

Madhusudan Das: The Hero of Modern Odisha

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Abstract: Odisha was a neglected area and its identity was in the crises during the British regime. Madhubau fought hard to unite Odisha and to give it a new shape in the map of India even sacrificing his property and life. His yeoman service for the cause of Odisha has made him the hero of the state.

Keywords: Madhusudan Das, Modern Odisha

Madhu Sudan Das, one of the makers of modern Odisha, brought renaissance to his state, which started in Bengal by the effort of Raja Ram Mohan Ray. Madhu Sudan Das went to Calcutta for higher studies obtained his M.A in English and LL.B and was deeply influence by renaissance which was surcharged in Calcutta atmosphere. It could be imagined how advanced and modern Madhu Sudan Das was for his dareless act of marrying Soudamini , his beloved Christian student. By that time his father disowned him as his son, for embracing Christianity .As a student and a teacher he was very much progressive and advanced. He worked more than twelve hours a day for earning, but more than half of it was going for the development of Odias in Calcutta. His fate was waiting for him in Cuttack. He returned Odisha after the unexpected demise of this sweetheart Soudamini with whom he spend four years in family life.

The heartbroken M.S. Das was ostracized in his village and home Satyavapur. As a result he preferred to live in Cuttack to practice in Odisha High Court. This was the stage Madhu Sudan launched a new life rendering a service to his motherland which was desperately wanted. Madhusudan's presence in Cuttack gave a new life to the Odias who were coming to High court regularly being entangled in different cases .The Odias were exploited by the Bengali lawyers because before that there were no Odia lawyer in Cuttack. He suddenly jumped into popularity as a lawyer in 1905 winning a case against the British government in Calcutta High Court. The British government wanted to take hold of the Jagannath temple administration under its control for lucrative revenues ,which irked every Odias , but Madhusudan Das dared to file a case against the British government and put forth such arguments that a bench of British judges realized that the decision of the government might bring about another sepoy mutiny in Odisha so the court nullified the decree of the British government on Jagannatha temple administration at Puri .After that Madhu Sudan Das was accepted by the entire

Odias, who proved himself as the real Savior of Odisha and Odias. Before this case Madhusudan Das had initiated a lot of steps for the developments of Odisha's Odia languages. In 1901 Madhu Sudan Das met Viceroy Lord Curzon in Simla and requested him to re-introduce Odia as the court language in Sambalpur which as a part of Central Province. Lord Curzon could understand the problems of Odisha & Odias, he reintroduce Odia as the Court language replacing the Hindi language. It was a great achievement of the Odias which helped Sambalpur to be united with Odisha in 1912.

Madhusudana Das was a close friend of Surendranath Banarjee, both of them were born in the same year 1848.Surendranath Baranjeer had deeply committed to the cause of Bengalis, in the same spirit Madhu Sudan Das was committed for the interest of Odisha & Odias. He was deeply influenced by the unities of Bengalis and to create the Odia sentiment in Odisha Das fought desperately. His first dream was to unite the Odias in Odisha. By that time Odisha was divided in three parts which were immersed in three British provinces. Berhampur was in the province of Madras, Sambalpur was a part of Central Province and Baleswar was with Bengal. So he fought heart and soul uniting the Odias to achieve his target. In 1882 he formed Utkal Sabha. Its main purpose was to unite the entire Odias making them aware of their real problem and its solutions. Through this Sabha Madhusudana Das invited the intellectual to spread knowledge through debate and discussions. After 20 years Utkala Sabha was a popular and stable organization for the cause of Odias. Madhusudana Das took an opportunity to convert Utkal Sabha into Utkala Sammilani in 1903.which ceaselessly fought for united Odia State on the basis of language. When Madhusudana Das put forth the problems of Odias in Indian National Congress in 1889 some Bengalis including his bosom friend Surendranath Banarjee seriously opposed. So he left congress and never attend in the National Congress in his life time .In other hand he gave full time to Utkala Sammilani.

A group of Odias assembled in Cuttack on 30th December 1903, which was the first meeting of Utkala Sammilani. The aim of the conference was the demand of a separate State on the basis of Odia language. The conference was presided by the king of Mayurbhanj Sri Ramachandra Bhanjadeva. In this conference the king of Kanika joined as the chairperson of the reception committee and Madhusudana Das was himself the secretary of the committee. The conference actively fought for the cause of a separate state on the basis of language and demand of the conference was accepted by the British government though it was materialized after a decade. The Chakradharapur session of Utkal Sammilani in 1920 passed a historic resolution in its 16th session, accepting the congress goal of independence as its objective. After that Gandhiji visited Odisha in march 1921, which completely merged the Utkala conference into the state congress committee because by that time the non-cooperation movement had already united the entire India under the banner of Indian National Congress led by Gandhiji. Gandhi's frequent visit to Odisha in 1921, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1934 & 1937 created a sense of unity among the young Odias who promised to fight for independence which weakened other subsidiary associations and merged them into the Congress.

The demand for separate state for Odisha on the basis for language was reached in its final stage when the Simon Commission came to India in 1928. The Simon Commission was greeted by angry mobs waving black flacks and anti- British slogan all over India. But the members of Utkal Samilani headed by Das wanted to greet Simon Commission in the Patna Railway station and decided to ignore the congress which was to oppose the Commission there. The Simon Commission was very much happy when a group of Odias welcomed it in Patna, when entire India rejected it. The members of the group greeted Simon and put forth their prayer for a separate state for Odisha on the basis of language which was accepted by Simon Commission. Odisha was declared as a separate state on the basis of language on 1st April, 1936. The contribution of Das for making Odisha a separate state is immense. Without Madhusudan Das it was impossible to think of a separate state on the basis of the language.

Das could not enjoy the moment to hear the news declared from London to make Odisha a separate state on the basis of language because Das died in 1914. But he was sure that Odisha would be a separate state on the basis of language.

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