From the year 1803 to 1st April 1936, Orissa had no official identity as a State, though the temples of the state and the caves of Khandagiri, Udaygiri, Lalit Giri and Dhauli on the bank of river Daya did bear eloquent testimony of the rich cultural heritage of the state in particular and its inhabitants in general and they still do. The Kalinga war of Chandashok, which can be compared with the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where millions of people lost their lives and lakhs rendered homeless, transformed Chandashok to Dharmashok. The sailors of ancient Kalinga were in affluence through their voyage oriented business with countries like Java, Sumatra, Bali, Indonesia and Malaysia. The cult of Jagannath, which even today has its own importance, had its appreciation by the length and breadth of the sub-continent. Orissa, with its mineral resources, the miles long sea-coast, the ever flowing rivers and the forest reserves of the state, was in an encircling gloom during the period mentioned above (1803 to 1936).

In the Holy "Bhagbat Gita", it is said when truth and society are in peril, God takes his incarnation to save the mankind from the disaster. So happened in Orissa. At the last quarter of nineteenth century, people like Utkal Gourav Madhusudan, Fakirmohan Senapati, Radhanath Ray, Madhusudan Rao, Krushna Chandra Gajapati, the Panchasakhas of Satyabadi and many others were born, at a time when the state of Orissa needed their selfless sacrifice and service.

The history of Satyabadi dates back to more than a century, during which the reformers not only worked for the socio-economic conditions of the people, they too served people during the natural calamities, fought against the age old blind faith and caste system. Conservation of the Oriya language, which was going through a severe attack from the neighbouring states, coupled with lack of education, which perhaps was a vital reason for creating wider difference between the haves and the have nots - less said about the gulf between the high caste or the privileged and the down trodden class - the under - privileged. Possibly, for an identification of the people of Orissa, in 1903, Utkal Sammilani was born.

The Oriya language was neglected since only Puri, Cuttack and Balasore districts were
identified as Orissa and in revenue records, they were the Mogulbandis. And after Britishers came to the helm of power, this Mogulbandi areas, came under the perview of Khasmahal. Though Oriya was the spoken language of Khasmahal area, in ex-estates also Oriya language was used. But the irony of fact that various districts of Orissa were not under one administration. Sambalpur had the influence of the then Madhya Pradesh, while Ganjam, Koraput, Jeypore were administrated by Telugus; Puri, Cuttack, Balasore were dominated by Bengalees. Thus, the British administration imposed Hindi, Bengali and Telugu as the official language, thereby forcing the local people to accept the above languages. On January 15th 1895, Hindi language was clamped on the people of Sambalpur, that resulted in a terrible outburst, and forced the administration to withdraw its orders in the same year i.e. the 8th November 1895. After the French were ousted by English, Ganjam was included under the British administration and the Britishers included this district in the Madras Presidency.

So, hundred years after the British took over Orissa in 1803, Utkal Sammilani was born under the dynamic leadership of Utkal Gourav in 1903 and Utkalmani Gopabandhu was his right lieutenant with his associates.

Here, at this juncture, once Gopabandhu invited three of his trusted associates Nilakantha, Harihar and Ananta to his remote village in Satyabadi at the bank of river Bhargavi. In the evening, they leisurely went for a stroll at the river bank, where they witnessed how the poor people of the nearby villages were throwing the human dead bodies to the stream of waters, because of their inability to afford fuel for the cremation of the corpse of their near and dear ones. This, no doubt, was a ghastly scene for the four. The people of the area, were engulfed by cholera-the epidemic and poverty-the curse.

There, looking to the setting sun, the four promised, "not to go for a job after their education but to see their motherland in a better condition than what they had seen at the time of their birth." They fulfilled their promise during their life time. Only Nilakantha, Harihar and Godavarish saw India an independent nation.

The necessity of education in the state, was haunting Gopabandhu and his associates day in and day out. They were unanimous to do some thing for the education of their fellow brethren at any cost.

In 1906, Gopabandhu, during his trip to Pune to attend the Indian National Congress Conference, visited the famous Fergusson College founded by Gopal Krushna Gokhle, where he was greatly impressed by the pattern of education introduced. He also knew the details of "Viswa Bharati" at Shanti Niketan established by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. At this point of time, his brain child Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya was conceived.

For the conservation of Oriya language, its development, social reforms, tourism, service to the downtrodden, patriotism, unity, co-operation, self-respect and consciousness, a meeting of the elites were convened and an extensive survey was undertaken. Visiting the ex-states, the coastal areas and various other places, the then Inspector of Schools of Puri, Vaktakabi Madhusudan Rao suggested the famous "Bakula Chhuriana Bana", described in myth as "Gupta Brundaban, as the ideal place for the location of the Vidyalaya with the equipments and staff of a closed M.E. School of Sriramchandrapur. The Satyabadi Bana Vidyalay was started on the auspicious Kumar Purnima of 1909 with Pandit Madhusudan Mishra as its' Headmaster. The name of this institution was known as Victoria Middle English School instead of Satyabadi Bana Vidyalay as has been
mentioned in the book "Jeevan Jeebika" (p-81) written by Late Justice Harihar Mohapatra, a member of the "Sabuja Group of Poets." Gopabandhu, a born opponent of British rulers, could afford to bear the English name of his brainchild, which hardly any one could believe but nonetheless it was a fact.

Though the new school was to run in the Bakula Chhuriana Bana, it actually started in a block of thatched houses. In the meantime Pandit Nilakantha wrote an article in Oriya about his moustache titled "Mo Nisha", that created a havoc among the conservative Bramhins of the locality. The aggressive conservatives set fire in the school house twice. Till a new block was erected, the teachers decided to stop the school from functioning. However, Pandit Gopabandhu was against it. He decided to run the school in the natural environment of the small forest. The school started functioning and people from different parts of the state came rushing to see the new pattern of school in natural environment. The media gave wide publicity in favour of this school, not only for its 'open-air and natural environment but for its' way of education, discipline, unity, harmonious relationship and philanthropic way of life. Thus from 1912, the name Victoria Middle School vanished in history and Satyabadi Banavidyalaya came into life. But from 1909 to 1926, history is silent about lower caste students securing admission in this school.

Towards the last part of 16th century, the Bakula Chhuriana Bana was gifted in favour of Shree Birachandanpur Mouja by the king of Khurda Pratham Ramchandra Dev. A major part of this gifted jungle was transferred, in favour the deity Gopinath Dev, after the temple was constructed. The temple trust-board transferred a major part of the forest in favour of the Bana Vidyalaya in course of time. The transfer of the said property was easier as Pandit Gopabandhu was the trustee of Satyabadi Gopinath Dev Temple Estate.

The garden school could not escape the visit of Mahatma Gandhi in 1921 and his heartiest appreciation has been recorded by Pramod Kumar Mohapatro, in his book Satabdi Sadhak (p.40). Gandhijee spent a complete day and a night, with the teachers and students at this school campus and was moved with the sense of punctuality, love and fraternity.

The list of teachers given below will go a long way in providing an idea as to what type of illustrious people were associated with the institution and their possible contribution for the pupils, that could make the school "A man manufacturing factory".

1. Pandit Nilakantha Das
2. Acharya Harihar Das
3. Pandit Godabarish Mishra
4. Pandit Basudev Mohapatro
5. Pandit Krupasindhu Mishra
6. Pandit Krupasindhu Hota
7. Dr. Radhanath Rath
8. Pandit Lingaraj Mishra
9. Nandakishore Das
10. Binod Behari Rout Ray
11. Dr. Ratnakar Pati
12. Satyabadi Tripathy
13. Mardaraj Roy
14. Madan Babu and Bhaskar Baboo
15. Gopinath Mishra
16. Harihar Mohapatra
17. Madhusudan Mishra
18. Artatran Das
19. Lokanath Mohapatro
20. Haladhar Mohapatra  
21. Apana Panigrahi  
22. Pandit Bhubaneswar Mishra  
23. Pandit Banchanidhi Mishra  
24. Benugopal Achari  
25. Dhaneswar Maharana  
26. Narayan Sumanta Patnaik  
27. Ramchandra Rath  
28. Harihar Mohapatra and many others.

Utkalmani Gopabandhu was a member of Bihar-Orissa Legislative Council and was very much known by the length and breadth of the country and as such Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya received wide publicity throughout the country and attracted visitors from different parts of India. The names of some distinguished visitors are given below:

1. Sir Edward Get - Governor, Bihar & Orissa  
2. Vice Chancellors of Calcutta University  
   Sir Devi Prasad Sarbadhikari and Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee  
3. Sir Krushna Govinda Gupta  
4. Devi Prasanna Raychoudhury of Navbharat  
5. Sir Jening, Director Education  
6. Mahatma Gandhi (1921)  
7. Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das  
8. Pandit Nilamani Vidya Ratna  
9. Sudam Charan Naik  
10. Gokulananda Choudhury  
11. Vyasakavi Fakir Mohan Senapati  
12. Prof. Jogesh Ch. Ray Vidyanidhi  
13. Sri Gopal Chandra Praharaj  
14. Historian Jagabandhu Singh  
15. Sashi Bhusan Rath  
16. Bagmi Biswanath Kar  
17. Braja Sundar Das  
18. Prof. Hemendra Sarkar  
19. Dr. Van Caster  
20. Vaktakavi Madhusudan Rao and rulers of the Ex-states and academicians of fame etc.

The British Government, inspite of repeated request, did not accord a permanent financial sanction for the school till 1917. Even if there was a permanent school building, the school functioned in the Bakula Bana except in rainy season. Utkal Gourav Madhusudan once remarked before Gopabandhu and Nilakantha "You have created a second Nalanda in Satyabadi" on 21st Feb. 1921. This institution was accorded with the sanction of a National school.

This being the history of Satyabadi High School, which in course of time achieved the status of a National institution, gradually lost it's luster and popularity.

Pandit Godabarish Mishra in his autobiography has clearly admitted that "Pandit Gopabandhu started the school with a himalayan ambition that developed very quickly to achieve a laudable height and came down to a negligible standard, within a very short span of time." He has indirectly hinted for the infighting among themselves without pointing an accruing finger on anybody (p-103). The same thing is also mentioned in Pandit Nilakantha's autobiography. Advancing a step forward, Pandit Basudev Mohapatra has written in his autobiography (unpublished), that the infighting for self respect, and craze for personal prominence between Gopabandhu, Godabarish and Nilakantha, resulted in the gradual downfall of Satyabadi High School standard.

The glory of the institution is the history of yester years but the vibration of the glory echoes in present years. That probably is the reason for General Shankar Roy Chaudhury, Ex-Chief of
Indian Army, who visited this national monument and donated rupees ten lakh for its development, from his Rajya Sabha member discretionary fund.

Half a century before independence of the country, the foundation laid by Utkalmani, is in a detoriorating condition now, which need to be ignited. Let the sophisticated take care of the controversy, whether the Satyabadi cult needs to be re-charged.

With this end in view, some old students of this ideal institution, laid the foundation of the Satyabadi High School old students Association, which is now twenty years old. In the recent past, Prof. Dr. Bikram Das, the illustrious son of Dr. Pandit Padmabhushan Nilakantha Das, the founder President of the Association passed away, leaving behind his sincere advice for the successors to carry on the torch of the organisation in the right direction.

Since, the year 2008 is at the door steps, the Satyabadians are anxiously waiting to join the centenary celebration of Satyabadi High School, as the institution enters in to its century old existence. Although the School authorities are to initiate it, certainly, it is a himalayan task for them to organise a national level celebration, keeping in view the limited resources with them and the task being enormous. The Headmaster of the school, considering the vastness of the occasion, has requested the Old Students Association, for possible help and assistance, to make the occasion a spectacular success.

The Satyabadi High School Old Students Association, on receiving such a request, has tentatively decided to co-operate and render all possible assistance, for the successful celebration of the centenary.

The centenary is primarily proposed to be celebrated for five days in memory of the "Pancha Sakhas, the founder of the institution. It will not be out of place to mention that leaders of national level, Educationists, Academicians, Planners, Economists and intellectuals (if decided) will be invited, to participate in group symposiums, in order to reach at a point, to formulate and draft a charter of programme for another hundred years, for regaining the concept of the vocational institution, in the form of "Gurukula", as was the concept thought-of hundred years ago. To be more ambitious, it will be a landmark in the history of Satyabadi, if the Banavidyalaya concept is inaugurated during the centenary celebration.

It is, therefore, necessary that the ex-students of Satyabadi High School to unite, no matter wherever they may be, to help the occasion, in whatever manner they can. The conscious citizens of Satyabadi and the people of the state may rise to the occasion without which history will not forgive them, for this institution played a vital role during the freedom struggle.

The words of "Upanishad", which Swamy Vivekananda pronounced at Chicago, be remembered : "Rise, Awake and Run Till You Reach the Destination."

References:
1. Old records of Satyabadi High School
3. "Jeevan Charita" of Pandit Nilakantha Das
5. "Satyabadi Itihas" by Bhimasen Mohapatra.

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