

Evolution of Odisha Administration

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Abstract: *The present research work provides complete ideas on the evolution of the Odisha administration since the British occupation of State to the existing Odisha Government. The first part of the article highlights the continuous demand of people to the British Government for the creation of a separate Odisha Province. Just after the birth of Odisha Province, the immediate problem was the issue of the merger of Feudatory States with the new Province. The second part of the article enumerates the Provincial party politics and formation of Ministries in the province from 1937 to date. Odisha witnessed two General Elections before independence and Congress won both elections but it couldn't complete full term which was followed by the imposition of the Governor's rule twice. After Post Independence scenario, Odisha achieved considerable progress and development under the rule of Hare Krushna Mahtab, Biju Patnaik, Janaki Ballao Patnaik and present Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Political defections, groupism among the Congress leaders, birth of regional political parties such as Ganatantra Parishad, Jana Congress, Swatantra Parties etc., coalition government, and above all the imposition of President's rule sixth time (1961-1980) in the State was the major obstacle for its political stability and economic growth. Naveen Patnaik, the unchallenged leader of present Odisha politics, has never faced any kind of defeat ever since his entry into politics. Odisha is heading for progress and economic prosperity under the long rules of Naveen Patnaik.*

Keywords: Formation of Odisha Provinces, Merger Issues, Pre-Independence Ministries, Post Independent Ministries of Odisha.

The British occupied Odisha in the year 1803. Odisha was the last province that came under the direct control of British rule. In the year 1803, Raghuji Bhonsle the Maratha ruler of Nagpur handed over Odisha to the hands of East India Company according to the provision of the Treaty of Deogaon. The then Odisha consisted of only three coastal districts namely, Cuttack, Balasore and Puri.¹ In 1823, the above three districts were to be governed by the administrative laws made by the Governor-General in Council at Calcutta. The rest part of Odisha came under nonregulated areas and was ruled by their respective local Princely rulers.

In 1912, Bihar and Odisha were separated from the Bengal Presidency. At that time Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India remarked, "If the Odias were agitating people which they are not, they would soon make their protest heard. As it is, they have been sacrificed without compunction". The irony of the fact is that Odisha was the last Indian Territory to go under the British rule.²

Methodology and Data Collection

I have used both historical and analytical methods while writing this research paper. The Data for this research paper has been collected from Odisha Legislative Assembly Library, Odisha State Archives, Bhubaneswar, Kanika Library Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, the Assembly Secretariat at Bhubaneswar, Library of Paramananda College, Bolgarh etc. I have used both primary and secondary sources to complete this research paper. Proceedings of Odisha Legislative Assembly are extensively used for preparing this research article. Apart from this the unstructured interviews of some political leaders also equally helped to complete this paper. This research article provides clear and detailed ideas on the evolution of the administration of Odisha State from its origin to the present time.

The objective of the Study

The Objectives of the proposed study are as follows

1. Discuss the background for the formation of Odisha as a separate province.
2. Discuss the Integration issues; Merger of Princely States with new Odisha Province.
3. Explain the early problems of Odisha just after its birth.
4. Pre-Independence Assembly Polls and its Ministries 1937&1946.
5. Post-Independence Assembly Polls, its Ministries and related political events

Movement Started for Separate Province

Towards the end part of the 19th century, a people's movement was started to make Odisha a separate State. The great leaders of Odisha such as Madhusudan Das, Gopabandhu Das and Parala Maharaja sacrificed their lives to the cause of their people and started a long way in their movement for social reforms and political awakening. The current of nationalism also swept over Odisha.³ In 1903, the late Madhusudan Das and some other eminent Odia leaders founded the Utkal Sammilani to unite all the Oriya-speaking areas lying under different provincial Governments into a single administrative unit. In 1905, the transfer of the Sambalpur region from the Central province to the Odisha Division of the province of Bengal gave a new ray of hope to the Odia people.

Formation of the Province of Bihar and Odisha

The hope was further strengthened by the creation of a separate Bihar and Odisha province from the Bengal Presidency in 1912. Although the status of Odisha was remarkably improved by the formation of the province of Bihar and Odisha; it by no means satisfied the Oriya leaders. Montagu-Chelmsford report emphasized the problems of Odias and suggested exceptional measures of the establishment of a Sub-province for the Odia speaking tracts, instead of creating a separate province for Odisha. The Bihar and Orissa Legislative Assembly afterward passed a resolution recommending the amalgamation of Oriya-Speaking tracts. The Government of India appointed the Philip-Duff Committee to make a detailed inquiry on the spot to ascertain the people's opinion in the Oriya-Speaking tracts of Madras Presidency on the question of their amalgamation with Odisha. The Philip-Duff Committee recommended the amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts of Madras with Odisha under one administration.⁴ But it was vehemently opposed by Madras Government.⁵

Simon Commission Report

The Report of the Philip-Duff Committee was formed based on the case submitted to Simon Commission in 1927. The Simon Commission also reported, "the grievance was well-founded the demand substantially supported by the people and the Oriya case deserved sympathy"⁶ The Commission recommended to the Government to set up a Boundary Commission to demarcate the territorial extent of the proposed Odisha Province.⁷ That particular issue was raised before the Round Table Conference where the Maharaja of Paralakhimundi strongly presented the Oriya's demand for a separate province for Odisha based on common language and race. On 30th August 1928, the All Parties Conference met at Lucknow. It resolved to create a separate province for the Oriya-speaking people provided Odisha would bear the entire financial burden incidental to separation. On 18th December 1931, the Government of India appointed the O' Donnell Committee to examine the proposal for a separate province of Odisha. The Committee recommended the creation of a separate Odisha province consisting of the then existing Odisha Divisions, Angul a nonregulation districts, Padmnapur, Khariar Zamindari of Central Province and part of Ganjam districts including the Vizagpatnam Agency tracts of the Madras Presidency.⁸

Creation of New Province

The Government of India (Constitution of Orissa) order 1936 created a new polity of Orissa. The new province was carved out of the province of Bihar and Orissa, Madras and Central Province consisting of six districts viz. Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Sambalpur, Ganjam and Koraput. The neighbouring Princely States have enjoyed the status of independence and are ruled by Feudatory Chiefs. A vast tract of territories predominantly inhabited by

Oriya-speaking people was completely excluded from the new province.⁹ The exclusion of the Feudatory States hurt the sentiments of the ruler of Odisha. The oppressive policy along with the excessive exploitation made by the Feudatory Chiefs and their Agents towards the local peasants brought out the Prajamandal Movement against the Gadjat rulers which were backed by members of the Indian Congress in 1937. The Prajamandal Movement was ruthlessly suppressed by the Feudatory Chiefs.

Beginning of the process of the Integration of Princely States

It was just immediately after the attainment of independence of India in 1947, the Government of Odisha began the process of integration of Princely States with Odisha province. In November 1947 the Government of India authorized Orissa Government to take Police action over Nilagiri, a "B" category State, where a chaotic condition had arisen due to Prajamandal agitation and the ruthless suppression of popular movement by its local ruler. In the words of Harekrushna Mahtab, the then Premier of Orissa, the control over Nilagiri State was the beginning of the integration of the state in Orissa and also in India which ended with the taking over of Hyderabad.¹⁰ Soon after the merger of Nilagiri State with Odisha province, Harekrushna Mahtab, the then Premier of Odisha demanded that "Some machinery should be set up for the common administration of certain subjects in both the Odisha States and the province". Dr. Mahtab threatened a voluntary merger of the Gadjat States with the province.¹¹

Final Integration of Princely States

The Nilagiri episode encouraged Mahtab to draw up an elaborate plan for the merger of Odisha Gadjat States with the Province which was earlier approved by Sardar Patel. A meeting of Gadjat rulers was convened by Mahatab at old Raj Bhawan (present Sishu Bhavan) of Cuttack to decide on the issue of merger of their States with Odisha province, on 14 December 1947, which was to be addressed by Sardar Patel.¹² Sardar Patel advised the rulers to agree to a voluntary merger with Odisha province because the safety of the rulers as well as their people was in danger due to the popular Prajamandal Movement. Sardar Patel also warned the rulers of Princely States that, they couldn't provide stable administration because of the smallness of their size and scanty natural resources and no manpower. Sardar Patel cautioned them that, if his advice was not listened to, the rulers might be dethroned by their subjects and thereafter the Government of India would be unable to protect them. He persuaded them to merge with the Odisha Province and the Government of India would in turn be interested in guaranteeing the privileges, honour, dignity and happiness of such rulers. He also appealed to the Princely rulers to join in the national mainstream and instead of jumping in a narrow well; the ruler would be entitled to swim in an ocean.¹³ On Patel's persuasion the agreement of merger was signed by the Princely rulers on December 14-15, 1947 and came into effect on 1st January 1948. Except for

Mayurbhanja, the rulers of twenty-five (25) the Princely States signed the Instrument of Accession. Mayurbhanj State signed the Instrument of Merger on October 17, 1948, but it was finally merged with Odisha province on 1st January, 1949.¹⁴

Results of Integration of Princely States

Integration of Princely States with Odisha was a landmark event in the political history of Odisha. The long-cherished dream of political homogeneity and amalgamation of Oriya-Speaking tracts was at last materialized. The States were reorganized and governed by the States Merger (Governor's Province) order, 1949. The impact of the integration of the Princely States led to the increase of areas and population of Odisha. Its area was extended to sixty thousand square miles. Its population too increased to one core and six lakhs. A larger Odisha acquired an important place in the political map of India. It comprised thirteen (13) districts compared to six (6) districts in 1936.¹⁵

The impact of the merger was quite significant on the ground of certain territorial adjustments in the administration. Athgarh, Tigiria, Badamba and Narasinghpur came under the administration of the Cuttack district. Nilagiri was merged with the neighbouring district of Balasore. Puri had got Ranpur, Nayagarh, Dasapalla and Khandapara. Angul, Talcher, Pal-Lahara, Athmallik and Hindol were brought under the district of Dhenkanal. The Kandhamals and the Baliguda Agency in Ganjam, together with the State of Boudh constituted a new district called Boudh-Phulabani. Patna and Sonepur formed the Bolangir districts while Gangapur and Bonai formed a new district named Sundergarh. Nuapada joined with Kalahandi district. Bamara and Rairakhol merged with the Sambalpur district. In this way, the territorial adjustment of newly formed Odisha Province had taken place under thirteen district administrative units.

The readjustment of territories, separation of records, preparation of Budget for 1936-37, examination of laws in force in different parts which were to be included in the new province, adjustment of Services, recruitment of the Officers for the new province, fixation of Cadre and provisional accommodation for the new Secretariat and departmental offices were major problems which were to be settled just immediately after the inauguration of the new province. "The amalgamation of Princely States with Odisha Province creates many problems in administration including the absorption of ex-States personnel in corresponding cadres of the Orissa Service and determination of their pay and seniority in the cadre and this imposed a severe strain on the existing Government machinery" ¹⁶

Governor Rule and Election of 1937

The Political History of Odisha cannot be completely separated from its administrative history. Sir John Austin Hubback, ICS was appointed as the Governor of Odisha. Provincial autonomy was granted to the Odisha

Government under the Government of India (Constitution of Odisha) order 1936. As the election to the Provincial Assembly couldn't be possible, the administration of Odisha province was kept under the control of the Governor's rule for one year. The first election for the Provincial Assembly with the provision of the limited franchise was held in 1937. The Congress party won thirty-six seats in this election and emerged as the victorious single majority party.¹⁷ Biswanath Das was unanimously elected as the leader of the Congress party. He was also invited by Governor to form the ministry. The Government of India Act, 1935 had provided special powers to the Governor to intervene and use veto any decision taken by the Cabinet. Such a situation wasn't acceptable to the Congress party and it didn't form the Government in protest.¹⁸

The First Non-Congress Ministry under Sri Krushna Chandra Gajapati

The Governor then invited Shri Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Deo, the Maharaja of Paralakhemundi to form the Ministry on 1st April 1937. The first non-Congress Ministry of Odisha Provincial Government was formed with another two ministers named Mandhata Gorachand Patnaik as the Revenue Minister and Maulavi Mahammad Latifur Rahman as Education minister. With minority support, the Ministry couldn't continue even for four months, in spite of the Governor's special power.

Second Premier Biswanath Das

Thereafter the Congress Party formed the Ministry under the Premiership of Biswanath Das on 19th July 1937 along with Nityananda Kanungo as Revenue Minister and Bodhoram Dube as Education minister.¹⁹ The Congress Party didn't accept the decision of the British Government to declare war against Germany without consulting the Government of India and issued directions to its State Units to boycott the war efforts of the British Government and resign from Office on November 4, 1939. After the resignation of the Biswanath Das Ministry, the State administration was put under the direct control of the Governor under section 93 of the Government of Indian Act, 1935 from November 11, 1939, to November 24, 1941.

The Second Non-Congress Ministry

Once again a non-Congress Ministry was formed by Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati who was appointed as Prime Minister. He was able to form the ministry when seven members of the Congress party defected and joined the opposition. This was the first defection case in the history of Odisha politics. The great achievements of this ministry were the foundation of **Utkal University** (now at Bhubaneswar) in 1943 and the establishment of a **Medical College** in 1944. But due to the difference of opinion among the Cabinet Minister this ministry fell on 29 June 1944.²⁰ Odisha once again came under the Governor's rule on 30 June 1944 and continued up to April 1946.

The Second Election of 1946: Mahtab in Power

The election to the State Assembly was again held on 4th and 5th April 1946. During this time the most dominating personality in Odisha politics was Harekrushna Mahtab. Dr. Mahtab received an overwhelming mandate securing 47 seats out of 60. He became the Prime Minister of Odisha on April 23, 1946, and continued as Chief Minister (formerly called Prime Minister) till 12 May 1950. The notable achievement of this Government headed by Dr. Mahtab was *merger of twenty six Princely States with Odisha Province*. The Other cognizable achievement of the Ministry under Mahtab included (a) *Construction of Multi-purpose Hirakud Dam project over Mahanadi*. (b) *Beginning of the establishment of Rourkela Steel Plant*. (c) *Shifting of Capital from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar*.²¹ After the merger of 26 Princely States with Odisha province, the strength of the Provincial Assembly was increased from 60 to 91 which included 31 representatives from ex-Princely States.

Ministry under Nabakrushna Choudhury

On 12 May 1950, Nabakrushna Chaudhury became the Chief Minister of Odisha in place of Harekrushna Mahtab. Dr. Mahtab joined the Central Cabinet and later became the Governor of Bombay. The significant achievements of Nabakrushna Chaudhury ministry were;

- Abolition of Zamindari system in Odisha.
- Introduction of Odia language as Official language.

Nabakrushna Chaudhury, a left-wing Congress leader continued as Chief Minister and remained in office till October 18, 1956.²²

Mahtab's return to Odisha Politics

In the meanwhile, Harekrushna Mahtab resigned from the post of Governor of Bombay and returned to Odisha and joined active politics. On 19 October 1956, Harekrushna Mahtab again became the Chief Minister. His Ministry continued till April 1957. The second Assembly after Independence was formed in 1957. Harekrushna Mahtab became Chief Minister once again on 6th April 1957. In order to have a stable Government in Odisha, the Ganatantra Parishad, a western-based regional party joined Government and Congress-Ganatantra Parishad coalition ministry was formed with Dr. Mahtab as the Chief Minister from 20-05-1957 to 25-02-1961. After the withdrawal of the Congress Party from the Government, that coalition Government was toppled, which led to the imposition of the President's rule for the first time in Odisha.

Biju Patnaik the New Leader

After the brief spell of the President's rule, a Mid-term election was held in 1961 in which the Congress Party returned to power under the leadership of Biju Patnaik. He continued as the Chief Minister of Odisha from 23-06-1961 to

02-10-1963 only for two years. But due to the implementation of the Kamraj plan, Biju Patnaik resigned from the post of Chief Minister on 2nd October 1963. After the resignation of Biju Patnaik, his close associate named Biren Mitra became the Chief Minister of Odisha on 2nd October 1963. Then Sadasiva Tripathy from Koraput Constituency was the Chief Minister of Odisha between 21st February 1965 and 8th March 1967.

Swatantra- Jana Congress Coalition Ministry

On 8th March 1967, a Coalition Ministry was formed by the Swatantra Party and Jana Congress Parties. Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo of Swatantra Party became the Chief Minister and Pabitra Mohan Pradhan was appointed as Deputy Chief Minister. Before completing its full term this ministry was resigned on 9th January 1971. Thereafter, Odisha was under President's rule from January 1971 to March 1971.

Coalition Ministry under Biswanath Das

In the Midterm poll, no party could secure a majority. So that a third coalition ministry by the Swatantra, the Utkal Congress and the Jharkhand parties was formed on 3rd April 1971 under the Chief Ministership of Biswanath Das. This minority Government continued only for short period. Thereafter, Nandini Satapathy was elected as the Chief Minister and her ministry was in power for an interim period from 14th June 1972 till the imposition of President's rule on 3rd March 1973.

Congress Ministry under Nandini Satpathy

In the sixth general election in 1974, the Congress party got the majority and Mrs. Nandini Satpathy continued as the Chief Minister till 16th December 1976. She was followed by Binayak Acharya as the Congress Chief Minister from 29th December 1976 to 30th April 1977. Odisha was again placed under President's rule for the fifth time from 30th April 1977 to 26th June 1977.

Nilamani Routray: The Janata Party Chief Minister

The Election for the seventh Odisha Legislative Assembly was held in June 1977 and Sri Nilamani Routray a Veteran politician and leader of the Janata party remained as Chief Minister from 26th June 1977 to 17th February 1980 and then the State was put under the President's rule for the sixth time.

Congress Ministry under Janaki Ballav Patnaik (1980-1989)

Elections to the eighth Legislative Assembly were held in May, 1980 and this time Congress party got the absolute majority under the banner of Janaki Ballav Patnaik. For the second and consecutive time, the Congress party also secured a massive mandate in the election held on March 19, 1985. Political stability under J.B. Patnaik helped the economic development and administrative improvement of the State. J.B. Patnaik resigned from the Chief Minister's post on 7th December 1989. Thereafter, Hemananda Biswal a tribal

Congress leader from Laikera constituency became the Chief Minister of Odisha on 5th March 1990.

Return of Biju Patnaik after 27 years

The Tenth election to the Odisha Legislative Assembly was held in February 1990. This time Janata Dal came to power under the leadership of Biju Patnaik. Biju Babu returned to power after a gap of 27 years and continued as the Chief Minister of Odisha for the second time from 5th March 1990 to 15th March 1995. During his Chief Ministership, some admirable achievements were made.

- The Reservation provision for Women in the election.
- The Fixation of Daily wages from 10 to 25 rupees.
- Election for Municipal and Gram Panchayats were undertaken.
- For better administration, he increased the number of districts from 13 to 30.

J.B. Patnaik's Third Term: Debacle of Congress Began

The Election for the eleventh State Legislative Assembly was held on 7th March 1995, the Congress party won a majority of seats and form the Government. Once again J.B. Patnaik became the Chief Minister of Odisha on 15th March 1995. But he couldn't complete his full term as Chief Minister. He resigned from the post of Chief Minister on 17th February 1999. J.B. Patnaik was morally and politically pressurized to step down from the office of Chief Minister after two important hot issues of that time such as the killing of Graham Stains, a Christian Missionary at Manoharpur of Keonjhar district by a group of tribal people for his alleged involvement in a forceful conversion of Hindus to Christianity and Anjana Mishra gang rape case brought black clouds for him culminating his premature downfall. After he resigned from the Chief Minister post, Giridhar Gamang became the Chief Minister of Odisha on 17th February 1999. Dr.Gamanga resigned from Chief Minister Post on 6th December 1999. He was succeeded by Hemananda Biswal who continued as Chief Minister till 5th March 2000.

Naveen Patnaik the Unrivalled leader of Odisha Politics (05.03.2000 to till date)

Biju Janata Dal is a regional Political party of Odisha was founded by Naveen Patnaik, the present Chief Minister of Odisha on 26th December 1997. In the election to the 12th Legislative Assembly, the alliance of Biju Janata Dal and Bharatiya Janata Party secured an absolute majority. A Coalition Government was formed under the leadership of Sri Naveen Patnaik who assumed the charge of Chief Minister Ship on 5th March 2000. In his first term as Chief Minister, Naveen Patnaik could maintain his popularity and his coalition Ministry worked well. His first tenure in office was marked by his attempts to establish a transparent and corruption-free administration. During this

time Indian Oil Refinery project at Paradeep was inaugurated by A.B. Bajpayee, the then Prime Minister of India. In May 2004, the election to the Odisha Legislative Assembly was held on. In this election B.J.D –B.J.P alliances sweep the Polls by claiming 61 and 32 Seats respectively in the 147 member Assembly. Congress won only 38 seats.²³ The leader of the B.J.D-B.J.P alliance Naveen Patnaik on 16th May 2004 took the oath of office and secrecy as Chief Minister of Odisha for the second successive term.

The Biju Janata Dal severed its ties with the Bharatiya Janata Party before the 2009 Assembly election and contested the Polls independently. The B.J.D won its largest margin of victory and formed the new State Government. The Party again outperformed itself in the 2014 elections. B.J.D secured 20 out of the 21 Loka Sabha Seats of Odisha and 117 out of 147 Odisha Legislative Assembly Seats. In the 2019 General Election, while there were strong B.J.P waves across the country, at the same time B.J.D performed well in the election and won 112 seats out of 147 in the Odisha Legislative Assembly and formed government under the leadership of Naveen Patnaik. He is the longest-serving Chief Minister of Odisha and won five consecutive elections back to back and rule the State since 5th March 2000.

Bureaucracy always plays a vital role in the administration of the State. The top-ranking bureaucracy in Odisha is not only expanding but also very powerful. In modern days, the success of administration completely depends on the efficacy of bureaucracy. It has changed its shape after the post-independence era and behaved like to be people friendly and delivered all the administrative benefits to common people. At last, I can here mention that administration has become a vital force in the building of the nation. It has helped to establish a welfare state in our country. This article helps to present broad ideas about the general administration of Odisha province since its birth as the formation of a separate province to the current administration system of State under the rule of Naveen Patnaik. Through this article, I have attempted to visualize the entire political structure of the State like the Assembly elections and its results, formation of different Ministries, their achievements and failure, political rivalry among Congress leaders, rise of regional parties, coalition politics, politics of defection, and imposition of President's rule in different phases of Odisha administration.

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