khan, the *Nazim* of Bengal ceded all territorial possessions south of the river Sonamukhi (Suvarnarekha) to the Marathas in lieu of peace for Bengal and agreed to pay a heavy sum of Rupees 12 lakhs annually as *Chauth* for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Januji Bhonsle signed this treaty on behalf of his father Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur. Thus Orissa came under the administration of the Marathas in 1751 and they continued to rule this province till 1803.

During this period the Marathas also maintained their supremacy over twenty four Feudatory Chiefs of Orissa who purchased their



restricted freedom by paying the Marathas the annual tribute. The Maratha authorities rarely interfered in the internal administration of the states. There were no established principles on the basis of which the amount of tributes, the State had to pay was to be calculated. The Chiefs were seldom regular in paying their annual tributes. This at times led to military operation by the Marathas for compelling either a refractory chieftain or a reluctant chief to pay tributes in time. However the role which the Marathas played was more or less of an umpire to ensure maintenance of law and order and timely payment of tributes. The Marathas occupied Sambalpur by the end of the 18th Century (1799 AD). It was kept under the Bhonsle of Nagpur.

Soon after the British occupation of Cuttack on 14 October, 1803 Harcourt and Melville opened negotiation with the Chiefs of *Garjats*, as a result of which treaty engagements were exchanged with as many as eleven States.¹ By those engagements the Chiefs acknowledged loyalty to the East India Company and agreed to pay to the company's government fixed annual tributes in specified instalments. The Company on the other hand agreed to accept the fixed tribute in perpetuity and also assured that no further demand, however small, would be made on them.²

With Raghuji Bhonsle the Britishers signed the Treaty of Deogaon on 17 December, 1803. This treaty was ratified by Raghuji in 1804. According to this ratified treaty Raghuji Bhonsle agreed to confirm certain treaties which had been concluded in course of the war with his feudatories by the British Government. Raghuji was compelled to surrender Baud, Sonapur, Patna, and Sambalpur to the British. By the end of 1805 fifteen Tributary Mahals were brought under the control of British authorities. In 1812 the annual tribute of Mayurbhanj was fixed and

Tribikram Bhanj was recognized as its ruler. Thus the number of Orissa Tributary Mahals named Baud and Athmallick were transferred from the jurisdiction of the Agent on the South-West Frontier to the Commissioner of Cuttack. Thus, the number of the Orissa Tributary Mahals was raised from 16 to 18.³ Thus the three districts of Puri in the coastal tract and 18 tributary Mahals in the hill region to the west constituted the British Orissa in the 19th Century. The total area extending 23907 square miles were occupied by the Tributary Mahals. It did not include all the Oriya speaking territories under its jurisdiction.

Confiscation of Banki (1840) and Angul (1848)

The inhabitants of Banki complained before the superintendent against the tyrannical activities of its ruler Jagannath Srichandan. The ruler was found guilty in the murder case of his priest Raghuanath Paramguru. In 1840 A.J.M. Mills became the Superintendent of the Orissa Tributary Mahals. He recommended that the Raja should be banished from Banki and kept as a State Prisoner for life. His Mahal should be confiscated and placed under the direct management of the government.⁵ The government confirmed the sentence passed on the Raja and authorized the confiscation of Banki. Banki became a permanent government estate like Khurda and was managed by the Collector of Cuttack.⁶

In 1846-47 the British authorities felt that the Raja of Angul was assisting the 'Khonds' who revolted under Chakra Bisoyi. Such an attempt on the part of the Raja hampered the movement for the suppression of the Meriah sacrifice in the hill tracts inhabited by the Kondhs. Lt. Col. Campbell was sent to penalize the Raja and the Raja was captured in January 1848.⁷ The Raja was sent to Hazaribagh as a State prisoner and Angul was confiscated to be managed directly by the British government.



Sambalpur came under the British suzerainty in 1817, when the Bhonsla of Nagpur was defeated in the Third Maratha War. Jayant Singh, a former Chauhan ruler, was reinstalled on the throne. After him his son Maharaja Sai was recognized as his successor. In 1827 he died without a male issue. So the Britishers allowed her widow Mohan Kumari to succeed him. But it was against the local customs and traditions. So there was growth of discontentment. She herself also became very unpopular, for which she was deposed in 1833.⁸ The case of Surendra Sai was not considered and Narayan Singh became the king of Sambalpur. Narayan Singh died in 1849. As he had no male issue to succeed the Doctrine of Lapse was applied and Sambalpur was annexed.

After the confiscation of Banki and Angul the number of Tributary Mahals of Orissa was reduced to 16. Pallahara was added to the list and thus the number was increased to 17. In October, 1894 Lord Elgin, the Governor General, signed the new *Sanads* from Simla and the Chiefs of 17 Tributary Mahals of Orissa were formally recognized as the "Feudatory Chiefs". The number of States attached to the Orissa Division increased in the first decade of the 20th Century by the transfer of several Oriya speaking States from Central Province and the Chhotanagpur Division. In October, 1905 the five Oriya speaking States of Patna, Kalahandi, Sonapur, Bamra and Rairakhol were transferred to the Orissa Division from Central Province and at the same time, the two States of Gangpur and Bonai from the Chhotanagpur Division. Thus, the number of States incorporated in the Orissa Division increased from 17 to 24. The States were known as the Feudatory States of Orissa. Though under the British authorities, these States did not form a part of British India, the status, power and position of the ruling chiefs *vis-a-vis* the British authorities had been clearly defined and proclaimed. On 1922

the post of a Political Agent was created with head quarters at Sambalpur to supervise the administration of the 24 Feudatory States. In that year Sareikella and Kharswan were brought under his jurisdiction. Thus the number of Feudatory States of Orissa increased from twenty four to twenty six.

British Administrative Relation with the Tributary Mahals :

By the end of 1805 fifteen tributary mahals were brought under the control of the British authorities. They were exempted from the operation of the British laws by the Regulation 12 of 1805. The Regulation also exempted the territory of Mayurbhanj from the operation of the British laws and regulations like other tributary Mahals. In 1812 the annual tribute of Mayurbhanj was fixed and Tribik Bhanj was recognised as its ruler. Thus, besides the coastal districts of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore, sixteen tributary Mahals emerged as a separate entity under the formal control and supervision of the British authorities at Cuttack. The Judge-Cum-Magistrate of Cuttack remained in formal charge of those Tributary Mahals by the Regulation 14 of 1805.⁹

In 1814 the office of the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals was established by the order of the then Governor General Lord Moria. The primary objective of this office was to enforce proper supervision and management of the Mahals. Edward Impey became the First Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals of Orissa. With the creation of this office, the Garjats were brought under closer supervision than before. But the Government of India desired to follow a policy of non-interference in the internal management of the Mahals subject only to nominal control of the Superintendent.

After the revolt of 1817, a new office of the Commissioner in Cuttack was established by



the regulation 5 of 1818 for better administration of Orissa. The Commissioner was entrusted with the duties of the Superintendent of Tributary Mahals which was so far exercised by the Judge-Cum-Magistrate of Cuttack.¹⁰ Thus the Commissioner of Cuttack became the ex-officio Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals.

In 1862 adoption *Sanads* were granted to the Chiefs by Lord Canning, the Governor General of India. In 1874 the hereditary title of '*Raja*' was conferred on them. In 1882 the Calcutta High Court ruled that the Tributary Mahals of Orissa did not form a part of British India. This decision was accepted as final by the Secretary of State, and a Special Court, called the Tributary Mahals of Orissa Act XI of 1893, was passed "to indemnify certain persons and to validate acts done by them in the Mahals, and to admit certain sentences passed there being carried into effect in British India".¹¹ In 1894 these seventeen Chiefs of Tributary Mahals of Orissa were formally recognized as the 'Feudatory Chiefs'.

From the very beginning the British Government in India felt that direct extension of sovereignty was not always a desideratum and hence the Chiefs of sixteen Orissa Tributary Mahals were allowed to run internal administration in their own ways. But they had to acknowledge supreme authority of the British as the subordinate of the allies. With the creation of the office of the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals for their proper supervision and management the *Garjats* were brought under closer supervision than before. The first Superintendent Edward Impey tried to bring certain improvement in the internal administration of the Tributary Mahals and suggested to the Central Government to introduce Bengal Regulations in those areas. This was not approved by the Government of India, which desired to follow a policy of non-interference in the internal management of the Mahals subject only to nominal control of the Superintendent.

This policy of non-interference on the part of British Government continued for a long time. But the *Rajas* of tributary Mahals were constantly on check by the Superintendent of the Mahals. In 1817-18 when some Chiefs of the Mahals failed to pay their tributes to the British Government the Commissioner in Cuttack, Robert Kerr ordered the sale of six Mahals at the Collector's office for recovery of arrears. They were purchased by the government and subsequently restored to the *Rajas* on payment of arrears. Some of the tributary Chiefs were in the habit of purchasing estates in *Mughalbandi*. Robert Kerr strictly prohibited such practice and advised the Chiefs to get rid of such estates if purchased earlier.¹²

William Blunt, the Commissioner of Cuttack (1820-1829) wanted that the operation of criminal laws should be extended to the Mahals. But such a proposal was not accepted by the Governor General-in-Council. However the suggestion of Blunt to empower the Joint-Magistrate-cum-Deputy Collector of Khurda and Balasore to collect the tributes of the nearby Mahals on his behalf, was accepted by the Government of India.¹³

However the policy of non-intervention in the internal management of Mahals by their Chiefs continued. But when in a boundary dispute two such Mahals (Ranpur and Nayagarh) were involved the Commissioner of Cuttack, George Stockwell had to interfere. In 1829 the Raja Ranpur made an attack on the possession of the Raja of Nayagarh. The Government took stern action and imposed a fine of Rs. 10,000/- on the *Raja* of Ranpur. When the *Raja* of Ranpur was threatened to pay the fine otherwise his Mahal would be attached, he paid the fine out of which Rs. 5,000/- was given to the *Raja* of Nayagarh as compensation.¹⁴ During the Bamanghati dispute (started in December, 1827 in the



Tributary Mahal of Mayurbhaj in which a *Sarbarahkar* named Madhab Das revolted against the *Raja* of Mayurbhanj) the Commissioner of Cuttack (Stockwell) authorized the *Raja* of Mayurbhanj to put down the revolt of Madhab Das. When the *Raja* failed to do so, a regiment of the Army under Capt. Wilkinson was sent and Madhav Das surrendered. Against the will of Stockwell the government showed lenient attitude towards Madhav Das for which Stockwell resigned and subsequently was relieved on 12 June, 1832.

With the assumption of office of the Superintendent of Tributary Mahals by A.J.M. Mills in 1840, the Britishers started interfering in the internal administration of the Mahals. When the *Rayats* of Nilgiri rebelled against the maladministration of the *Rani*, (the mother of the minor *Raja*), Mills assumed temporary charge of the Mahal which was later placed under the management of Collector of Balasore.

The situations in which the Tributary Mahal of Banki in 1840 and Angul in 1848 were confiscated have already been discussed. In 1842 'Engagements' were exempted by the chief officers of the tributary *Rajahs* for preventing the practice of *Sati* in their territories. To suppress the 'Meriah sacrifice' necessary instructions were given to the Chiefs of the Tributary Mahals, where the system was in practice. British forces entered the territories of Daspalla and Baud to liberate Meriah victims. To put down the Khond Uprising under Chakra Bisoyee of Ghumsar the British Government had taken stringent measures. When the *Raja* of Angul was found in proximity with the rebel Chakra Bisoyee his Mahal was confiscated in 1848.

During the Great Revolt of 1857 the Tributary Mahals of Orissa remained remarkably calm. The *Raja* of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar rendered some good services to the British during

the period, and subsequently they were conferred with the titles of '*Maharajas*' by the government.

The paramountcy of the British Crown over the Indian States began to assert with greater certainty after the Revolt of 1857-58. The policy thus adopted towards the Tributary Mahals may be termed as "the policy of subordinate union".¹⁶ The *Sanads* of Lord Elgin (issued in 1894) which converted the Tributary Chiefs into 'Feudatory Chiefs' imposed certain responsibilities of them. Such responsibilities and restrictions were as follows.

1. The Feudatory Chiefs were required to pay the annual tribute as before.
2. They were instructed to "administer justice fairly and impartially" to all alike.
3. They were empowered to try all criminal cases except in which the Europeans were involved and in case of serious offences like murder, homicide, dacoits, robbery and torture cases were to be referred to the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals.
4. All orders passed by the Feudatory Chiefs were subjected to revision by the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals.
5. The Chiefs were required to deliver up any offender from Britisher or other territory who might take refuge in their States. Similarly they could represent to competent authorities if offenders from their States took shelter in British or other territories.

The *Sanads* of 1894 expected that the rulers should recognize and maintain the right of the people and not oppress them. They were required to consult the people and not oppress them. They were required to consult the Superintendent of Tributary Mahals in all important matters of administration and comply with his wishes.



In the second half of the 19th century the British authorities interfered in the internal administration of the Tributary Mahals in several grounds. They were: 1. dispute between two *Rajas*; 2. disturbance between the *Raja* and his subordinate feudatories; 3. disturbance due to disputed succession; and 4. maladministration.

The British authorities resolved the tension between the *Rajas* of Ranpur and Nayagarh by punishing the former for his provocative acts. In 1863 a dispute arose in Athmallik when a feudatory named Bala Biswal refused to pay extra rent for his lands. The British authorities took military action on behalf of the *Raja* and Biswal was humbled. The Bamanghati problem in Mayurbhanj was still alive. The British authorities felt that the *Raja* of Mayurbhanj could not be able to bring peace to that area. So he was not allowed to enter Bamanghati. Bamanghati was placed under the administration of the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum, who was able to restore peace there. In 1867 the *Raja* of Mayurbhanj petitioned for restoration of his ancestral rights on Bamanghati which was rejected by the government. Bamanghati was actually restored to the new king of Mayurbhanj, Maharaja Krushna Chandra Bhanj Deo on 1st April, 1870.

When disturbances over disputed succession started in Keonjhar in 1863 the Superintendent of Tributary Mahals Mr. T.E. Ravenshaw made an enquiry, rejected the claim of the dowager *Rani* and placed Dhananjay on the *Gaddi* of Keonjhar. The displaced *Rani* fought a legal battle, tried to incite the tribals in her favour, but ultimately she had to accept Dhananjay as the legitimate ruler. But Dhananjay Bhanja could not check the insurgency of the tribals. Rather other sections of people rose against him. The Britishers came to his rescue, suppressed the rebellion and the leader of the rebellion Ratna

Nayak was hanged. But the British officers continued to stay in Keonjhar till 1878 to re-organise the administration of Dhananjay Bhanja.

Another case of disputed succession was settled in Athagarh in 1893 by the interference of the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals, Mr. H.G. Cooke when Raghunath Samant was given the *Gaddi* as the rightful heir. The other claimant Srinath Samant appealed to the Lt. Governor. But the stand taken by Cooke was upheld.

Misrule of the Feudatory Chiefs and the Reaction:

The people of the States were exploited in various ways. There was no regular and well defined administrative organisation to redress their grievances. The whims of the rulers was the only basis of administration and the immoral officials were vying with each other to implement the irrational will of their master. They were mere sycophants and utilising the state machinery for their personal benefits. In the social front the common people were not honourably treated. They were subjected to various social disabilities and exploitations. They had no fundamental right of citizenship and no right of occupancy on their holdings. They were subjected to illegal and forcible exactions like *Rasad*, *Magan*, *Bethi*, *Beggari* etc. Economically they were backward as the governments of the States were completely apathetic towards their problems and well being. During the period of natural calamities, they were not in a position to survive and were dying like insects and flies uncared for and unlamented. The society had a feudal structure in which the rulers, the sub-feudal chiefs, the officials and certain confident patronised by them were enjoying all the available privileges. The common people had no fundamental right as such. Even their life was not secured as very harsh punishment was meted out to the innocent people, who were accused of showing any kind of displeasure towards the



misrule of the rulers. Even for petty reasons and whims of the rulers, some of whom were the Orissan edition of neurotic Nero, innocent people were humiliated, molested, tortured and killed.

The rulers were practising polygamy in a perverse way. Their harem was over crowded with queens and concubines. In 1867 it was estimated that in total their number was in between 700 and 800 in the Princely States of Orissa. It might have been an overestimation. But if the wives and concubines of the *Zamindars* (who had also the title of *Raja*) were also included, the calculation was correct. In fact the *Raja* of Dhenkanal Ramachandra Singh Mahendra Bahadur had fifty such women in his *Antapur*. The *Raja* of Banki, Jagannath Harichandan had twenty five such ladies. The big *Zamindars* of Kanika, Kujanga, Badakhemundi and Parikud had the record of maintaining a good number of wives and concubines inside their residences.

Some of the rulers of these States were accused of strange sexual behaviour. They were enjoying their life with wine and women. Due to excessive sexual activities a few of them had lost their capacity of individual sex. So they enjoyed mass sexual activities of their officials with beautiful young women captured from the households of the State territories. Such activities were mostly done inside the palace complex. The police which was supposed to protect innocent citizens was seen standing as mute observer to the whole episode or themselves seen in action. A beautiful young daughter or wife considered as a curse as it was difficult to protect her from the lustful eyes of the cunning officials and spys of the rulers.

Vivid pictures of such sexual life of the State Princes has been given in the "Reports on the districts of Midnapur and Cuttack" by Henry Rickett "Princely India's" (a Journal) and "Pathology of Princes" by Kanheilal Chaubey. Ghanshyam Mohanty, a contemporary Oriya Poet

of Athamallik had given the first hand information of such activities in his anthology of Oriya poems "*Dasahara Bheti*". In another Oriya book entitled "*Bhulibu Nahin*" a contemporary native of Dhenkanal, Braja Kishore Dhalla described the plight of the State subjects of his State under the '*Dhenkanali Sasan*'. The States Enquiry Committee headed by Harekrushna Mahtab was also able to expose the undesirable activities of these Princes, in their Report published in 1939.

The British administration in Orissa was not silent to these instances of misrule in the Princely States of Orissa. Against the misrule of the *Raja* of Daspalla constant complaint was lodged before the Superintendent, who ultimately appointed a *Dewan* to advise the king properly to maintain law and order in the State of Daspalla. The *Rajas* of Narasinghpur, Talcher, Athamallik and Dhenkanal were also warned for their misrule. Such warnings to *Garjat* rulers clearly revealed the strength of the paramount power *vis-a-vis* the rulers of the Princely States.

British Relationship with the Feudatory Chiefs in 20th Century :

In 1908 several chiefs of the Feudatory States of Orissa submitted a memorandum to the Viceroy of India, Lord Minto. In response to these memorandum revised *Sanads* redefining the British relationship with the Feudatory Chiefs, were issued to them. In these *Sanads* they were directed to administer justice 'fairly and impartially' to all alike. They were also directed to recognise and maintain the rights of the people and also, on no account, oppress them or torture. They were also advised to consult the Commissioner of the Orissa Division in all important matters of administration and comply his wishes. The settlement and collection of land revenue, the imposition of taxes, the administration of justice, arrangements connected with excise, salt and opium and for catching elephants, the concession



of mining, forest and other rights, disputes arising out of such concessions, and disputes in which other states were concerned were to be regarded as specially important matters and in respect to them the feudatory chiefs were advised to confirm to the advice of the Commissioner of the Orissa Division or any such officer authorised by the Lt. Governor of Bengal.¹⁸

In 1922, the functions vested in the Commissioner of Orissa was transferred to the Political Agent and he was redesignated as the Political Agent and Commissioner of Orissa Feudatory States. An Assistant Political Agent was appointed to help him in the better management and administration of the States.

In 1933, the administrative set-up of the Feudatory States was further overhauled. The Princely States were brought under the direct control of the Government of India. The Eastern States Agency was created. It was comprising of 26 Feudatory States of Orissa and 14 States from the Central Provinces. Its headquarters was first situated at Ranchi and then shifted to Calcutta. The head of the Agency was a Resident, who worked under the control of the Political Department of the Government of India. Such an arrangement continued till the end of the British rule in the country.

Growth of Oriya Nationalism and the Feudatory States :

Towards the last quarter of the 19th century, the enlightened Oriyas felt the necessity of the amalgamation of Oriya speaking tracts into one administrative unit and then the formation of a separate Orissa province. The first proposal for the unification of the scattered Oriya speaking tracts under single administration came from *Raja Baikunthanath De* in 1875. But the memorandum submitted in this regard was rejected by the Lt. Governor of Bengal. In 1895 the Chief

Commissioner of the Central Provinces decided to abolish Oriya language from official use in the district of Sambalpur. The *Sambalpur Hitaisini*, a weekly newspaper published from Bamara opposed this move. The *Utkal Sabha* also sent a memorandum to Lord Elgin against this. In spite of all such protests, Oriya was abolished from the Courts of Sambalpur. However in the same year (1895) the Commissioner of Orissa, Mr. H.G. Cooke supported the movement for amalgamation of the Oriya speaking tracts. According to Cooke, the areas which could be united with the Orissa Division were : (i) Sambalpur district of the Chatishgarh Division of the Central Provinces, (ii) Tributary States of Patna, Sonapur, Rairakhol, Bamra and Kalahandi, and (iii) the whole or part of the Ganjam district with the States of Khimidi and Ghumsur.¹⁹ But his suggestion was ignored.

The movement for a separate Orissa Province with amalgamation of all Oriya speaking tracts got a concrete shape with the formation of *Utkal Sammilani* (Utkal Union Conference) in 1903. The inaugural session of this Conference was to be presided over by Sir Basudev Sudhal Dev, the *Raja* of Bamra. But his sudden death on the eve of the meeting forced the reception committee to request Sri Ram Chandra Bhanja Deo, the *Maharaja* of Mayurbhanj to preside over the meeting. The President considered the Union of the scattered Oriya speaking people as the primary objective of the Conference. From 1903 to 1920 the *Utkal Sammilani* held 16 annual sessions. Madhusudan Das was the guiding spirit behind the successful progress of this organisation.

In 1905 a resolution of the Government of India (No 2491, dated 19th July 1905) transferred Sambalpur district to the Orissa Division. But the transfer of Ganjam and Vizagpatanam Agency to Orissa was abandoned.



The Oriya speaking States of Patna, Kalahandi, Sonepur, Bamra and Rairakhhol were transferred to the Orissa Division from the Central Provinces. The two States of Gangapur and Bonai were also taken out of Chotnagpur Division and added to Orissa. In 1916 Sareikella and Kharswan were attached to the Orissa Division.

Thus the grievances of the Oriyas for a separate Orissa Province was not redressed. During the partition of Bengal separate province of Orissa did not come out. In 1912 when the partition of Bengal was annulled and separate province of Bihar and Orissa was created the hopes of the Oriyas was again belied. A few other Oriya speaking tracts like Medinapur, Singhbhum, Phuljhar and Ganjam remained outside the orbit of Orissa administration. The boundary of Orissa remained unchanged till 1936 when a separate Orissa Province was formed which included the district of Ganjam. But then since the Oriyas remained under two types of administration, i.e. under the administration of British Orissa and under the administration of 26 Feudatory States.

References :

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2. *Selections from Nagpur Residency Records*, Vol.I, p.38, G. Harcourt and J.Melville to Major General Wellesle, 19 January 1804.
3. *Bengal Judicial (Civil) Proceedings*, No.44 of 11 April 1837, Government to Ricketts.
4. Sixteen Tributary Mahals : 1. Angul, 2. Athagarh, 3. Banki, 4. Baramba, 5. Dhenkanal, 6. Dushpalla, 7. Hindol, 8. Keonjhar, 9. Khandapara, 10. Mayurbhanj, 11. Narasinghpur, 12. Nayagarh, 13. Nilgiri, 14. Ranpur, 15. Talcher, 16. Tigiria. Later two tributary mahals (Athmallik & Baud) were added to it raising the number to 18.
5. *Bengal Judicial (Civil) Proceedings*, No.55 of 14 April, 1840. Mills to Government, 20 February, 1840.
6. *Ibid*, No.34 of 27 October, 1840. Mills to Government, 6 October, 1840.
7. *The Calcutta Review*, Vol.IX, No.XVIII, Article VI, The Cuttack Tributary Mahals - Recent Operation against Angul, p.201.
8. *Orissa District Gazeteers*, Sambalpur, (Cuttack, 1971)p.71.
9. *Bengal Judicial Civil Proceedings*, No.34 of 5 September, 1805, Regulation 14 of 1805.
10. *Bengal Judicial (Criminal) Proceedings*, No.44 of 28 April, 1818, Regulation 5 of 1818.
11. L.E.B. Cobden-Ramsay, *Feudatory States of Orissa*, Calcutta, 1910, p.27.
12. *Bengal Revenue Proceedings* No.25 of 19 May, 1820, Stirling to Blunt, 29 February, 1820.
13. *Bengal Judicial (Criminal) Proceedings*, No.28 of 17 December, 1821, Resolutions of Governor-General in Council on the Report of Blunt. (The *Rajas* of Nayagarh, Khandapara, Ranpur and Banki had to deposit the tributes at Khurda treasury and the *Rajas* of Mayurbhanj and Nilgiri had to do the same in the treasury at Balasore).
14. *Bengal Judicial Criminal Proceedings*, No.44 of March 30, 1830, Stockwell to Government, 24 March, 1830.
15. *Bengal Judicial Proceedings*, No.512 of 21 January, 1859, Government to Superintendent of Tributary Mahals, 20 January, 1859.
16. William Lee-Warner, *The Native States of India*, (London, 1910), p.396.
17. *Utkal Deepika*, 4 March, 1867.
Dhenkanali Sasan - means the administration of Dhenkanal which was based on the irrational whims of the ruler.
18. C.V. Aitchison (ed), *A Collection of Treaties etc.* Vol.II (Calcutta, 1931) p.419, Clause-VIII.
19. *Administrative Report of Orissa*, 1894-95, p.25.

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