

ROLE OF GANJAM IN THE KHURDA REVOLT OF 1817 IN ODISHA

Dr. Sujit Kumar Panda

Lecturer-in-History,

Govt. Jr. College, Phulbani,

Dist- Kandhamal, Odisha, India

Abstracts: The birth of the Paik Rebellion of 1817 in Khurda was an anti-colonial armed upsurge ushered a magnificent era in the people's movement of Odishan historiography. The oppressive and tyrannical rule of the British, their exploitive character and bellicose temperament, unwanted economic policy and colonial monopoly over salt, excessive taxation and rigorous collection system, prolonged discontent of ryots and Paiks of Khurda, the merciless murder of Jai Rajguru, ill-treatment to Raja Mukunda Deva-II and Bakshi Jagabandhu coupled with the hardnosed suppression of Khurda rebellion of 1804-05 all these blood boiling factors enforced for the eruption of an 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 emergence of Khurda Paik Rebellion of 1817, they failed in spite of mulish resistance due to policy of isolation. It is significant to mention that the Paik Rebellion of 1817 was not confined in a limited territory but, received unconditional support from the neighbour Zamindars of Ghumsar, Seragarh, Boudh, Nayagarh, Dasapalla, Kujanga, Kanika, Karipur, Golra, Balrampur, Budnaker, and Rupsa. Apart that, the patriotic people of Pipili, Gopa, Tangi, Bolagada, Banapur, Ranapur, Athamallick, Bharatpara, Balakati, Panchapalli, Harispur rendered altruistic support. However, the above narration is corroborated by a series of scholars in their research work. But, none has critically focused on the heroic contribution of Ganjam during Paik rebellion. Hence, the prime intension of this paper is to talk about briefly patriotic fever of the people of Ganjam who sacrificed a lot during the historic Paik Rebellion of Khurda.

Key words—Paik, Khurda, Khallikote, Colonial

1. INTRODUCTION:

The year 1817 was momentous in the political history of Odisha witnessed the appearance of historic Paik Rebellion in Khurda. When the British administration was busy to control the political turmoil, meanwhile Ganjam was in a state of severe famine caused untold starvation and high rate of mortality due to unsympathetic action and mal-administration of the British. The empty bellied Paiks of Khallikote, Seragarh, Ghumsar region of Ganjam district had directly responded the step-motherly tyranny of the British for such catastrophe, generated Paikmeli. The exciting drama of Paik Rebellion of 1817 was inaugurated at Banapur with the energetic support of four hundred Kondhs of Ghumsur region.¹ It is significant to mention that like four hundred Kondhs of Ghumsur, five hundred Panas of Khallikote region portrayed tremendous role in the Paik rebellion. One Rathi Samantasinghar of Chatragada took leadership to exterminate the British rule from their soil. Khallikote, Pathara, Keshapur, Pankala these invincible tracts become the center of rebellion. They reacted in a hard tune, created stumbling bloc everywhere. 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. Mr. Bell followed the policy of hostage to control the law and order situation. Once, a woman 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.

It has been known from an Odia article named “Surasingh Martha- Paik Biplaba ra Prabartak” written by Sri Sachidananda Mishra of Chhatrapur published in Jhankar Volume -53, Number-8 that Paik rebellion was started first in Mohury Zamindary of Ganjam under the leadership of Surasingh Martha in February 1817 AD. Then it spread to Khurda at the end of month March through Ghumsar and Banpur. Basing on the letter of 18th August 1817 by W.E. Baliey of Bengal Presidency Sri Mishra has stated the aforesaid view. The said letter reveals that “In the beginning of the month of April last the Government received intelligence from the Magistrate of Cuttack that a body of four hundred men dominated by Kondh and Chooars of Ghumsar of Ganjam had entered the Pergunnah of Khurda in the district of Cuttack. In here they have been joined by Jagabandoo Roy.” On the basis of this letter Sri Mishra has opined that by the beginning of April the Magistrate of Cuttack reported that mainly the Kondhs and Sabaras of Ghumsar numbering four hundred entered in to Kandh Pergunnah and that Jagabandhu Roy joined with them from there. According to Mishra Kondh and Sabaras in the letter were described as Chooars. However, Sri Mishra accepted the Sabaras of Mohry Zamindary were described as Chooars in the letter. We cannot overlook the view of Sri Mishra on historical point of view. Generally, the Sabaras are called as Soura. The word Soura might be come from the Mundari word ‘Sora’ means hide under tree. The word ‘Suari’ as mentioned in the account of Pliny, a renowned Roman geographer presumed by the scholars as no other then Sabara tribe. The ‘Purna Chandra Bhasakosa’ refers the word Chooar as invincible hill tribe. However, the word Chooar is supposed to be the misspelled of the word Soura or Sora by the British who treated them as bad character. It is true that the background of the revolt in Mohury Zamindary was similar with Khurda revolt. The Company in 1810 AD sold Mohury Zamindary to one Bandama Chelmaya, a servant in the Collector’s office at an amount of Rs. 40,000/- on lease.² The arbitrary action of the Government created hue and cry everywhere in Mohury. An agitation broke out in Mohuri against the Company rule. The Sabar Paiks of Mohury under the leadership of Sabara Singh Martha or Surasingh Martha originally known as Benudhar Maharatha rose in revolt. They demanded Majhia Deo to be their Zamindar. The Company rule in Ganjam began to be traumatized during the Pindari raid in February 1817 AD. In such crucial situation Surasingh Martha wanted to free Mohury from Bandama Chelmaya. On 19th February 1817 rebels under active support of Sursingh Martha plundered twenty carts loads of paddy and set fire on the town of Berhampur.³ H. Spottiswood the then Collector of Ganjam made strict supervision to suppress the revolt. In 1819 AD the colonial troops occupied Sirkoot successfully captured Sursingh Martha and sent him to Gooty jail as a captive where he died in April 1820.⁴ Sri Mishra said that Surasingh Martha was supported by Srikara Bhanja, the Raja of Ghumsar. The Kondhs of Ghumsar along with the Sabaras of Mohury proceeded towards Banapur and reached at Banpur by the end of March 1817 AD and supported Bakshi Jagabandhu. But, the view of Dr. Pravat Mukharji a renowned historian is significant to mention here. He commented that the Chooars are the Bhumija inhabitants of Jangal mahal of Midnapur. In 1799 AD history reveals that there was a Chooar insurrection in the Midnapur district. The name Chooar was subsequently applied to all bad characters.⁵

From Khurda the patriots with heroic spirit 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 critical 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 12th 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 steps to arrest the rebels. Martial law was proclaimed in Pipili, Khurda and Puri. On 16th April 1817 AD when Captain Le-Fevere proceeded to Puri, Bakshi and his supporters diplomatically 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 30th November 1817AD. From Puri the uprising spread to Kujanga and Chandabali. The Raja of Kujanga Madhusudhan Sandha joined hands with the rebels.⁶ Captain Cannet with troops launched to Kujanga to chastise the king. Finally, the ruler surrendered on 2nd October 1817 and helped to the Government in arresting the two rebels such as Narayan Paramguru and Ramadeva Pattajoshi.

In February 1818, the insurgents under the leadership of Rathi Samanasimhar, the Bisoyi of Chatragada attacked Kalapahara of Keshpur who acted as a British spy. But, the traitor Kalapahara sneakily fled from the spot. The infuriated followers of Rathi Samantasinghara looted the house of Kalapahara and alarmed the people not to cooperate him.⁷ In the month of May 1818 AD colonial Government made a proposal for surrender of Rathi Samantasimhar. One Santha Patnaik on behalf of Government took initiative for surrender of Rathi Samantasimhar. Rathi Samantasimhar also agreed to surrender before the Government 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 ruthless measures to repress the rebellion and also announced reward for arrest of rebels. Rathi Samantasinghara finally decided to stay at Pathara in adjacent to Khallikote with some of his followers. 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 27th August 1818 AD. 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 imprisonment⁸. 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.

The rebellion took violent turn under the leadership of Bakshi Jagabandhu. The situation become so serious that the colonial government on 5th February 1819 AD with much honour proclaimed full pardon to Bakshi Jagabandhu 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 armlet, hundred sika seal, Rs. 100/- Kaptani.⁹

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.¹⁰ 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 Zamindaries had matrimonial relationship.¹¹ At that time Raja Srikar Bhanja was busy in political turmoil to save his fate. Bakshi Jagabandhu remained underground at Durgaprasad in the jurisdiction of Ghumsur Zamindary.¹² The British stationed one Subadar and hundred soldiers at Gahangu, one Subedar and forty soldiers at Nuagam, Jilundi and Jaganathprasad to arrest Bakshi. The British searched teeth and nail in Ghumsur but, failed to arrest Bakshi. Finally, the Raja of Boudh was threatened by the British to assist him. Facing on can't 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.¹³ 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 1820.¹⁴

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.¹⁵ However, Bakshi stayed at Rambha of Khallikote Zamindary for some time to avoid arrest of the British.¹⁶ Then, he escaped to Nayagarh. The Government came to know that Bakshi was in Nayagarh. The British without delay issued 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 Bebartha 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 25th 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 27th 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 24th January 1829 AD at the age of 49 years ¹⁷left 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.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

At the part of conclusion it can rightly be observed that the history of modern Odisha is still neither liberated from colonial influence nor well judged in a scientific manner. Basing on the Report of Commissioner of Enquiry of Walter Ewer on dated 13th 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 1817 AD but to highlight the contribution of Ganjam to provide shelter to Bakshi Jagabandhu during Paik Rebellion. 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 and four Kondhas of Ghumsar region created extra-ordinary enthusiasm, robust patriotic fever and the flame of nationalism in Ganjam. 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:

Both Primary and Secondary data has been systematically used for this study. Historical source materials and research data like official records, contemporary works, structured interview with some old age person to get information extensively collected both from archaieve and non-archaive sources and of historical analysis.

3.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The methodology of study is modern scientific methodology meant for historical research which 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. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I convey my deep sense of gratitude to my revered teacher Sri Bhagaban Sahu, Professor and Head of History Department, Central University of Tamilnadu for his kind cooperation and valuable suggestions.

References:

1. Calcutta Gazetter Part-V, pp-189-190
2. Board of Revenue to Collector 28 May 1819, GR Vol-819
3. Collector to Board of Revenue 10 March 1817, GR Vol-760
4. Collector to Board of Revenue 17 April 1820, GR Vol-801
5. Mukharji, Pravat. (1966), Utkal University "History of Orissa", Vol-VI, p-114
6. Board of Proceeding Revenue Orissa, State Archive Accession No-8, E. Impey to West Bengal Bayley on 16th June 1817
7. Dash, Pandit Surjya Narayan. (1964) "Paik Bidroha" p-59
8. ibid p-82
9. Officer commending Bologada to M.H. Turnbull judge and Magistrate 25.07.1819
10. Dey, S.C. Edtd "Guide to Orissan Records", Board of Revenue Proceedings Vol-XLIX from Lewis Thomas to R. Ker October 29th, 1819 p-84
11. Dey, S.C. Edtd " Guide to Orissan Records, Vol-II, pp-10-20, W. B. Bayleys Report on 10.August.1817
12. Ganjam District Records Collector to Board of Revenue, 31 May 1819

13. Dash, Pandit Surjya Narayan. (1964) "Paik Bidroha" p-96
14. Letters Brigadier Thomas, 29. October. 1819
15. Patnaik, Dr. A.K: Padhy, Major R.R. Edtd "History and Culture of Khallikote" (2008) Raja Ramachandra Mardaraj Deo Memorial Lectural, Science College, Hinjilicut, Ganjam, Sahu, Prof. Bhagaban. article "The Zamindary estate of Khallikote – A Bird's eye view" p- 87
16. Dash, Dr. Surjya Narayan. Edtd. "Dakhina Odishara Sahitya O Sanskruti" (O) (2002) Phalugu Sahitya Sansada, Brahmapur Harichandan, Gopal Krushna. article "Khurda Rajavamsa saha Dakhina Odishara Samparka" p-201
17. Board of Proceedings Revenue Orissa, State Archive Accession No-21, R. Hunter to J. Pakenham on 26 January 1829.
18. Dey, S.C. Edtd "Guide to Orissan Records" Vol-III, pp-34-37, W.D. Orrin, Registrar of Nizamat Adlat to E. Impey on 10. 12. 1819
19. Dey, S.C. Edtd "Guide to Orissan Records" Vol-III, pp-31-38, W. Forrester to E. Impey on 13. April. 1819`

