Madhusudan Das and the Articulation of Odia Identity

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I

The last phase of the 19th century and the first phase of the 20th century witnessed a great awakening in Odisha. It was the phase of New Odisha- in-making. The Odias during this phase got an identity consciousness. This identity needed to be asserted. Many persons and institutions were responsible for this resurgent trend in Odisha. Among them Madhusudan Das was very significant. His career in Odisha at least from the 1880s till his death was entirely dedicated to the making of modern Odisha. He took a very prominent role in the amalgamation of different Odia speaking tracts lying scattered in different neighbouring provinces into a great political entity. At the same time he attempted socio-economic and cultural progress of the Odias which would stabilise his political Odisha. He articulated manifold problems of Odisha and asserted the identity of the Odias in that crucial phase. In order to establish the identity of the Odias he closely connected himself with many elites and associations which demanded the reconstruction of Odisha. The activities of Madhusudan were found to be expressed through the powerful national bodies like *Utkal Sabha* and *Utkala Sammilani*. In many respects he was the prophet of Odia nationalism.

II

Madhusudan Das while studying in Calcutta took a very prominent role in educating many Odia labourers there in the 1870s which was his primary attempt to establish the Odias in Calcutta. (Das 1971/1988:43-44) In Calcutta his intense love for Odia language was intact as it is evident from his demand to write the answers of Sanskrit questions in Odia(his mother language) to the authorities of Calcutta University in 1869-70. (Ibid:44) In Calcutta Madhusudan was converted into a Christian. But it did not deter his plan for the re-invention of Odisha in the 1880s after his return from Calcutta to Cuttack and his practice as a lawyer. The Puri Jagannath temple affairs of this phase provided him an opportunity to enter into the movement for a regenerated Odisha. (Mohanty 1982:44-45)
In 1878 Raja Divyasimha Deb was convicted of murder and was sentenced to transportation for life. The British Government found an opportunity to intervene in the temple management. But the dowager mother of Divyasimha Deb immediately called in the Royal Court and priests of the temple and announced the ascent to the throne of her five year old grandson Jagannath Jenamani and proclaimed him as Raja Mukunda Deb of Puri. The queen began to manage the affairs of the temple on behalf of the minor Raja. The management was naturally not to the liking of the Government. It was decided that the control and the endowments of the temple were to be vested in a committee of management. Accordingly the Puri Temple Act of 1880 was announced. The legislation was objected by the priests of the temple and the queen submitted her petition to the Government. Her representation went unheeded. On the other hand the local Government instituted a suit in the Court seeking authority to appoint a Receiver for the temple. The Court decided in favour of the Government and the queen was denied the management of the temple. The announcement of the Court’s decision was looked upon as a humiliation to the age-old Odishan tradition. The queen wanted to appeal to the Calcutta High Court but she lacked resources. She made a personal request to Madhusudan Das to fight her case. (Mohanty 1972:39) Madhusudan shouldered the responsibility though everybody thought it was a lost case. As a lawyer he would have been very happy to find better cases; but he concentrated his attention on this issue because he accepted Jagannath as a marker of Odia identity. He considered the decision as an attempt to disrupt Odia national sentiment and he therefore directed his attention to it. He went through the royal records and prepared the case meticulously. He tried to focus attention through articles in the press against the unjust interference of the Government in the matter. He published two interesting letters in the name of Lunatic in *Utkala Dipika* critically presenting his arguments against the suit for the management of the Jagannath temple. (*Utkala Dipika*, March 26 and April 9 of 1887, Dash 1978:367-368) After prolonged deliberations at Calcutta High Court the lower court’s order to appoint a Government Receiver was set aside. Raja Mukunda Deb was reinstated to his authority. This was a victory of Madhusudan Das. *Utkal Dipika* in an interesting focus had thanked Madhusudan for this noble contribution. He had by this great national activity justified the adage *Bipatte Madhusudanam* (Lord Madhusudan helps in the time of distress). His perseverance and skilful handling of the case promoted him to be the greatest Odia nationalist. (*Ibid;* April 30, 1887) By preserving the prestige of Thakur Raja of Puri Madhusudan earned the enormous confidence of the people. Madhusudan accepted Jagannath as the central part of Odia culture. In order to make this conviction firm in the minds of the Odias he recited a poem in the public meeting in the Town Hall of Cuttack in 1928. A part of the poem runs like this -

“Kotie Odia gotie kanthare daka trahi Jagannatha
Andhara ghunchiba nischaya dekhibe Jatira unnati patha
Sudarsana Chakra garaji uthiba Baliara bahutale
Matanka Srianga purbabata heba satru palaihe dare”.

(*Utkala Dipika*, November 17, 1928; Dash 1978:374)

III

Madhusudan Das started to articulate his feelings of Odia identity in the great Odia nationalist forums- *Utkala Sabha* and *Utkala Sammilani*. These two were the most significant forums to present diverse problems of the Odias from the last phase of the 19th century to the first four decades of the 20th century A.D. He was an important part of the *Utkala Sabha* in the 1880s and 1890s. His voice was very powerful in the
As a member and president of the Association Madhusudan took interest on the pressing problems of the union of the different Odia-speaking tracts under the Bengal Government and in this connection his discussion with the missionary Howell was very remarkable. In the letter of 26th/28th January 1904 to Howell Madhusudan as a member of the Association demanded the unification of Odia-speaking tracts under Bengal and not with the Central Provinces or Bihar. (Ibid.) Gokulananda Choudhury, an ardent Odia nationalist, had then developed an opinion to the effect that it was to the advantage of Odisha to be under Central Province administration. (Ibid.) He was also supported by some Odias, but they changed their views and accepted the stand of Madhusudan. Madhusudan’s potent arguments on behalf of the Orissa Association reflected the intense activities of it to highlight Odia problems. He had his own opinion about the people of Odisha. By people of Odisha he did not mean a few pleaders or a few aspirants for titles and honours or a few candidates for employment in the higher grades of Government service. He meant it as Odia nation which included all who were permanent residents of Odisha, whatever their race, nationality or religion. This indicates the nature of Odia identity he was articulating then. Throughout the movement for the reservation of Odia language in Sambalpur during the phase of Utkala Sabha ascendancy Madhusudan was the moving spirit. (Mishra 1979:70) His efforts were crowned with success when the Government of the Central provinces restored Odia as the Court language of Sambalpur with effect from 1 January 1902. (Ibid.) Utkala Sabha was a very limited body. It had no wider link. Madhusudan must have felt that a wider body representing many sections-rural and urban-in Odisha would help in the proper solution of the Odia problems. This led to the birth of Utkala Sammilani(Utkal Union Conference).

The Utkala Sammilani which had its first session in the month of December 1903 came into existence after one year effort in which Madhusudan had a significant role. As presented by Professor G.N. Dash in his recent focus on Madhusudan before the formation of Utkal Sammilani in an institutional form he had prepared a stage for the origin of Odia identity consciousness in different ways not through the national Organisation called Indian National Congress, but my some indirect ways from the beginning of 1903 which were very significant for the formation of Utkala Sammilani. (Dash, Gaganendra Nath 2010:785-788) Lastly on 25th October 1903 Madhusudan called a meeting at Kanika palace. About twenty-five to thirty people of Cuttack were present on that occasion. As proposed by the Raja of Kanika the Raja of Keonjhar became the president of the meeting. (Utkala Dipika, 31st October, 1903; Dash 2002:22-30) Madhusudan presented the purpose of the meeting in the beginning. He said that recently there was a meeting for the formation of Odia Jatiya Samiti(Odia national organisation) at Berhampur and that some people of Cuttack and Sambalpur including himself had participated in it. He proposed in the meeting at Kanika palace that in 1903 there would be a session at Cuttack in which both people from Ganjam and other places in Odisha would participate. In the meeting he also proposed that every year people of different places of Odisha should make sessions at different places where they would discuss their common problems. Gaurishankar Ray, the Editor of Utkala Dipika, had also accepted the proposal of Madhusudan for holding conferences at different places in Odisha to discuss issues affecting the national life and progress. It was
decided on that day that on 30th and 31st December of that year (1903) the proposed session would be held at Cuttack. It was accepted as a national organisation by the Odias. This organisation would discuss problems on the progress of the society, education and industry. It would not take up issues on politics and religion. At the end of the meeting an executive committee was formed for the session. The President of that committee was the Raja of Kanika. Madhusudan became its Secretary. Jayram Das, Samson Rout, Gopal Chandra Praharaj and Abhiram Bhanja became the Joint Secretaries of the committee. (Ibid.) The executive committee had eight sessions from 15th November 1903 to 24th December 1903 for a spectacular success of the first session of the Conference. In the beginning it was decided by the committee that the august session would be presided by Sir Sudhal Deb, the Maharaja of Bamanda. But as he died shortly the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj was invited to be the president of the session. The site of the session was Idga Padia of Cuttack which the Jamindar of the area Nagendranath Ray Choudhury left without rent for three months. The committee decided that the delegates would put on red turbans as symbol of their nationalism. All the arrangements were made by the committee which was actually guided by Madhusudan Das. Madhusudan came to know that by the order of the Government some officers would not participate in the session. Immediately he sent a telegram to the Bengal Government about this problem. The Bengal Government sent a reply that the Government officers would not be forbidden to take part in the conference if it promised not to discuss problems of political agitation. For the successful working of the session student volunteers were employed and this was due to Madhusudan who wanted the youngmen of Odisha to be active for the service of the motherland.

In the first day of the session after the resolutions were passed Madhusudan stood up to deliver a very interesting speech which formed a part of the nationalist discourse. (Ibid.) He stated that “in the fixed ocean there is one image of the moon, but when it flows with waves, many images appear. As I see my brothers my heart is filled with the waves of love and I am very glad to see them. Hindus believe that the eight metals when united become such a metallic substance which does many useful works. Hence this brotherly love would animate the newly created Utkala Sammilani to such an extent that it would undertake many useful and auspicious works. According to History people from different places came to England and settled there. This union helped in the making of the English race. The English people had great contribution to the progress in Europe. We must consider this in the context of our motherland. Now looking at the suffering of mother Utkala who amongst us would not be serious? Hence we all being united would share her suffering and serve her. While in this deep service my brothers must remember a statement of the prophet Muhammad - for the spread of brotherly love one should give up impure element from the heart and allow pure and pious blood into it. My brothers who want to dedicate their lives for the service of the mother Utkala must at first give up self conceit and selfishness. The race or nation is eternal, you and myself have temporary existence. The only way to progress is to give up selfishness. It will be admitted by all that the water of the river and lake coming from different directions will enter into the ocean where it will take one shape and one colour. It will be called the water of the ocean and will take the name of the great ocean (Mahasagara).” (Ibid.) This speech of Madhusudan in the first session of the Utkala Sammilani animated the Odias to go ahead with the mission.
Madhusudan was the Secretary of the reception committee for the second session of the Utkala Sammilani. In order to activise the youngmen of Odisha in the direction of the making of New Odisha he formed a body called Young Utkala Association which rendered great service to the Sammilani of the second year. It became a part of the Sammilani from that session. (Mohanty 1982:55) Madhusudan’s efforts in the organisation of the Utkala Sammilani led to a great awakening in Odisha. The Sammilani became the most important nationalist forum which united the Rajas of different Garjat states in Odisha with the rural landlords and elites. Odiyas got a forum to represent the long standing problem— the amalgamation of different Odia speaking tracts. Existence of all Odiyas within one boundary would help in articulating their identity. The Conference had also another notable object, the economic and industrial regeneration of Odisha and for that Madhusudan was more serious.

Madhusudan himself presided over the 9th session of the Conference which was held at the field near Ramachandi Sahi at Puri on the 29th and 30th December of 1913. (Utkala Dipika, January 3, 1914) As Madhusudan entered into the meeting pendal all the delegates stood up with the slogans— Jai Utkala Janani. There he presented his discourse which animated the delegates present. In his address he said: “If we accept the Conference as a stage of the progress of Utkala we must understand the meaning of the Conference. Like the union of the lifeless objects and animals, human beings have their union. The carpenter unites two pieces of woods. The animals are united due to fear for the enemy. Vapour and wind in union produce water. But vapour goes upward and water goes downward. The individual life of the Conference must perish for the formation of national life. The Conference belongs to the Utkaliyas. Like German and English Utkala is a race. Those who want to glorify by the glory of the past of Utkala and want her prosperity they should have self-examination. Self-examination is very difficult. National objectives cannot be accomplished within one day, one month and one year. It demands time. Life is meant for service to others and the development of the nation. It is of two kinds—individual life and national life. The first is related to the body and worldly events and the second is related to the soul. If someone taunts me for being an Odia, thousands of Odiyas associated with me will be shocked and wounded. It is called the national life. Like an individual a race has defects. At one time Japanese like the Chinese used to keep pigtails and the English identified them as Chinese. This wounded the national sentiment of the Japanese and for that they stopped the practice. A small dog does not fear a powerful tiger at the first sight. He advances towards the tiger. He has no power to kill a tiger. If he tries he has to accept death. Then why does he advance towards the tiger ? He will die, but his group will not be humiliated. Hence in Utkala everybody should look to the prosperity of the national life.

Many people say that India will not have progress without industrial advancement, but such people at first should be industrialist. Individual education and national education are quite different. The national products are more valuable than the handmade products. The Germans have good ears and so they are expert in music. The French have good eyes and so they produce luxurious objects which are very valuable in the world market. Different parts of the body need improvement for the advancement of the nation. The artistic works of Bhubaneswar constitute the glorious heritage of Utkala. The successors of these artists and sculptors of Utkala will get a continuity of the old tradition by continuing the
stone work. But now they are living by cutting stones or by making minor stone objects for household purpose. They need to jump into their glorious past. Of course for that they need time and patience.

This Conference does not belong to one section. We must take up that work by which all Utkaliyas would be benefitted. Whosoever is born in Utkala, Odia, Bengali or Muslim, high or low should try for the development of the nation. Man’s life is for the service of others. This can be learnt from the nourishment of the child by a mother. She wants that like herself the children should dedicate their lives for the cause of others. The unity demonstrated by the predecessors is now present in Jagannatha. Think about the problems of the national life for ten minutes, it will begin national life. The motherland Utkala is fragmented. For the sake of the race self-sacrifice is necessary. The youngmen of Satyabadi school are ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause of the motherland Utkala. You have all been united at the opening gate of Utkala-Jagannatha Puri with great enthusiasm. Hence this Conference is the indicator of future prosperity.”

By presenting this address Madhusudan made the Utkala Sammilani the great nationalist platform of the Odias. His speech served to fan the flame of nationalism through out the natural Odisha. At an extra-ordinary meeting of the Utkala Union Committee held in the month of September 1917 at Madhusudan’s place it was decided that the Utkala Sammilani should have a paper of its own to represent its views and aims and objects. (Ibid. September 22, 1917) The Conference had not been able to possess an organ of its own. Madhusudan had long wished for it, but for various reasons he was not able to do anything in the way to give a start. The name of the paper which was to focus the activities of the Utkala Sammilani was “The Oriya”. Madhusudan became its editor. It continued till 1919 as the mouthpiece of Utkala Sammilani. For many years Madhusudan by his active participation in the Utkala Sammilani and by asserting the Odia issues in the paper “The Oriya” really articulated Odia identity.

IV

Economic aspect was a significant part of the articulation of Odia identity in the first phase of the 20th century A.D. Madhusudan was well aware of this side. In his quest for a New Odisha he wanted great economic progress of the Odias. Although Odias were treated as impoverished in the last part of the 19th century, Odisha’s economic potentiality was well known for her unrivalled filigree industry. There were Silversmiths in Cuttack who were prized in the Cuttack Exhibition for sixty years from A.D. 1840 to 1900. (Utkala Dipika, 24th November 1900) But this trade suffered a lot in the last decade of the 19th century which was noticed by Madhusudan. He wanted to give an impetus to this old industry of the Odias by holding a shop (Orissa Art Wares) at his place at Cuttack by training the karigars and encouraging them all the more by holding an exhibition of their finer products and awarding them medals. The Orissa Art Wares of Madhusudan began from about A.D. 1898. (Ibid.) Madhusudan wanted this industry to be on the progressive stage for asserting Odia’s economic potency and it would be a marker of Odia identity. As early as A.D. 1900 Orissa Art Wares got to be modernized by the effort of Madhusudan. (Ibid.) When Lord Curzon came to Puri in 1900 in the month of December Madhusudan presented to him a raupyadhara (silver casket) which would contain the greeting note of the Odias. (Ibid. December 22, 1900) This silver casket was made in the Art Wares of
Madhusudan and was very elegant and was indicative of his inventive genius. The bottom of the casket was a silver filigree plate. Upon it on both the sides were placed two elephants made of ivory and in the middle in a golden leaf was painted the image of Jagannath temple. In the back of the elephants there was a long silver box and it had its own system to open and close down. On one side of the handle (dhankuni) of the box the image of Lakshmi and on the other side the image of Saraswati were painted on gold leaf. The silver plate of the two sides of the box contain the painted image of Kaliyadalana Srikrishna in gold leaf. This presentation to Lord Curzon in the last year of the 19th century by the considerable care and supervision of Madhusudan indicates that he was more careful to present the economic potentiality of the Odias who were considered by the outsiders to be in a period of quiescence. He wanted to communicate to the Viceroy Lord Curzon that the Odias were vital, energetic and full of creativity and that they could not fall into a sudden stupor.

Madhusudan established the Orissa Art Wares to regenerate the spirit of manufacturing indigenous goods of high quality for export. A separate school of Art Wares was attached to the factory with hundred trainees who produced beautiful articles. He also provided training to hundred fifty weavers from his factory for production of handloom fabrics with modern shuttles. His Art Wares was highly admired by the British officers like Charles Elliot, Webster, Maddox, U.S. Club, W. Lawrence and E.B. Harris. The fixation of golden star in the silver filigree object in the Art Wares of Madhusudan was a great artistic work and was very elegant. The automatic Ottordan with Golab pass Pandan combined patent. The plate was meant for pan, the roses were receptacles of otter and the peacock threw out the rose water automatically where button was pressed. The roses and peacocks had gold stars. The plate and roses could be removed and the plate could be used for other purposes. (Utkala Dipika, 24th November 1900)

Another important aspect of his economic activity was the Utkala Tannery. Its fame was not only confined to Odisha, but to different parts of India, England and Japan as early as 1923. Its popularity was due to the continuous efforts of Madhusudan. He wanted this Tannery as a marker of Odia’s economic identity. It was established by him near Cuttack Railway Station over an area of about fifty acres of land and a great experiment was made by him to make the best leather goods by utilising native objects like the use of lizard skin. In order to make it a profitable business concern, Madhusudan was ready in 1923 to give it for its management to a company. It was of course registered as a limited company in 1913. It started from about 1903 and he spent huge amount of money for it. By his own effort he made the factory to stand on a firm footing and wanted its progress for Odia’s economic prosperity. In 1923 the Utkala Tannery had a capital of Rs 80000. It was expected to produce leather goods in huge quantities and to evoke the wonder and admiration of the west.

Madhusudan took up the economic and industrial regeneration of Utkala as a part of his programme. Economic and industrial regeneration depend on the good wishes, earnest efforts, industrial and scientific education of the people and mutual co-operation which were communicated to the Odias by Madhusudan through the Utkala Sammileni. The Cuttack Industrial Exhibition which had started from 1898 and which was inaugurated in 1903 by K.G. Gupta
(the Commissioner of Odisha) in the sixth year was a great indication of Madhusudan’s efforts for economic and industrial progress of Odisha. In the address Gupta praised Madhusudan by stating that there was no lack of skill and the “hand hath not lost its cunning” in Odisha was clear from the success which Madhusudan Das had been able to achieve with local artisans. (Ibid: 10th January, 1903)

Thus Madhusudan for constructing Odia identity and later on for articulating it sought to revive Odishan traditional crafts to a considerable extent. No doubt it mobilised the Odias in the programme of economic and industrial regeneration for a stable Odisha.

V

Madhusudan had excellent ideas for mobilising the Odias for the assertion of their identity. His speeches on different occasions starting from the Utkala Sabha to Utkala Sammilani, his speeches on other public platforms in the first two decades of the 20th century possessed an extra-ordinary appeal for the enthusiastic Odias. He spoke words which could never be spoken and kindled a fire which could never be extinguished and aroused a people from long slumber. In his speeches he imagined the glorious past of Odisha and presented it before the Odias. He was in the forefront of the followers of imagined Odia identity. Following the Andersonian view about nationalism we may state here that the imagined communities of the Odias were guided by Madhusudan Das for asserting the cultural domain of their identity. (Anderson1983) He reconstructed the identity of the Odias where he felt it disrupted. He inspired the youngmen of Odisha by associating them with the activities of the Utkala Sammilani. An important evidence of his articulation of nationalistic attitude for the youngmen can be collected from Utkala Dipika. (Utkala Dipika, 10th November 1917). In 1917 a unique Dasahara festival was celebrated by the School students at Cuttack. While the image was on the way to immersion the students prepared a photo sketch (Chitra Patta) of fragmented Utkala which was the idea of Madhusudan Das in which mother Utkala was in one direction and her banished daughter in another direction. In the gap there was sea. It means the sea of political administration (Colonial power) had kept the daughter separated from her mother. Both mother and daughter were looking to one another, but the daughter was banished. She had no way to return to her mother land. The young group kept the photo sketch before Durga image and shouted with the slogan “Jay Utkal Jay” which was widespread.

Inspired by Madhusudan the Odia nationalists in their quest for a complete Odisha viewed the terrible image of Durga (Chhinamasta) in the deformed and scattered image of Utkala Mata. They believed that in near future the fragmented body of their mother Utkala would take a full shape in the form of the Cheerful Bhubaneswari image worshipped on the occasion of Durgapuja. (Asha, 2nd October 1916)

Madhusudan articulated the feelings of Odia identity through-out his life. But the most important phase of this articulation was till 1919. Although he had his voice after that year, the intensity began to lesson. It is a point of enquiry how the leadership of Madhusudan, the Uncrowned king of Odisha in 1914, shifted to other groups. It invites an interpretation of the issues of Odia identity (regional identity) and the wider context of Indian identity (Mahabharatiya Jatiyatabada).

Till the 13th session of the Utkala Sammilani Madhusudan’s activities relating to the
assertion of Odia identity expanded. In March 1918 Madhusudan called three great meetings at Balikuda, Jagatsinghpur and Biridi. (Asha, March 25, 1918) Every meeting was attended by thousands of people. His purpose was to intimate the rural people with the aims and objectives of Utkala Sammilani as a remarkable step to establish Odia identity on a firm basis. His arrival in these meetings was responded with slogans from the people “Jay Utkala Jay”. In the beginning day of the 13th session of Utkala Sammilani Madhusudan at the request of the president delivered the initial address of welcome. He accepted the meeting place of Utkala Sammilani as a mandap of mother worship. The meetings organised by Utkala Sammilani were designed for the worship of mother Utkala. He uttered- ‘Janani janmabhumsica Svargadapi gariyasi’ in the address and explained the idea-first we have to think of Janani (Mother), second Janmabhumi (Motherland) and third Svarga. (Heaven). Everyman’s life is like a wave (Srota). In the beginning of this srota there comes Janani, in the middle Janmabhumi (Motherland) and lastly Svarga. The life of man begins with mother, work field is Janmabhumi (Motherland) and hence the reward of work-the work in the motherland is superior to heaven. He insisted in that address to worship and pray for Utkalamata. (Ibid; April 8, 1918)

It was after the 14th session of the Utkala Sammilani there was a desire of some Odias to convert the Utkala Sammilani into a wider platform for the discussion of Gandhian strategy for the national movement. The Sammilani was originated for the great and noble purpose of the unification of the Odia-speaking tracts. Madhusudan and his associates wanted to reconstruct Odisha both geographically and culturally. They represented a generation of Odianess which did not want issues of politics in their nationalist platform Utkala Sammilani. But the Utkala Sammilani of Madhusudan and others in 1920 was a young entity of 16 years and the time was in favour of a multinational movement called the Great Indian National Movement. Hence many Odias like Gopabandhu Das and his associates eagerly wanted to make it a platform to discuss the burning political issues of the time. The discourse of Great Indian Nationalism (Mahabharatiya Jatiyatabada) started to dominate over the small question of Odisha state formation on linguistic basis. The demand for the union of Odia-speaking areas was accepted by the senior groups represented by Madhusudan. The Junior groups represented by Gopabandhu fully accepted the transformation of Utkala Sammilani into a platform for the spread of Indian Nationalism against colonialism. The Odia Newspapers like Asha represented the Odiaism of Madhusudan and did not appreciate to root out the primary motive of the Sammilani for the sake of the application of the Non-Cooperation programme for Indian Nationalism. (Asha, December 27 1920: Dash 1984: 111-114) Gopabandhu himself in his Satyabadi explained his discourse of national identity against the regional identity of the Odias and even persistently demanded the progress of the Odias through the wave of Indian Nationalism. (Dash 1921/1328 Sala:31-34) From the Chakradharpur session of the Sammilani Madhusudan disassociated himself with its activities, but continued his primary purpose-the unification of the Odia-speaking areas by many other ways.

The supervision by Madhusudan in Utkala Sammilani, his efforts to widen the constructive programmes of the Sammilani for the reconstruction of Odisha were the most significant aspects of the study of modern Odisha History. Madhusudan was best evaluated in his time not only by the Odias, but also by the Bengalis in
Bangabani. While writing on Sir Ashutosh Mukhopadhyay Rajendralal Vidyabhushan stated that Madhusudan(Purushashreshthha) was the home tutor of Ashutosh and that he used to correct the exercises which were kept by Ashutosh carefully in his library till his death. Ashutosh used to have a look at them on many occasions before he died. The Bengali version of this focus has been presented below for an estimate of Madhusudan in his time;

Madhusudan Ashutosher ye eksarsai-guli sanshodhan kariyaditen, seyi khataguli adyavadhi Ashutosher sajatna-rakshitam almiray vidyaman/ Ashutosh majhe majhe taha dekhiten.

(Bangabani, 3rd Year, No.5, Sala-1339, p.599-603)

The Odia writings of Madhusudan reflect his conscious attempt to project Odisha with spectacular pride at a crucial phase of the history of India-in-Making and they also articulate his innermost desire to see Odisha in full form of progress.(Dash, Debendra Kumar 2010) Thus for his multi-dimensional activities and programmes Madhusudan Das has remained an unmistakable symbol of Odia identity till to-day.

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