

# AN ELAPSED HISTORY OF COLONIAL ODISHA--- A TRIBUTE TO THE HEROIC SAGA OF RATHI SAMANTA SINGHAR OF KHALLIKOTE

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*Abstract* : The Khurda Rebellion of 1817 in was an anti-colonial peasant uprising of Odisha vehemently challenged the oppressive and exploitive character of the British, their mal-administration and unwanted economic policy of rude taxation and rigorous collection system and monopoly over salt. Apart that the prolonged discontentment of Ryots and Paiks of Khurda, the merciless murder of Jai Rajguru, colonial ill-treatment to Raja Mukunda Deva-II and Bakshi Jagabandhu coupled with the ruthless suppression of Khurda rebellion of 1804-05 all these factors compelled for outbreak of the biggest anti-imperialist mass struggle. However, this peasant uprising obviously had shaken the foundation of the British rule in the eastern part of India. It was not an isolated one but received unconditional assistance from the neighbor Zamindars and selfless supports of patriotic people of undivided Ganjam, Boudh-Kondhmal, Cuttack, Puri district. However, the above narration is corroborated by series of scholars in their research work. But none has focused about the heroic contribution of Khallikote militia of Ganjam during Paik rebellion. Hence, the prime intension of this paper is to talk about briefly patriotic fever of the people of Khallikote along with the heroic saga of Rathi Samantasinghara.

Key words—Paik, Khurda, Bakshi Jagabandhu, Khallikote, colonial

## I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Paik Rebellion of 1817 in Khurda was unique, organized anti-colonial armed upsurge of Odisha ushered a magnificent era in the people's movement of Odishan historiography. The oppressive and exploitive character of the British, their mal-administration and bellicose temperament, unwanted economic policy of rude taxation and rigorous collection system, monopoly over salt, prolonged discontent of Ryots and Paiks of Khurda, the merciless murder of Jai Rajguru, ill-treatment of the British to Raja Mukunda Deva-II and Bakshi Jagabandhu coupled with the ruthless suppression of Khurda rebellion of 1804-05 all these blood boiling factors compelled for outbreak of the biggest anti-imperialist mass struggle. However, this peasant uprising obviously had shaken the foundation of the British rule in the eastern part of India. Even though anti-colonial agitations were frequently held by the Rajas of Paralakhemundi, Ghumsur, Khallikote and Mohuri much before the appearance of Khurda Paik Rebellion of 1817, they failed in spite of stubborn resistance because of their policy of isolation. It is significant to mention that the Paik Rebellion of 1817 was not confined in a limited territory but, received unconditional assistance from the neighbor Zamindars of Ghumsar, Seragarh, Boudh, Nayagarh, Dasapalla, Kujanga, Kanika, Karipur, Golra, Balrampur, Budnakera, and Rupsa. Apart that, the patriotic people of neighbor areas like Pipili, Gopa, Tangi, Bolagada, Banapur, Ranapur, Athamallick, Bharatpara, Balakati, Panchapalli, Harisapur rendered selfless support. However, the above narration is corroborated by series of scholars in their research work. But none has focused about the heroic contribution of Khallikote militia of Ganjam during

Paik rebellion. Hence, the prime intension of this paper is to talk about briefly patriotic fever of the people of Khallikote along with the heroic saga of Rathi Samantasinghara who sacrificed his life while fighting with the British in the historic Paik Rebellion of Khurda.

In fact, the exciting drama of Paik Rebellion of 1817 was inaugurated at Banapur with the support of four hundred Kondhs of Ghumsur area.<sup>1</sup> the insurgents attacked local police station, killed hundred men and looted Rs. 1500/- at Banapur. In this connection I feel it proper to put forth wide reference of Rathi Samantasinghara who played decisive role and sacrificed his life for the cause of motherland otherwise history of Paik Rebellion would remain incomplete.

The year 1817 is very momentous in the political history of Odisha. It witnessed the emergence of historic Paik Rebellion in Khurda. While the British administration was busy to control the political turmoil, meanwhile Khallikote was in a state of severe famine caused untold starvation and high rate of mortality due to unsympathetic action of the British. The empty bellied Paiks of Khallikote region had directly responded the step-motherly tyranny of the British for such catastrophe, generated Paikmeli consisting of Five hundred militia guided by one Rathi Samantasinghar of Chatragada chalked out plan to exterminate the British rule from their soil. Khallikote, Pathara, Keshapur, Panlkala these hilly invincible tracts become the center of rebellion. They reacted in a hard tune, created stumbling bloc everywhere. However, it is significant to mention that four hundred Kondhs of Ghumsur and five hundred Panas of Khallikote region played outstanding role in the Paik rebellion. They marched to Banapur, looted treasury, set fire on local police station accompanying with the Paiks of Khurda. From Banpur the rebels marched to Khurda. On the way at Rathipur they murdered Charan Patnaik. It is significant to mention that Mr. Bell followed the policy of hostage to control the law and order situation. Once a women of Khallikote region whose husband was a rebel patriot was taken to Banpur under the custody of Bell. It was reported to her husband through a messenger that his wife will be released soon if he would act as a spy of the British during search operation.

From Khurda the rebel patriots with heroic temperament marched to Panchagarh killed Diwan Jagabandhu Patnaik and Sadasiba Roy, while Mukta Deo luckily escaped to Cuttack. At Bolgarh the rebels were joined by Bakshi. E. Impey did his best to suppress the rebellion but failed due to guerilla warfare adopted by the Paiks. The retreat of Impey made the Paiks more bold and paved unprecedented enthusiasm and spirit. The wives of Bakshi named Chandana and Lakshmi encouraged Paiks such a high extent that the insurgents shot dead Lieutenant Faris at Gangapara skirmish along with a native Subedar. To control the situation Lieutenant Prideaux landed at Khurda. He came to know that five thousands of Paiks led by Bakshi Jagabandhu along with some countryside women headed by two wives of Bakshi were coming to charge him. Being apprehended, Lieutenant Prideaux immediately escaped to Cuttack via Pipili leaving behind all his belongings. On 12<sup>th</sup> April 1817 Bakshi with Paiks and Kondhs entered in to Puri through Lokanathghat and burnt down government buildings promulgated Raja Mukunda Deva-II as their King. On the other hand Major General Gabriel Martindell followed ruthless measures to arrest the rebels. Martial law was proclaimed in Pipili, Khurda and Puri. On 16<sup>th</sup> April 1817 AD when Captain Le- Fevere proceeded to Puri, Bakshi and his supporters tactfully fled to Banpur. The British imprisoned Raja Mukunda Deva-II and his son Ramachandra Deva placed in the fort of Barabati where Raja Mukunda Deva died on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1817AD. From Puri the uprising spread to Kujanga and Chandabali. The Raja of Kujanga Madhusudhan Sandha joined hands with the rebels.<sup>2</sup> Captain Cannet with troops launched to Kujanga to chastise the king. Finally, the ruler surrendered on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1817 and helped to the government in arresting the two rebels such as Narayan Paramguru and Ramadeva Pattajoshi.

Meanwhile, the insurgents heard that Kalapahara, a man of Keshpur acting as the British spy. To teach that notorious fellow, Rathi Samantasinghara, the Bisoyi of Chatragada and his followers arrived at Keshpur in February 1818. But, the traitor Kalapahara cunningly fled from the spot. The infuriated followers of Rathi Samantasinghara looted the house of Kalapahara and alarmed the people not to cooperate him.<sup>3</sup> In the month of May 1818 AD colonial Government made proposal for surrender of Rathi Samantasimhar. One Santha Patnaik on behalf of Government took initiation for surrender of Rathi. On the other hand Rathi agreed to surrender through Sudarsana Narindra Singh Dalabehera. Accordingly, Santha Patnaik communicated the letter of Mr. Bell to Sudarsan Narindra Singh Dalabehera of village Putra for mediation. Mr. Bell sent a huge troop to Keshpur to arrest insurgents. Rathi tactfully escaped to Parikud by crossing Chilika. The Company adopted merciless measures to suppress the rebellion and also announced reward for arrest of rebels. Rathi finally decided to stay at Pathara in adjacent to Khallikote with some of his friends. The message communicated to the Company through air. Without delay the colonial troop ghearoued village Pathara. In spite of the British alert, the rebels skillfully escaped on the spot. Then he decided to stay at Pankala village to avoid arrest. It is a matter of irony that one local traitor named Gouranga Patnaik reported the whereabouts of Rathi Samantasinghara to the Company. Immediately, the colonial troop landed at village Buddhi near Chatragada on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1818. After a thorough search the colonial force arrested Rathi Samantasinghar including his four followers such as two sons Guman Singh and Satyabadi, his orderly Lokanath Paik and Paramananda Bisoyi who sheltered in a ramshackle temple of said village received imprisonment<sup>4</sup>. Traitor Gouranga Patnaik rewarded Rs 50/- from Government. However, the British could able to suppress the uprising in Banapur, Tangi, Bolagarh, Khallikote, Panchapalli, Gopa and Pipili<sup>5</sup>.

The rebellion took violent turn under the leadership of Bakshi Jagabandhu. The situation become so serious that the colonial government on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1819 with much honour proclaimed full pardon to Bakshi along with a monthly allowance subject to condition if Bakshi would surrender voluntarily. Even then he did not surrender. Government raided the alleged spot. Bakshi fled from Khurda to Ghumsur of Ganjam and stayed few days at Ankulo a deep forest area situates under the jurisdiction of Ghumsar Zamindary in spite of strict vigilant of the British. They could able to seize one box left by Bakshi containing 01ft. length, ½ ft. wide, 03inch height filled with a golden necklace of pearl canopy, an art ware gold ring, two gold ear ring, two armler, hundred sika seal, Rs. 100/- Kaptani.<sup>6</sup>

During the second phase of the revolt from 1818-1824 Bakshi received sufficient assistance from Srikara Bhanja, the Raja of Ghumsur, Shyam Sundar Singh Deo, Raja of Seragarh, Binayak Singha Mandhata, Raja of Nayagarh, Chandra Sekhar Bhanja, Raja of Boudh. It was reported that Jagabandhu's family (wife Chitramani, son Gopinath Vidyadhar) lived at Sergarh of Ganjam and his chief queen and other members were residing in Ganjam town.<sup>7</sup> She has been sheltered by one Birendra Patnaik of Ganjam. Bakshi got the help of the ryots and Raja Srikar Bhanja of Ghumsur because the Raja of Khurda and Ghumsur and the chief official of both the Zamindari had matrimonial relationship.<sup>8</sup> At that time Raja Srikar Bhanja was busy in political turmoil to safe his fate. Bakshi Jagabandhu remained underground at Durgaprasad in the jurisdiction of Ghumsur Zamindary.<sup>9</sup> The British stationed one Subadar and hundred soldiers at Gahangu, one Subedar and fourty soldiers at Nuagam, Jilundi and Jaganathprasad to arrest Bakshi. The British searched teeth and nail in Ghumsar but, failed to arrest Bakshi. Finally, the Raja of Boudh was threatened by the British to assist him. Facing on cannot but situation the Raja of Boudh sent Ramavamsi Purohit to arrest Bakshi. At that time Bakshi was at Atalagada hill which was situated in between Chakapada and Ordesh.<sup>10</sup> The Raja of Dasapalla reported everything before the

arrival of Ramavamsi Purohit. To save his skin Bakshi left that place. However, Akwin Saheb arrested the wife of Bakshi Radhamani Jemadei and Chitramani Jemadei, son Gopinath Vidyadhar, adopted son Shyam Sundar Roy, adopted daughter Padmadei, niece Uparnadei, Gurabari (concubine of the brother of Bakshi) total seven members of his family from Ganjam and Sergarh and sent them to the fort of Barabati. A patriot named Birendra Patnaik of Ganjam who provided shelter to the family members of Bakshi was also arrested. One traitor Phakir Patnaik of Ganjam rewarded Rs 200 by the British and two others received Rs 76 for their assistance in connection with the arrest of the family members of Bakshi. At last the family members of Bakshi released in November 1820.<sup>11</sup>

From Ghumsur Bakshi fled to Sergarh Zamindary of Ganjam, ruled by his father-in-law Raja Hari Krushna Singhdeo. Then he fled to Boudh and even to Sambalpur State in July 1819. Next, he escaped to Ghumsur again. The most significant fact which is still overlooked by scholars that Bakshi went to Khallikote for hide and the Raja of Khallikote Jagannath Mardaraj provided shelter to Bakshi and his followers' secretly.<sup>12</sup> However, Bakshi stayed at Rambha of Khallikote Zamindary for some time to avoid arrest of the British.<sup>13</sup>

Then, he escaped to Nayagarh. When Government came to know that Bakshi was in Nayagarh he immediately made strict instruction to the Raja of Nayagarh to surrender Bakshi by hook or crook with in a stipulated period of four months failing which he would loss his estate. Meanwhile, the Raja of Nayagarh Binayak Singh Mandhata expired in 1823AD. The new Raja Brajabandhu Singh Mandhata was a supporter of the British. He ordered his Bebartia Baraju Paikroy to trace out Bakshi as soon as possible. In 1823AD Government confiscated his property. In presence of Waz Muhmmad, Baraju Paikroy and the Collector of Khurda, Bakshi surrendered at Nayagarh palace garden on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1825 AD. Mention may be appropriate regarding the name of Waz Muhmmad and Fathe Muhmmad two Zagirdar brothers of Maludu had close loyalty with the British. Waz Muhmmad the Sirastadar of Superintendent of Tributary Mahal was deputed to accompany him to Cuttack. He was in a palanquin with extreme regard as dignitary then housed in a rented house in Cuttack. Bakshi signed the agreement on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1825. He was not allowed to leave Cuttack without sanction of the Commissioner. Accordingly, he stayed there with his family with pension of Rs. 150/- per month. Bakshi died on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January 1829 AD at the age of 49 years <sup>14</sup>left behind legal heir Gopinath Vidyadhar a minor boy of nine years old. After trial Nityananda Patnaik and Nine others were sentenced to 14 years jail. Natabar Sunder Roy and 102 (123) were deported to Andaman island for life.<sup>15</sup> Sri Ram Mallick and others were banished from the province. Similar punishment of imprisonment and deportation were given to Madhu Rout and 26 others. Sri Bhagabat Mohanty, Bamadeva Pattajoshi, Narayan Paramaguru, Ballabha Roy were given life imprisonment. Parsuram Routroy and Sachhidananda Patnaik rewarded death sentence as alleged offence of murder of Charan Patnaik and Sadasiva Roy.<sup>16</sup>

At the part of conclusion it can rightly be observed that the history of modern Odisha is still neither liberate from colonial influence nor well judged in a scientific manner. Basing on the Report of Commissioner of Enquiry of Walter Ewer on dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 1818 AD, it would be safe to call the revolt of 1817 AD as peasant rebellion rather Paik Rebellion as stated by a group of the British historians like Sterling, G. Toynbee. In this paper the intension of the author is not to discuss the causes, nature and consequences of the Revolt of 1817AD but to highlight the gallant deed and dedication of the freedom loving patriots of Khallikote headed by Rathi Samantasinghar of Chatragada whose entire family dedicated their life to safeguard the sovereignty of motherland during the Khurda Rebellion of 1817. However, the impact of the Revolt of 1817, heroic tale of Bakshi Jagabandhu, valiant saga of Rathi Samantasinghar coupled with the adventurous role of five hundred Panas with their King Jagannath Mardaraj

(the younger brother of Ramakrushna Mardaraj) of Khallikote created extra-ordinary enthusiasm, robust patriotic fever and the flame of nationalism in Khallikote. In short it can honestly be spoken that Ganjam had lion share in the Khurda Paik rebellion of 1817. Warm salute must be given to the son of the soil of Ghumsar Zamindary, Khallikote Zamindary and Sergarh Zamindary of Ganjam district who supported and sheltered Bakshi Jagabandhu unconditionally and valiantly for the cause of the motherland in spite of British atrocity. It is an irony of history that such a great historic episode has not been evaluated properly till date which still awaits high depth study.

## 2. Data and Sources of Data

For this study both primary and secondary data has been collected. Historical source materials and research data like Official records, contemporary literary works, structured interview with some old age person of Khalikote region to get information extensively collected both from achieve and non-achieve sources and of historical analysis.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of study is modern scientific methodology meant for historical research. This includes Sources of Data, personal interview with local people for collection of relevant information. The research work carefully maintains the value of word economy.

## 4. Acknowledgment

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