



# Change Management for Organizations

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Lessons from Political  
Upheaval in India

Dr. Chandan Kumar Sadangi  
Dr. Sanjay Mohapatra

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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# Acknowledgements

In recent years, the Indian princely states have become a focus of attention among the historians of South Asia. This is to be welcomed as the vast areas of resech. These States were not painted pink on the maps of the British Empire and had hitherto been located at the margins of the historiography of the subcontinent. Yet Indian states were by no means negligible in terms of size and political and military presence. They comprised two-fifths of South Asia's territory and about one-fifth of its population at the time when the British Crown took over the English East Company in 1858. In Orissa, *Garjat* states had a total area of 28,656 square miles and a population of nearly five millions. They were divided into 26 small states. Among them, Nilgiri, a small but tribal dominated state, played a decisive role in the history of integration of Indian states. The movements developed by *Prajamandal*, communist and tribal, created political earthquakes in the national politics. The political movements in the states were complex and their analyses cannot be confined to the usual binary of people versus rulers. Apart from class objectivity, the demands, and characteristics of the exploited peasants, tribals and common people, the struggle included, at various points of time, anti-feudal and anti-colonial components as well as communist ambitions. The complex and protracted dialectics of the *Prajamandal* movements in Nilgiri have been highlighted in this study.

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Chandan Kumar Sadangi  
Sanjay Mohapatra

# Introduction

## Historical Background of Orissa

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The Kalinga War of 261 BC was one of the landmarks in the History of Orissa. In this war the Mauryan King Ashoka defeated the people of Kalinga. The *Shagbazagarhi* inscription in the Pakistan–Afghanistan border describes the war. The Mauryan Policy of Imperial aggrandizement came to an end after the Kalinga War. Kalinga became one of the Provinces of the Mauryan Empire. Again, the History of Orissa was illuminated in the first century BC with the ascendancy of Kharavela. He was the third ruler of the Chedi dynasty. The Hathigumpha Inscription describes the childhood and achievements of Kharavela. During his period, the Kalingan Empire extended to the Arabian Sea in the west, the Bay of Bengal in the east, the Pandyan Kingdom in the south and Pataliputra in the north.

The historical boundaries of Orissa changed frequently. Numerous ethnic, historical and political units like Kalinga, Utkal, Odra and Kosala constitute the modern Orissa. Raja Kapilendra Deva, who was the founder of the Gajapati dynasty, had extended the frontier of Orissa to the river Kaveri in the south and to the river Hooghly in the north. During the medieval times the boundary of Orissa was extended from the river Ganga to the river Godavari and from Amarakantaka to the Bay of Bengal. Several dynasties have ruled Orissa in different periods of history. They were the *Chedis*, the *Sailodadbhava*, the *Bhaumakaras*, the *Somavamsi*, the *Gangas*, the *Gajapatis* and the *Bhois*. In 1568, the medieval Orissan Empire disintegrated with the death of Mukundadeva, the last Hindu ruler of Orissa.

The Afghans ruled Orissa for a short period of time. But the extension of the Moghul Empire was brief and the Afghan Empire collapsed in Orissa. In 1592, Raja Man Singh, the General of Emperor Akbar, conquered Orissa. Orissa had five *sarkars* at that time, namely, Jaleswar, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Kalinga Dandapat and

Rajamahendri. The hill territories were kept under a separate head in the revenue accounts of the Empire. The independent chiefs of hill territories of Orissa became feudatories of the Moghul Emperor. The Nawab of Golkonda, by the end of 16th century, annexed the *Sarkar* of Rajamahendri and a portion of *Kalinga Dandapat*. So the *Chilika Lake* became the dividing boundary between the Moghul and the Bahmani Empires.

After the disintegration and collapse of the Moghul Empire, the Marathas occupied Orissa. Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur conquered Orissa in 1751. The river Subarnarekha became the boundary of Orissa. *Mughalbandi* and *Garjat* were two political divisions during the Maratha period. The *Mughalbandi* formed a unit managed by the Maratha governors and *Garjats* were ruled by the ruling chieftains.

The British East India Company unfurled their flag on Orissa soil on 14 October 1803. Orissa remained under the Bengal Presidency. At that time, Orissa consisted of three districts named Cuttack, Balasore and Puri, which were known as *Mughalbandi* area. At that time there were 17 tributary states, under the general supervision of the superintendent of Tributary states. In 1805, Bengal law and regulations were introduced in the province. In 1912, Bihar and Orissa province was formed and Orissa was placed under it. Orissa became a separate province in 1936.

The total area of the British Orissa in the 19th century was 23,907 square miles, of which 16,184 square miles were occupied by Tributary *Mahals*. The population of Orissa in 1815 was estimated at 1,162,500 persons, which rose to 3,280,574 persons in 1872.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE PERIOD

The period under reference is most important because of the anti-British and anti-feudal uprisings both in India and Orissa. The major cause of this upheaval was due to the rapid changes the British introduced in the economy, administration and land revenue system to cause colonial exploitation. These changes led to the disruption of agrarian society, causing prolonged and widespread sufferings among the peasants. Similarly, within a short period of time revenue collection was raised to nearly double the amount in Bengal. In Nilgiri, medieval feudalism had perpetuated its tentacles. The state budget was, so to say, being spent at the supercilious decisions of the Royal Administration. The British Government remained an active partner and in 1834,

Henry Rickett asked the people of Nilgiri 'either die or emigrate'. Congress in its nascent age was a silent spectator in the name of non-interference. During the period of limbo, the courageous people of Nilgiri started three anti-feudal movements against the state administration of Nilgiri. In India, from 1763 to 1856, there were more than 40 major rebellions, as well as hundreds of minor ones, had occurred. Most important among them were the Sanyasi uprising of 1766, the Santhal Revolt of 1854, the Indigo movement (1854–1860) and the Deccan Riot in 1874.

The same symptoms were also reflected in Orissa. A major agrarian outburst exploded in 1817–1818. It is known as the *Paik* rebellion and it was led by Buxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar. The revolt under the leadership of Surendra Sai (1857–1864) was also an agrarian uprising. After the great famine of 1866, there was rebellion in the Keonjhar state. This was a rebellion against the British administration raised by the *janajati* tribes called *Juanga, Bhuyans and Kol* during April 1868.

The *janajatis* with the leadership of Dharanidhar Naik once again revolted in Keonjhar in 1891 against *bethi* and other forced labour. In 1882, there were sporadic displays of dissatisfaction among the *Kondhs* of Kalahandi against the *Kultas*, who economically exploited them. There were also resistance movements in Nayagrah, Khandpara, Ranpur and Dasapalla during the last quarter of the 19th century. Those movements were violent in nature and could not be sustained for a longer period. In Dhenkal, at the end of the 19th century, the manager of the state contemplated enhancement of rent under a new settlement. Nearly 1000 people came and protested; as a consequence of which the idea was abandoned. Talcher was another state where the agitations were organized in 1911, 1922 and 1932. In Dhenkal, agitation and resentment were started against feudal dues. In 1917, a tribal revolt started in Mayurbhanj against the recruit of coolies. The uprising was so serious that the Commissioner of Orissa and the political agent of the feudatory states of Orissa reached Mayurbhanj and brought the situation under control. There were five uprisings in Bamra state from 1908 to 1928 against unreasonable enhancement of rent and assessment of new *abwabs*. The risings were suppressed forcibly and leaders were thrown into prison. There was a serious *Khond* uprising in Dasapalla in 1914. The revolt was suppressed and leaders like Narayan Kaur, Mahantha Jani, Sadai Mallick and a few others were awarded with death sentences and others were sentenced to transportation for life.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The historiography of the princely states of Orissa has yet to receive sufficient attention from scholars. Moreover, the history of Nilgiri is very significant because it was the first state which merged with the Indian Union. The tribal and political movements of Nilgiri were indigenous, unique and were not influenced by outside factors significantly. So it needs a special study.

In 1910, L. C. B. Cobben Ramsay Published *Gazetteers of Feudatory States of Orissa*. It was the first pioneering work on the administration, origin and economic life of all the feudatory states of Orissa. The origin and short history of Nilgiri is described in this book. It narrated the tribal and political lives of Nilgiri.

A second pioneering work titled *The Native States of India* was written by Lee Warner in 1910. It was published in London. It described the different native states of India.

V. P. Menon published his work in 1981. In his book *The Story of Integration of Indian States*, he explained the integration of the different princely states of Orissa. It focused on the different problems of Indian states.

Urmilla Phandis (1986) in her work *Towards Integration of Indian States (1919–1947)* describes the challenges and roles of different states and the roles played by rulers in the resolution of conflicts.

In Orissa, certain pioneering works have been done. Dr. H. K. Mahatab had played a dominating role in Nilgiri since 1930. He played a pioneering role and influenced the then Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel for the merger of Nilgiri with the Indian Union. Dr. H. K. Mahatab was the Prime Minister of Orissa during that period.

P. K. Mishra (1986) in his book *Political Unrest in 19th Century Orissa* has vividly described the different political unrests in Orissa.

J. Pattnaik (1988)'s *Feudatory States of Orissa (1803–1857)* Vol. II, describes the socio-economic conditions of and British relations with the Feudatory states of Orissa.

J. K. Samal (1988) in his book *Princely States of Orissa (1905–1947)* highlights the socio-economic conditions and the unrest and merger of the princely states of Orissa.

S. C. Padhi in his book *British Relation with the Chiefs of Orissa (1803–1858)* describes the political relations of the rulers of Orissa with the British and the obligations and duties of Chiefs to the British.

Orissa State Archives published a book in 1998 titled *Towards Merger* (Integration of Princely States of Orissa). It explains the different aspects of the merger of states in Orissa.

A. C. Pradhan wrote a book titled *Sidelight on Freedom Struggles in Orissa* in 2011. In this monograph, he has described different political movements in Orissa. He has narrated the contribution of the Indian National Congress to the people's movement in Nilgiri.

Distinguished publications of freedom movements in Orissa edited by Dr. H. K. Mahatab and *Who's Who of Freedom Workers* edited by N. K. Sahu and S. C. Dey deal with some aspects of the history of Nilgiri.

A vast plethora of documents on Nilgiri history has remained unused at various places in and outside Orissa.

Therefore, an attempt has been made in this study to bring to light the history of Nilgiri in a comprehensive manner with the help of mostly the original and unpublished documents.

The work has the following objectives:

- To assess the geo-historical background of Nilgiri.
- To explore economic conditions in Nilgiri.
- To evaluate how the precarious economic conditions affected the people.
- To evaluate tribal and political upheavals in Nilgiri: people's participation, the role of Raja and the British response.
- To delineate Political movement in Nilgiri in 1930, congress policy, national consciousness and people's participation.
- To assess the political situation in Nilgiri after the Quit India Movement.
- To assess the tribal problem and awareness after 1942.
- To assess how state administration wanted to sabotage the political movement after 1942.
- To assess the role of Communist, Prajamandal, Congress and Pro Raja parties in the political situation in Nilgiri.
- To assess the civil war in Nilgiri and the events leading to its merger.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The topic of our study is tribal and political upheavals in Nilgiri. The topic is so comprehensive and broad based that it is not possible to deal with every minute aspect of the topic. Hence, it

contains mainly the geography, location and dynastic history, economic conditions, tribal and political movements in 19th century, political movements in 1930 and political movements after the Quit India Movements.

Statistical tables have been prepared from official data published in the British official records. These data were not available from newspapers and local literatures. So the present scholars are compelled to be very selective and have worked under various constraints to give the final shape to this study. In fact, tribal and political movements in Nilgiri are the integral part of socio-economic and political movements developed in India and Orissa. So, within this broad framework the present study was conducted.

## METHODOLOGY

To examine the issue, the study mainly uses contemporary source material from official records, both published and unpublished, additional published secondary data and materials from various sources, such as academic, institutional and official, to gain an unbiased rational view.

Available statistical data, which have remained unutilized to date, have been used extensively. Comparison of data has been made with contemporary conditions of other states of British India. Wherever possible, every effort has been made to incorporate relevant new information and data in the study. To make the works comprehensive and unbiased, the socio-economic life has been portrayed by examining literary and archival sources also. All necessary authoritative views and information have been collected to explain the tribal and political upheavals in Nilgiri.

## CHAPTERISATION

The study is divided into seven chapters including the Introduction. It is again sub-divided into sections and subsections.

The first chapter is titled 'Nilgiri: Its location, Geography and Dynastic History'. It is again sub-divided into land and its people. It explains the types of soil, rivers and its ethnography. In its subsequent sections it explains the early history of Nilgiri, feudatories during the Hindu period, feudatory states during the Afghan and *Mughal* Periods and feudatory states during the Maratha Period.

The Second chapter is 'Feudal Economy: The Genesis of Socio-Economic Problems'. It delineates how a poor and stagnating

economy became an important factor for the increasing grievances of the people. This chapter is sub-divided into agriculture, irrigation, revenue, transport, trade, forestry, etc. It basically discusses how the feudal economy became an explosive factor for generating grievances among the people.

The third chapter is 'Tribal and Political Movements in the 19th Century'. It mainly discusses the three main revolts in Nilgiri in the 19th century. In the first section, the uprising of 1838–1840 is discussed. In the second section, the Khadpur Meli of 1873–1876 is discussed. The agitation of 1884–1886 is also discussed. In the last section the fundamental characteristics of popular movements are analysed.

The fourth chapter is 'Political Movements (1930–1942)'. The first section discusses the agitation in different states of Orissa. In the next section it discusses movements in Nilgiri. The subsequent section elaborates the support of the congress. The last section describes people's participation in the movement.

The fifth chapter is 'Tribal Upheaval and Merger of Nilgiri after Quit India Movement (1942–1947)'. The first section discusses the effects of the Quit India Movement in Nilgiri. The next section discusses the influence of the Congress in Nilgiri. The next subsection elaborates the illegal effort of Raja to occupy power. The formation of *Praja Sabha*, Indian Independence and civil war in Nilgiri, and the integration of Nilgiri are discussed in the subsequent sections.

The last chapter is 'Conclusion'. It analyses the fundamental causes of revolt in Nilgiri. Administrative manouvering, outrageous actions of tribals against the non-tribals and vice-versa and, finally, how Nilgiri got integrated with the Indian Union are discussed in this chapter.

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# Abbreviations

AICC	All India Congress Committee
AISPC	All India States' Peoples' Conference
BNR	Bengal Nagpur Railway
CMD	Chairman-cum-Managing Director
Col	Colonel
CP	Central Province
ESA	Eastern States Agency
Hon'ble	Honourable
INC	Indian National Congress
IPC	Indian Penal Code
Judi	Judicial
Lt	Lieutenant
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
M&SMRy	Madras and South Maratha Railway
NAT	National Archives of India
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi
OGMMCL	Office of the General Manager, Mahanadi Coalfields Limited
OSA	Orissa States Archives
OSCT	Office of the Sub-Collector, Talcher
OSPC	Orissa States' Peoples' Conference
Pol	Political
SECL	South Eastern Coalfields Limited
SUA	Sambalpur University Archives
SRT	Sub-Divisional Record Room, Talcher
TJRR	Talcher Jail Record Room
TPRR	Talcher Palace Record Room
WWCC	Who's Who Compilation Committee

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## 1

# Nilgiri: Its Location, Geography and Dynastic History

Orissa encompassed two main divisions. One was less fertile, with wider mountainous areas and forest tracts, and parcelled out and occupied by a number of military chieftains. This area contained several forts or castles locally known as *garhs* or *killas*. It came to be known as the *Garjat* area. The second division was a fertile and productive coastal region that formed the area of the principal ruling dynasties of Orissa and from which the earlier Hindu sovereigns and their successors, the Afghans, the Mughals, the Marathas and finally the British, derived their principal revenue. Since Akbar's conquest of Orissa this region (second division), which remained under the direct administration of the sovereign, came to be known as the *Mughalbandi*.

## Nilgiri, the Land and Its People

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The Nilgiri state was located between 21°17 and 21°37 north latitude and 86°25 and 86°25 east longitude with an area of 278 square miles. The headquarters of the state was named Raj Nilgiri and was located between 21°29 North and 86°48 East. The state was bordered on the North by the Mayurbhanj state, on the West by the Kaptipada *zamindar* in the Mayurbhanj state and on the South and East by the district of Balasore, which was

administered directly by the British.<sup>1</sup> Out of the total area of 278 square miles, 147 square miles comprised forests, hills and scrub jungles, leaving the rest cultivated or otherwise occupied.<sup>2</sup> The whole range of hills, which was known as the Nilgiri hills, consisted of metamorphic rocks of various kinds, the most extensive being the black magnesia rock. This black granite stone was locally known as the *mugni* stone.<sup>3</sup>

The forests in the state contained valuable timber trees; but there were no high forests in the state mainly due to the presence of laterite stones below the surface.<sup>4</sup>

No big river passed through this state; the only river worthy of the name was *Sona*, a small tributary of the river *Burhabalang*. The other two small waterways, *Tangana* and *Ghagra*, were mere rivulets; for the greater part of the year they remained sand beds except in the rainy season.

As for the nature of the soil, there was every variety of admixture from poor stony soil to pure clacy leam; heavy soils and clay leams were most abundant in the state. The soil received an annual deposit of silt from the washing of the hills and forests. Due to swelling of the surface, the silt found ready access to the low lands and for which those lands were more fertile than the higher tract.<sup>5</sup> The state was divided into eight *chaklas* or circles and contained 313 villages. These *chaklas* were formed for the purpose of revenue administration and continued for a very long time. The *chaklas* were Athkunta, Banasima, Benagadia, Dantore, Jukjhuri, Kaspā, Khadpur and Panchagarh. Panchagarh was the largest in area while Banasima was the smallest. From a population point of view, Kaspā was the most densely populated *chakla* and Banasima was scarcely inhabited.<sup>6</sup>

The first available statistics on the population of the state date back to 1870 AD. But, they were not very accurate as the calculations were made using guesswork rather than careful enumeration. The superintendent of the tributary *Mahals* estimated 21,000 people in Nilgiri in 1870 AD. However, the Raja's return the same year showed 27,665 inhabitants in his

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<sup>1</sup>E. Thornton, *Gazetteers of Territories under the Government of East India Company and Native States of India*, Vol. 111, p. 688.

<sup>2</sup>Final Report on the Settlement of Nilgiri, Patna, 1922, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>L. C. B. Cobben Ramsay, *Orissa Feudatory States*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup>Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of Nilgiri, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

state.<sup>7</sup> The first census of the population of the Orissa states were taken in 1872 AD. According to this census report, 33,944 people lived in Nilgiri in 6,319 houses. The aboriginal tribes and the semi-Hinduised aborigines comprised 18.3 per cent of the total population. People of Hindu origin formed the majority with 81.7 per cent; the most numerous castes were *Khandait*, *Chasa*, *Brahmins* and *Gouras*.<sup>8</sup> A small community of native Christians was established at village Mitrapur; they belonged to the American Free Baptist Mission, which was started in 1854–1855.<sup>9</sup>

## Early History of Nilgiri

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The origin and the past history of Nilgiri, like those of most other Orissa states, is cloaked in obscurity. In many cases, facts have been mixed with fiction and myth. The history of Nilgiri follows the usual pattern found behind the creation of most Orissan principalities, i.e. a strong man connected in one way or the other with the foremost ruling race of Orissa (the Gajapatis) and was rewarded with certain territorial possessions for his fidelity or distinguished services to the sovereign. This common narrative includes a significant phase of Indian history. There was a period of Aryan colonisation of the tribal and hilly regions of Orissa, which contained almost all the feudatory states. This area might be regarded as the backwaters of colonisation by the Hindu settlers and probably was among the last areas in India to be colonised by advanced Hindu settlers.<sup>10</sup> It was originally occupied by the aborigines, who lived there undisturbed in the seclusion of hills and jungles. But changing circumstances in Northern and Central India had its usual impact on the future of these tribal people and their places. The Mohammedan incursions in the 12th century AD brought about great changes in upper India. Several established ruling houses were shaken and kingdoms underwent changes. A number of soldiers of fortune and princes without thrones, who happened to visit *Puri* on pilgrimage, found that these areas were easy to acquire and hold.

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<sup>7</sup>W. W. Hunter, *History of Orissa*, Vol. 11, Appendix 111, p. 85.

<sup>8</sup>W. W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. XIX, pp. 210–212.

<sup>9</sup>L. C. B. Cobben Ramsay, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

<sup>10</sup>R. K. Ramdhani, *Report of the Land Tenures and Revenue System of Orissa and Chattisgarh States*, Vol. 1, para. 2.