

A detailed oil painting of an elderly man with a turban and multiple necklaces, holding a spear. The man has a serious, weathered expression with deep wrinkles on his forehead and around his eyes. He is wearing a light-colored turban and several strands of dark, round beads. To his right, a wooden spear with a sharp, dark metal head is visible. The background is a plain, light brown color.

Gonasika Paper Series, Number 4, April 18, 2026

# Ratna Meli of 1868

**ANIMESH ROUL**



# Gonasika Research Foundation

<https://gonasika.org>

**Gonasika Research Foundation (GRF) is a research organisation (registered as a Section 8 non-profit company under the Companies Act, 2013) located in Kendujhar, Odisha.**

**REGISTERED OFFICE**

**Vidya Bhawan, Vill: Manpur, PO: Kendeipasi, Dist:  
Kendujhar, ODISHA (INDIA). PIN: 758017**

**Email: [info@gonasika.org](mailto:info@gonasika.org)  
<https://www.gonasika.org/>**

**Contact No: + 91 98105 66982 / 99374 02240**

*Gonasika Paper Series, Number 4, April 18, 2025*

# THE RATNA MELI OF 1868

*The Genesis of Tribal Rebellion in  
Colonial Kendujhar*



*ANIMESH ROUL*

# Abstract

**T**his paper examines the 1868 ‘Ratna Meli’ uprising in Kendujhar, Odisha, led by Bhuyan tribal leader Ratna Nayak. It contextualizes the revolt within 19th-century Odisha, emphasizing British interference in tribal governance and traditional institutions. The study underscores how the denial of the Bhuyans’ customary role in selecting and crowning the king, along with new revenue policies, administrative reforms, and the loss of traditional privileges, fostered widespread dissatisfaction within the tribal community. It traces the uprising from succession disputes and local grievances to a broader resistance against feudal rule and British domination. It shows how the movement garnered support among the Bhuyans, Junags, and Kols, leading to attacks on officials and temporary disruptions of administration. However, the rebellion was suppressed through military action, with assistance from neighboring princely states allied with the British.

The study also explores the consequences of the revolt, including the execution and imprisonment of leaders, and attributes its failure to factors such as the lack of modern weaponry, absence of support from non-tribal groups, betrayal by native rulers, and collusion between the colonial administration and the Kings. It highlights Ratna Nayak as an early resistance leader who promoted justice, rights, and accountable governance in Garhjat Kendujhar. The paper concludes that, despite its brief duration, the Ratna Meli uprising was a significant part of tribal resistance history in Odisha and helped pave the way for future social and political movements.

# CONTENTS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

## 2. HISTORY AND POLITY OF GARHJAT KENDUJHAR: A LITERATURE SURVEY

## 3. PRELUDE TO THE KENDUJHAR UPRISING

- *Socio-Political Factors.*
- *Economic and Administrative Grievances.*

## 4. RATNA MELI: RISE OF TRIBAL RESISTANCE IN KENDUJHAR

## 5. COURSE OF THE UPRISING: FROM PROTEST TO ARMED REVOLT (APRIL-JULY 1868)

## 6. COUNTER-INSURGENCY, BETRAYAL AND SUPPRESSION OF THE REBELLION (MAY–AUGUST 1868)

## 7. CONCLUSION

- NOTES
- APPENDIX: JUDGMENT ON THE KENDUJHAR TRIAL (1868)
- AUTHOR'S PROFILE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout India's long history of anti-colonial resistance, rebellions and uprisings by tribal and indigenous communities often appear as isolated, spontaneous acts disconnected from the broader story of nationalism.[1] However, beneath their regional differences, these movements expressed a strong fight for autonomy, dignity, and justice, especially after the 1857 Anti-British Revolt, when India entered a new phase of imperial rule under the Crown, following the Government of India Act of 1858. This transition ended the East India Company's rule and established direct Crown control through the office of the Viceroy. The British reorganized the army, restructured relations with princely states, and adopted a policy of 'divide and rule' to strengthen their authority.[2] In this changing political landscape, local grievances, often over succession, land, and customary rights, became rallying points for indigenous assertion. One such episode, primarily confined to the forested tracts of northern Odisha but resonating far beyond, was the 'Ratna Meli', also known as the Bhuyan Uprising of 1868. This rebellion emerged in the Garhjat state (literally "born or ruled from forts/garh") of Kendujhar (Princely State or Feudatory State), where the valiant Bhuyan (or Bhuiyan) community, the traditional landholders and custodians of the tribal polity, rose in defiance against British interference and a newly crowned ruler.

The Ratna Meli uprising emerged at a time when British authority over the princely states of Odisha was expanding through policies of indirect rule and administrative intervention. By the mid-nineteenth century, the colonial administration increasingly governed the Garhjat states through local rulers while retaining decisive influence over political decisions, including royal succession. In Kendujhar, this strategy generated deep resentment among the Bhuyan community, which guarded its customary rights and political role in the installation of the ruler. Following the death of King Gadadhar Bhanja in 1861, the British recognition of Dhanurjay Narayan Bhanja as the ruler, bypassing traditional practices in which the Bhuyan

chiefs participated in legitimizing the coronation, was widely perceived as an intrusion into established tribal authority. The decision provoked sustained opposition among the Bhuyans, who viewed it as both a political and cultural affront. Under the leadership of Ratna Nayak, a respected Bhuyan sardar of the Bhuyan pirha (tribal confederation), this discontent gradually transformed into organized resistance, culminating in open rebellion in 1868. Although the uprising was eventually suppressed and Ratna Nayak, along with several of his associates, was executed by the colonial authorities, Ratna Meli left a lasting imprint on the political memory of Odisha, symbolizing an early assertion of tribal rights and resistance against colonial–feudal domination. Furthermore, the rebellion served as the moral foundation for later tribal movements in the region, including Dharanidhar Nayak’s 1891 ‘Dharani Meli’ (Kendujhar)[3] and Madri Kalo-led ‘Gaontia Meli’ in 1897 (Gangpur)[4], upon which they were built.

This paper examines the legacy of Ratna Nayak and the tribal mobilization he led against both colonial and royal authority, arguing that his struggle represented not merely a revolt against injustice but an early articulation of indigenous political consciousness rooted in ideas of collective self-rule, tribal rights, and human dignity. Drawing upon colonial reports, regional chronicles, and studies of Odisha’s political and tribal history, the study reconstructs the chronology of the 1867–68 Bhuyan uprising and situates it within the broader socio-political environment of Kendujhar. It analyses how interference in royal succession, exploitative revenue practices, and the marginalization of tribal leadership generated conditions for armed resistance, and further explores the subsequent repression, the transformation of Ratna Nayak into a martyr in local memory, and the uprising’s enduring influence on the political imagination of tribal communities. By placing the Ratna Meli within the wider pattern of nineteenth-century indigenous resistance movements, the paper highlights how a regional conflict over legitimacy and justice evolved into an early expression of democratic consciousness and proto-tribal nationalism in colonial Odisha.

# History and Polity of Colonial Kendujhar: A Literature Survey



Image-1: Orissa Tributary States- (Source: Imperial Gazetteer 1909)

Within the broader historiography of colonial Odisha and the Kendujhar uprising of 1867-1868 led by Ratna Nayak, this research engages with a body of foundational scholarship that provides both archival depth and interpretative insight. Several seminal works are particularly significant for understanding the political, social, and administrative contexts of the rebellion. Among them, L. E. B. Cobden-Ramsay's *Bengal Gazetteers: Feudatory States of Orissa* (1910) and C. E. Buckland's *Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors* (1901) remain essential administrative sources that document the colonial state's perspective on the socio-political landscape of the Garhjat states and the dynamics of tribal resistance.

Both books also provide valuable observations on disturbances in the tributary states and the British response to insurgencies such as that of Kendujhar. J. K. Samal's *Orissa Under the British Crown, 1858–1905* (1977), which situates tribal uprisings within the evolving political economy of colonial rule and the trajectory of Odisha's early resistance movements. Regional historiography has been enriched by D. C. J. Paikray's *Kendujharare Adibasi Andolanara Itihas* (2009), which offers localized insights into indigenous protest movements and reconstructs the role of Bhuyan leadership in the uprising. Prasanna Kumar Mishra's *Political Unrest in Orissa in the 19th Century: Anti-British, Anti-Feudal and Agrarian Risings* (1983) provides a comprehensive analytical framework for situating the Kendujhar rebellion within wider patterns of anti-colonial and agrarian unrest across nineteenth-century Odisha. Finally, complementing these works is a broader historical account, such as HK Mahatab's *History of the Freedom Movement in Orissa* (Vol. II), which, together with the above-mentioned works, forms the historiographical foundation for analyzing the causes, course, and effects of the Ratna Nayak-led Bhuyan uprising in Kendujhar.

Evidence from colonial records and later historical scholarship shows that the Kendujhar uprising arose from a combination of contested royal succession, the expansion of colonial administrative control, and deep-seated tribal grievances against both British authority and the local feudal system. In addition to the major foundational works discussed above, several descriptive, specialized, and interpretive studies [5], including those on Odia vernacular literature [6], have examined Kendujhar's socio-political history and the broader patterns of tribal resistance in colonial Odisha. These studies provide important analytical and historiographical insights that deepen understanding of the Ratna Nayak-led movement and its place within the larger history of tribal politics and resistance in colonial eastern India.

## Prelude to the Kendujhar Uprising

### *Socio-Political Factors.*

By the mid-nineteenth century, Odisha's Garhjat states or Tributary Mahals (later reduced to Feudatory states in British official letters/documents, also known as Sanads), were entangled in the expanding web of British indirect rule.[7] After the British conquest of coastal Odisha in 1803, the interior Garhjat states, including Kendujhar, Mayurbhanj, and Dhenkanal, remained nominally independent but were politically subordinate.[8] British political agents stationed in Cuttack and Balasore arbitrated disputes and successions, intervening whenever their strategic interests demanded. The policy of supporting loyal princes while suppressing the tribal hinterlands became a defining feature of colonial rule in Odisha.

Among these feudatory states, Kendujhar held a distinct position. Rugged, mineral-rich, and heavily forested, it was the ancestral home of the Bhuyans, an ancient tribal group whose social and political identity revolved around the idea of *bhuin*, or the land itself. The Bhuyans saw themselves as 'Sons of the soil' (*Bhumi Putra*), the earliest inhabitants and rightful guardians of Kendujhar's polity.[9]

As British colonial officer and ethnologist Edward Tuite Dalton notes, Bhuyan folklore suggests that they once enthroned a stolen royal child from the Bhanja dynasty, granting him legitimacy on the condition that he rule justly and that they retain the right to depose him if he became oppressive. Therefore, in every coronation ritual, Bhuyan chiefs played an essential role; without their approval, no king could claim full legitimacy or divine approval. Dalton, who was also the Commissioner of Chotanagpur at that time, mentions the Bhuyan's claim to the land as first settlers (contradicting the Juang claim) and to the country (Kendujhar), which they say belongs to them. They assert that the King is of their creation and that the prerogative of installing every new Raja on his accession to the throne is theirs and theirs alone. [10] Dalton further recounts his eyewitness account of the King's coronation ceremony in Kendujhar, which confirms the Bhuyan traditional rituals during the King's

coronation:[11] “The Bhuyan chiefs make offerings to the King, including rice, pulse, pots of ghee, milk, honey, and other items, each article being touched by all the Bhuyan sardars before it is presented. The chief sirdars now solemnly address him, telling him that they have, under the authority exercised by them and their ancestors from time immemorial, made over to him the realm and the people therein, and enjoin him to rule with justice and mercy.” [12] However, with the arrival of the Imperial British, this delicate balance was largely disrupted. The colonial push for legal codification, especially through the “Twenty-five Questions” (or Pachees Sawal) governing succession in feudatory states (including Regulation and Tributary Mahals in Orissa), replaced traditional authority with bureaucratic rule. [13]

When King Gadadhar Narayan Bhanja died without an heir in March 1861 during a pilgrimage to Triveni Sangam (in present-day Bansberia, Hooghly district of West Bengal), a dispute arose over the succession to the throne of Kendujhar.[14] Two claimants emerged: Brundaban Narayan Bhanja, supported by the Chief Queen Bishnupriya Devi as her adopted son from the Mayurbhanja Royal family, and Dhanurjay Narayan Bhanja, the son of a concubine (or Phoola-Bibhai), albeit an illegitimate son of the late king.[15]

Back in Kendujhar, after the news of the King’s demise reached the Royal palace, the political situation within the state shifted rapidly. Basudeo Dhal, Dewan Chandrashekar’s brother and acting as the Raja’s lieutenant, swiftly seized control of the succession. Using his temporary authority, he installed Dhanurjay Narayan Bhanja as ruler on April 3, 1861, before the claims could be formally reviewed. Accounts suggest his decisive action was politically motivated, possibly manipulating the Raja’s dying wishes to aid Dhanurjay’s rise and block other contenders like Queen Bishnupriya’s adopted son, Brundaban Bhanja. This move set the stage for future succession disputes and political tensions in Kendujhar. [16]

R. N. Shore, Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals at Cuttack, examined the rival claims to the throne of Kendujhar under the provisions of Regulation XI of 1816.[17] After reviewing the competing claims, he ruled in favor of Dhanurjay as the legitimate

successor. The opposing claimant challenged this decision before the Calcutta High Court, but his petition was dismissed. A further appeal was then filed before the Privy Council in England. However, before the Privy Council delivered its judgment, the Government of Bengal confirmed Shore's ruling and formally recognized Dhanurjay Narayan Bhanja as the King of Kendujhar. This decision provoked strong opposition from Queen Bishnupriya Pattamahadevi and her supporters, which included not only members of her royal family in Mayurbhanj but also several tribal communities, particularly the Bhuyans, Juangs, and Kols, who favored the rival claimant. Consequently, resentment against the newly recognized ruler spread widely among these groups.

The British authorities went ahead with installing Dhanurjay Bhanja despite facing opposition. The process was overseen by Commissioner T. E. Ravenshaw, who ensured the new ruler assumed power in accordance with the colonial succession rules. This decision ignored local traditions about succession and coronation. As discussed before, traditionally, the Bhuyans played a key role in the coronation of the Kendujhar rulers and believed their participation was necessary for the king's legitimacy. Their exclusion caused strong resentment in the community and worsened the already tense political situation around the contested succession. The Bhuyans saw themselves as having a traditional right to be involved in the installation of the Raja, considering their participation vital for the throne's legitimacy. Installing Dhanurjay without their ritual approval was seen as a violation of customary practices. Leaving them out of the coronation process weakened their political influence and challenged their traditional authority within the Bhuyan pirha.

Queen Bishnupriya continued to oppose the British decision and maintained contact with Bhuyan leaders and her royal relatives in Mayurbhanj. Ratna Nayak emerged as a prominent figure among these groups, articulating resistance to the recognized succession and supporting the Queen's intention to install her adopted son, Brundaban Bhanja, on the throne. The situation escalated when Ravenshaw moved to Kendujhar in December 1867 to oversee the installation. Bhuyan groups protested at Anandpur and refused to

recognize Dhanurjay as their ruler. Ravenshaw responded by pressuring the Queen Bishnupriya to accept the arrangement. After negotiations, she agreed to recognize Dhanurjay Bhanja, and the coronation ceremony was completed in February 1868. Several detained Bhuyan leaders were released on the condition that they renounce further opposition. Ratna Nayak, however, refused to reconcile with the new ruler, and his continued resistance eventually contributed to the outbreak of open rebellion later that year.

### *Economic and Administrative Grievances.*

The Ratna Meli uprising cannot be explained solely as a succession dispute or a reaction to British intervention in the affairs of the Kendujhar state. While the controversy surrounding the recognition of Dhanurjay Narayan Bhanja provided the immediate political trigger, the deeper roots of the rebellion lay in mounting economic pressures, coercive labor obligations, administrative restructuring, and the gradual marginalization of the Bhuyan communities within the state's political order.

The Bhyuans were subjected to a variety of fiscal and labor demands that increasingly strained their subsistence economy. They were required to pay plow and house taxes, rent in kind, and perform labor under the bethi and begari systems, which obligated villagers to provide unpaid services for the state. A. J. M. Mills, Commissioner and Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals at Cuttack, observed that it was common practice for local authorities to extract compulsory labor from their subjects or appropriate part of their produce and earnings to sustain the Raja, his officials, and the administrative establishment. In earlier periods, such labor was required for royal works, ceremonial obligations, and the transport of goods and supplies. Over time, however, these demands intensified, particularly during land settlements and revenue adjustments, generating growing resentment among the tribal population.[18]

Administrative practices further aggravated these grievances. Dewan Chandrasekhar Dhal Mahapatra (Bebarta) became a focal point of popular anger due to his role in revenue administration. He introduced the use of a 7-foot-5-inch measuring rod (padika) for land

assessment, a method widely believed by cultivators to enlarge the measurement units and thereby increase the tax burden on farmers. Locally, such measures were perceived as deliberate attempts to raise revenue at the expense of the Bhuyans and other cultivators, reinforcing the image of the state administration as exploitative. [19]

The process of monetization of revenue further deepened the economic strain. Following the death of Raja Gadadhar Bhanja in 1861, when the state came under temporary British supervision during the succession dispute, efforts were made to convert traditional payments in grain or customary service into cash revenue. The colonial authorities also altered the administrative structure by appointing Gurmanjis (Bhuyan agents) to manage revenue collection. These intermediaries, who were generally outsiders rather than members of the Bhuyan community, served as the Raja's representatives, conveying orders and collecting tribute. Since the position was profitable and often obtained through competitive bidding, frequent changes in office led to aggressive revenue extraction, as each agent sought to maximize collections. This system disrupted earlier arrangements in which Bhuyan sardars themselves supervised the collection of tribute and retained a portion as commission.[20]

For a largely subsistence-based society dependent on forest resources and shifting cultivation, the shift from tribute in kind to cash payments exposed communities to market fluctuations and heightened financial vulnerability. At the same time, the irregular appointment and dismissal of traditional Bhuyan leaders and the growing influence of court officials aligned with the Raja weakened the authority of the indigenous leadership structure.

Economic pressures were compounded by abuses committed by officials and military personnel operating in the region. Detachments of the Ramgarh Light Infantry, deployed to escort government funds for the postal establishment, were frequently accused of taking provisions and supplies from villagers without payment and imposing arbitrary demands on local communities. Complaints were also directed against administrative intermediaries associated with the



***Gathering Storm*** (Representational Image)

postal system. Dak runners alleged that clerks and revenue assistants extorted money from them, while counter-complaints were filed against postal employees in Kendujhar for similar misconduct. Such practices contributed to a pervasive atmosphere of coercion and exploitation across the hill tracts.

Taken together, these developments, rising taxation, forced labor obligations, monetization of revenue, intrusive administrative restructuring, and the misconduct of officials, created a climate of deep economic distress and political alienation among the Bhuyans. The succession dispute of the 1860s, therefore, acted not as the sole cause of the uprising but as a catalyst that ignited long-standing grievances rooted in economic exploitation and administrative marginalization.

## Ratna Meli: Rise of Tribal Resistance in Kendujhar

The Ratna Meli uprising of 1868 emerged in a wider climate of political and economic instability in eastern India. The aftermath of the 1857 rebellion had shaken colonial authority in many regions, while the Na'Anka famine of 1866 devastated Odisha and deepened resentment against both the princely administration and the British colonial state. Ratna Nayak successfully channeled this widespread discontent among the Bhuyans and neighboring tribal communities. Drawing upon their familiarity with the forests and hills of Kendujhar, the rebels adopted guerrilla tactics, relying on mobility, surprise attacks, and local knowledge of the terrain to challenge royal and British forces despite their lack of modern weapons and supplies.

Born in February 1821 in Tarpur (Gandibeda Danadapat), in present-day Saharpur village of Banspal block, Kendujhar, a Bhuyan pirha in the rugged hill tracts of the state. Ratna Nayak belonged to the Bhuyan community, which historically played a central role in the region's political traditions. Although details of his early life remain obscure, both historical records and oral traditions portray him as a courageous and persuasive local chieftain who commanded considerable respect among the Bhuyans. As a sardar (tribal leader), he embodied the Bhuyan political ethos that emphasized collective consent, ancestral rights, and autonomy of the pirha confederations rather than purely hereditary authority. From an early stage, he emerged as a spokesman for tribal grievances and gradually transformed scattered dissatisfaction into organized resistance.

The background to his leadership lay in the broader political and economic transformation of Kendujhar under colonial influence. After the British established control over Odisha in 1803, the princely states, including Kendujhar, were brought under indirect colonial supervision. In cooperation with the local ruling establishment, colonial authorities introduced administrative changes that increasingly burdened the tribal and peasant population. By the mid-nineteenth century, the royal administration had intensified taxation and enforced oppressive practices such as bethi (forced labor) and rasad (compulsory supply of provisions). These measures,

intended to strengthen the state treasury and sustain the court establishment, created widespread resentment among Bhuyans and other tribal groups. Recurrent protests and localized disturbances began to appear across the region, with Bhuyan sardars gradually assuming leadership roles in mobilizing resistance.

Ratna Nayak's prominence became evident during the escalating unrest of the 1840s, when tribal communities began organizing to oppose the burdens imposed by both the princely administration and the colonial authorities. In response to Ratna Nayak's call, the populace collectively refused to engage in forced labor, repudiated the payment of excessive land taxes, and openly defied the oppressive royal administration. During this period, the British administration in the region was overseen by Commissioner A. J. M. Mills. Upon observing the burgeoning mobilization led by Ratna Nayak, he expressed concern. Around 1849, a brief but impactful uprising led by the rebellious Ratna confronted royal government forces. Although Ratna Nayak was eventually arrested during this phase, he reportedly escaped, although British records noted that he was released after three days from custody. [21] This episode enhanced Ratna's reputation as a courageous sardar and reinforced his standing as a determined leader capable of defying both royal and colonial authority.

In the historical memory of Garjat Odisha, Ratna Nayak is therefore regarded as one of the earliest leaders to initiate an armed challenge against both princely despotism and British authority, making him a pioneering figure in the region's resistance tradition. Despite limited resources and inferior weaponry, he relied on innovative tactics that later became a hallmark of the 1868 Meli, guerrilla-style warfare using the dense forests and rugged terrain of the Kendujhar hills. These tactics enabled tribal fighters to evade direct engagements with better-equipped forces while harassing administrative outposts. Following his escape from custody, Ratna Nayak reorganized the movement from the forests of Kendujhar. For over two decades after his first escape from custody, he remained active in mobilizing the Bhuyan pirhas and neighboring tribal communities. He began training young tribal fighters, both men and women, in guerrilla methods,

including ambush tactics, forest mobility, and coordinated attacks against officials. Through these efforts, Ratna Nayak gradually transformed isolated protests into a structured resistance network. His influence also extended beyond the Bhuyans; sections of the Juang and Kol communities joined the movement, reflecting the broader tribal confederation that characterized political organization in the hill tracts. [22]

Under his leadership, the gathering storm, now known as 'Ratna Meli', symbolized both a community uniting to deliberate and a courageous assertion of defiance. It embodied the steadfast conviction that the pih, or tribal confederation, remained the legitimate source of political authority. Following the contested installation and coronation of Dhanurjaya Narayan Bhanja in December 1967 and, more formally, in February 1968, conducted under British supervision, Ratna Nayak and other leaders, such as Nanda Nayak, began organizing guerrilla units in the forests near Banspal. Their initiatives not only hampered government operations but also challenged the state's authority, transforming protest into active insurgency. While Queen Bishnupriya initially influenced the political landscape through her opposition and inspired Ratna Nayak to support the movement, it was Ratna's leadership that signified a definitive transition from a mere power struggle among elites to a comprehensive tribal uprising. This movement unified calls for the recognition of traditional political rights with resistance against coercive external control, thereby paving the way for a more prominent indigenous voice within the colonial framework of Kendujhar.

### **Course of the Uprising: From Protest to Armed Revolt (April-July 1868)**

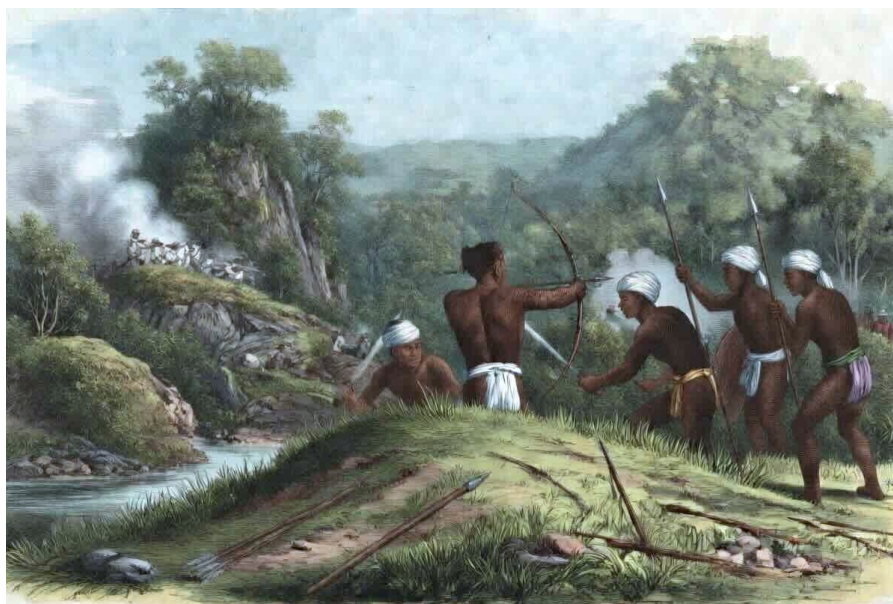
**A**fter Dhanurjay Narayan Bhanja's coronation in February 1968, a calm temporarily returned to Kendujhar, but this peace was short-lived and deceptive. Beneath the surface, tribal frustrations continued to build and ultimately reached a breaking point by mid-April 1868. Dewan (Bebarta/Chief Minister in Royal court) Chandrasekhar Dhal Mahapatra and his brother Basudeo Dhal

Mahapatra, whose policies on administration and revenue had caused unrest, continued to rule with arrogance and an oppressive mindset. [23] Dewan's dismissive attitude toward Bhuyan's petitions and grievances and his manipulation of revenue collection fuelled the unrest into an organized armed revolt. Colonial administrative reports document the gradual escalation of the Ratna Meli uprising in the months following April 1868. The rebellion began with open acts of defiance, reflecting rising anger against state officials and non-tribal elites who symbolized the authority of the King and the colonial administration.

Contemporary British records differ on the immediate provocation, though. While the Commissioner of Chotanagpur, Dalton, blamed the minister Chandrasekhar for impolitic behavior, Ravenshaw suspected the secret involvement of Queen Bishnupriya and her relative, the King of Mayurbhanj.[24]

On April 12, 1868, Ratna Nayak declared war against the oppressive royal authority. Under his leadership, the Bhuyan Meli swore an oath to overthrow the long-standing oppressive rule of the indigenous people. The tribal mobilization under him reflected a broader rejection of both princely authority and colonial interference. Contemporary accounts indicate that the rebels viewed the existing political order, represented by the Kendujhar court and the British administration, as illegitimate and oppressive.

Colonial records noted that there were reports of large gatherings of insurgents at Fota Tangpur from April 21 to May 01, 1868. These groups were described as 'riotous assemblages,' showing that the rebels were coming together in sizable numbers under organized leadership. The rebellion quickly grew more serious, with direct attacks on the state's administrative center. Ratna Nayak and Nanda Nayak led a large group of Bhuyans, Kols, and Juangs toward the royal palace at Kendujhar. Other key leaders of the uprising included Rameya Kol, Tuni Pradhan, Chandrabehara Kabatsingh, and Dasarathi Nayak, who guided the insurgents into the heart of Kendujhar. During their march, the rebels looted markets and burned the homes of officials loyal to the king. On April 21, rebels burned



### ***Guns vs Guerrillas (Representational Image)***

Dewan's house and also torched the Santharapore Sasana, an elite Hindu Brahmin settlement. The targeting of both the state officials' residence and the Brahmin settlement was significant, as it demonstrated hostility not only towards the state administration but also towards social groups perceived as collaborators with the ruling establishment.[25]

On May 01, the rebels overpowered police guards, stormed the palace, and dismantled the guns. The rebels looted Kendujhargarh, the main town and administrative hub of Kendujhar. During this raid, they abducted the Dewan along with several officials and took them into the nearby hill areas, disrupting the functioning of the local government. After this event, insurgent activity spread to several nearby villages. Early in May 1868, reports mention armed raids in Batoong, Tarah, and Gorah villages. Additional targeted attacks followed in the subsequent weeks. On May 6, 1868, a man named Urjoon Paikra was attacked. Later, on May 31, 1868, Pathanee Mishra was kidnapped by the rebels and was killed on June 1, 1868.

More incidents occurred as the insurgency expanded across the region. On May 15, 1868, a man named Gora Gooalla was abducted and later killed. Another person, Nursing Panda, was kidnapped and murdered on July 16, 1868. The rebels also targeted people associated with the local government. On June 6, 1868, Godei Singh, a guard in the Raja's service, was captured and kept confined. The following month, several other local officials were kidnapped and killed, including Gora Pradhan (a village headman), Nursing Pattar (a village officer), and Rudra Patra. These attacks were not merely random acts of banditry but targeted specific individuals and sites linked to state authority or non-tribal elites. Government personnel were also targeted. On June 9, 1868, nine constables from the Cuttack Tributary Mahal police were captured by the rebels. Additionally, several local notables were abducted and held as prisoners for various lengths of time. The rebels also kidnapped and killed the head of the Sountia tribe, Beher Jal, a supporter of the King. [26]

Another important target of the insurgents was the colonial communication system. The rebels repeatedly attacked and disrupted the dak (postal) routes, which were crucial for maintaining administrative control and communication between colonial authorities and the princely state. While the rebel bands continued guerrilla attacks on police outposts and government treasuries, the uprising spread rapidly to neighboring tribal regions, Bonai, Pal Lahara, and Dhenkanal, where sympathy for the Bhuyans ran deep. What seemed like a minor succession dispute had escalated into a regional uprising. Taken together, these incidents demonstrate that the uprising quickly moved beyond symbolic protest to become a coordinated insurgency targeting state officials, communication infrastructure, and administrative authority across Kendujhar between April and July 1868.

## Counter-Insurgency, Betrayal and Suppression of the Rebellion (May–August 1868)

As the rebellion intensified, the newly crowned King Dhanurjaya found his authority quickly eroding. A distrustful king feared for his safety as some of his own security guards sympathized with the Ratna Nayak-led rebellion. Alarmed by the worsening situation and unsure of the loyalty of his immediate forces, Dhanurjaya urgently appealed to the British Government for military assistance to restore order in the state.

The colonial administration responded swiftly and sent Dr. W. Hayes, the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum, to Kendujhar with an armed contingent. On May 7, 1868, Dr. Hayes arrived with his troops from Chaibassa, drove the militants from the area, and attempted to reconcile the rebels with the Palace. Hayes managed to rescue the King and somehow convinced Ratna Nayak to talk. However, Ratna reportedly agreed to talks but refused to release the captive Minister or to accept Dhanurjay's authority unless Brundaban Bhanja's claim was recognized. When persuasion failed, Hayes requested reinforcements, sensing more trouble ahead. Additional government troops were placed on standby in Balasore as a strategic reserve, ready to intervene if the situation escalated further.

Alongside these military measures, the authorities issued a series of formal administrative warnings. The Bhuyan rebels were ordered to disperse immediately and reminded of their earlier pledges of loyalty to the King of Kendujhar. The Queen Bishnupriya was informed of the government's position regarding the violent rebellion. A particularly stern warning was also sent to the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj Krushnachandra Bhanja, cautioning him against offering any support to the insurgents in Kendujhar and outlining the legal and political consequences of such involvement. These steps reflected the British strategy of combining military preparedness with political pressure to isolate and suppress the uprising. On May 19, Ravenshaw issued a proclamation declaring Dhanurjay as the rightful king.[27] Following the declaration, Krushnachandra Bhanja, who was aiding the rebels, became frightened and ceased to do so. As the

rebels kept attacking, the British forces arrived from all directions and trapped them, forcing them to flee to Pal Lahara and Bonai.

Brundaban Chandra Bhanja, the rival claimant supported by the queen and some political elites of Kendujhar and Mayurbhanj, was taken into custody and held in Balasore. This setback demoralized the moderate rebel faction. While he did not directly lead the resistance, his claim provided the dynastic basis for tribal opposition to emerge, making him a target for the British.

Despite the British military dominance, Ratna Nayak and his rebel force persisted, attacking British camps and intercepting convoys. Although lacking firearms, they used bows, spears, and guerrilla tactics to exploit the terrain. The British counterattack was brutal. Villages suspected of harboring rebels were burned, crops destroyed, and civilians whipped. When violence escalated, the rebels executed Dewan Chandrashekar and several others, an act driven by despair rather than cruelty. This gave the British moral grounds to escalate their repression in an effort to suppress Ratna Meli.

As the rebellion spread across the hill tracts, the British administration recognized that the local forces of Kendujhar alone would not be able to contain the insurgency. Ravenshaw, therefore, coordinated a broader campaign in July 1968 to isolate the rebels from their strongholds. The colonial government mobilized troops and simultaneously sought assistance from neighboring Garhjat rulers, including those of Bonai, Pal Lahara, Dhenkanal, and Mayurbhanj, who were politically dependent on British authority. These rulers eventually withdrew their earlier sympathies for the Bhuyans and provided military contingents to assist in suppressing the uprising. The collaboration of these princely states proved decisive. Familiar with the terrain and local networks, their forces helped locate the rebel leaders who had evaded British troops in the forests and hill tracts.

The government also enlisted Dyanidhi Deo, the crown prince of Bonai and son of King Chandra Deo, to help capture the hiding or fleeing Bhuyan rebels from their hideouts. Dyanidhi Deo not only sent soldiers but also took a personal interest in arresting the rebels,

fearing their presence could spark a new Bhuyan uprising in Bonai. On August 1, 1868, twenty-five rebel leaders hiding in Bhuyan villages surrendered, dealing a major blow to the movement and leading to the capture of leaders Nanda Nayak and Rameya Kol. The turning point came when Raja Bindheswari Prasad Singh Deo of Udaipur sent local forces familiar with the terrain, who successfully attacked rebel strongholds inaccessible to the British. Ratna Nayak, betrayed by the rulers, including the Queen Bishnupriya and Krushnachandra Bhanja, who had previously supported his Meli, left his side during the peak of the uprising, ostensibly under pressure from the British. He was surrounded near Pal Lahara and captured on August 15, 1868. [28] With Ratna Nayak's capture, the rebellion quickly unraveled. Hundreds of rebels surrendered, and many others fled deep into the forests. By the end of August 1868, most rebel leaders were in custody. The trials, conducted under British oversight, were notably harsh and retributive.

Following the suppression of the uprising, the British authorities handed down strict penalties on those involved. The rebel leader Ratna Nayak, along with Dasarathi Kumar, Baikuntha Kol, Padu Nayak, Tuni Pradhan, Margasiri Kol, and Bairagi Kol, were all sentenced to death by hanging for their roles in the uprising on charges of murder, plunder, and waging war against the king, including the killing of Dewan Chandrashekar Dhal and 30 others. A larger group of rebels faced forced transportation, including Babu Nayak, Rania Kol, Nanda Padhan, Juang Dehuri, and others, highlighting the revolt's wide-ranging repercussions. Several individuals received sentences of 12 years or more, including Bikrama Mahapatra, Banamali Rana, and Gangadhara Patra, underscoring the serious consequences of their actions. Others, including Pathania Samanta Garhnayak and Prahlada Dandasena, were sentenced to ten years of penal transportation or imprisonment. In total, thirty people received seven-year sentences, while fifty-one others were given sentences of less than seven years. Additionally, rewards were announced for the capture of ten rebels who had gone into hiding.

On November 30, 1868, Ratna Nayak and six of his companions were hanged at Cuttack Jail, officially ending the uprising. These

severe actions, as noted in colonial records, were part of the British effort to set an example and discourage further resistance in the kingdom of Kendujhar and elsewhere in the Garhjat states.[29] Despite the military suppression of the movement, Ratna Meli left a deep imprint on the political memory of the Bhuyan community. Commissioner Ravenshaw himself later acknowledged that the succession dispute and the rebellion had “protracted itself over eight years, producing a chronic state of unrest throughout the highlands.” The rebellion demonstrated that the conflict in Kendujhar was not merely a local disturbance but a sustained challenge to the legitimacy of the political order imposed by colonial authority and its allied princely rulers.

## Conclusion

From a historical perspective, Ratna Nayak’s leadership transformed local grievances into a broader movement that combined resistance to princely authority with opposition to colonial intervention. His struggle was rooted in defending customary political rights, particularly the Bhuyans’ traditional role in determining the legitimacy of the ruler, but it also articulated a broader claim to justice and autonomy. By mobilizing multiple tribal communities and confronting both feudal authority and colonial power, Ratna Nayak emerged as one of the earliest tribal leaders in Odisha to articulate a political vision grounded in collective rights and self-rule. The significance of the Ratna Meli, therefore, extends beyond the immediate events of 1868. It marked a moment when indigenous communities translated long-standing customary practices into a political assertion of authority over their own governance. In doing so, the Bhuyans challenged colonial portrayals of tribal societies as politically passive. Their resistance demonstrated organization, strategic planning, and a clear understanding of legitimacy and sovereignty.

Ratna Nayak’s execution did not extinguish the grievances that had produced the rebellion. Rather, it strengthened his position in regional historical memory as a martyr of tribal resistance. His defiance is often compared with that of other figures of early

resistance in Odisha, such as Jayi Rajguru (Khurda Rising of 1804), and with later indigenous movements elsewhere in India (besides Dharani Meli and Madri Kalo-led movements). Like the Santhal uprising of 1855–56 or Birsa Munda's Ulgulan of 1899–1900, the Ratna Meli reflected the broader confrontation between indigenous systems of governance and the expanding authority of colonial rule.

Seen in this wider context, Ratna Nayak can be regarded as a pioneer of tribal political assertion and indigenous nationalism in nineteenth-century eastern India. His struggle was not merely a reaction to administrative grievances but a defense of a moral and political order rooted in community consent and customary rights. Although the rebellion was crushed through military force and the collaboration of neighboring rulers loyal to the British, the ideals it represented, justice, autonomy, and the dignity of indigenous communities, continued to resonate in later movements across Odisha. Today, Ratna Nayak remains an enduring symbol of resistance in Odisha's history. His leadership during the Meli demonstrated how local struggles for customary rights could evolve into broader expressions of political consciousness. In that sense, the uprising stands as an early chapter in the longer history of indigenous assertion and anti-colonial resistance in India.

## **NOTES**

[1] In this paper, the terms 'uprising', resistance and rebellion' are used interchangeably to describe the organized insurrection led by Ratna Nayak in Kendujhar during the late 1860s. These terms broadly refer to collective acts of resistance against established authority (often termed as 'Meli' and the leader as 'Melia' in Odia), whether a ruling state, monarchy, or colonial administration, arising from political, economic, or social grievances. Even though in historical writing, these terms sometimes carry subtle distinctions. For example, an uprising generally denotes a sudden or rapidly mobilized popular revolt against specific policies, authorities, or immediate injustices. A rebellion, by contrast, is often understood as a more sustained and organized movement that challenges the legitimacy of political authority and may involve prolonged confrontation with the state. In the case of the Kendujhar disturbances of 1867–68, the resistance displayed similar characteristics: it emerged from immediate grievances. Still, it

evolved into a structured and prolonged challenge to princely and colonial authority. For this reason, the author employs these terms where appropriate, without implying a rigid conceptual distinction between them.

[2] Neil Stewart, “Divide and Rule: British Policy in Indian History”, *Science & Society*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter, 1951), pp. 49-57.

[3] For a comprehensive report on Dharanidhar Nayak and his rebellion, see Animesh Roul, “Dharanidhar Nayak: The Forgotten Flame of Kendujhar,” *Gonasika Paper*, Number 3, June 27, 2025. <https://gonasika.org/dharanidhar-nayak/>. For other scholarly works on the subject, see Jaganath Patnaik, *Biplabi Dhanaridhar* (Odia Language), Academy of Tribal Dialect and Culture, Bhubaneswar, 1992, and Prasanna Kumar Mishra. (1987), “Political Economy of Tribal Uprisings in Keonjhar in 1891-93”, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 48, 1987, 383–389.

[4] Pravat K. Mallick, “Madri Kalo and the First Tribal Uprising in the State of Gangpur”, *Orissa Review*, January, 2007. <https://magazines.odisha.gov.in/orissareview/jan-2007/engpdf/64-67.pdf>.

[5] See, Lalatendu Das Mohapatra, “Kendujhar Uprising” in Bhabani Charan Ray (et al.), *Freedom Struggle in Orissa: Pre-Nationalist Era, 19th Century*, Orissa State Archives, 2004; Pravat Mallick, “The Raj, the Rajas and the Bhuiyans: Revisiting the Kendujhar Rebellion of 1867 and Its Impact on Bonai”, in Maguni Charan Behera (ed), *Tribe-British Relations in India*, Springer, 2021; Biswamoy Pati, “The Diversities of Tribal Resistance in Colonial Orissa, 1840s–1890s: Survival, Interrogation and Contests,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 48, No. 37, 2013; and, C. P. Nanda “Validating Tradition and Bhuiyan Insurgency in Georg Berkemer and Margret Frenz (ed), *Colonial Orissa, in Sharing Sovereignty: The Little Kingdom in South Asia*, Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin 2003.

[6] A few Odia-language books are also worth noting here for their contribution to a broader understanding of Kendujhar’s socio-political history. See S. Mohanty’s *Kimbadanti Bahula Kendujhar* (1986), Niranjan Barik’s *Kendhujhar Itibas* (1998), and Pandit M. Mishra’s *Kendujhar Itibasa*, Vol. 2 (2015).

[7] After the Mughal conquest of Odisha in 1576, the region was generally divided into two political (revenue) zones: Mughalbandi and Garhjat. Mughalbandi referred to the coastal plains, from Medinapur (in present-day West Bengal) to Rajahmundry (present-day Rajamahendravaram, Andhra Pradesh), which were governed directly by Mughal officials through several sarkars for revenue and administration. In contrast, the Garhjat included the forested and hilly interior, ruled by semi-

autonomous Hindu chiefs who paid tribute to the Mughal Subedar at Cuttack. Under Maratha control (from 1751), this division persisted, with about 24 Garhjat tributary states. After the British took control of Odisha in 1803, these areas fell under colonial rule, although the Garhjat states maintained limited princely independence. See, Bhabani Charan Ray, *Orissa under Marathas (1751-1803)*, Kitab Mahal, 1960, pp.126-132; Subash Chandra Barik, *British Trade Policy in Orissa, 1803-1900*, RNB Publication, 2001.

[8] In 1803, during the Second Anglo-Maratha War, the British rapidly conquered coastal Odisha in a military campaign led by Colonel Harcourt under Lord Wellesley. Beginning in September, Bengal forces took Balasore and Puri, and by October 14, 1803, they had also seized Cuttack and the strategic Barabati Fort, ending Maratha dominance in Odisha. See, *Commencement of English rule, Orissa Under Mahomedan, Maratha And Eng. Rule*, pp. 313-315.

[9] N. Patnaik, S. P. Rout, A. Ali, and K. B. Debi, "Handbook on the Pauri Bhuinya," *Adibasi*, 1978–1979, Volume 19, Issue 1–4, Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute (Government of Orissa), 1980.

[10] Edward T Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, The Government of Bengal, Under The Direction of The Council of The Asiatic Society of Bengal. Calcutta: Office of The Superintendent of Government Printing. 1872. pp. 141-148.

[11] Edward T Dalton attended Dhanurjaya Bhanja's coronation in February 1868 and, in some detail, described the traditions and rituals and the Bhuyan communities' participation in the consecration ceremony. See, Edward T Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, The Council of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta 1872. pp. 141-148.

[12] Ibid.

[13] See, "Appendix: Twenty-five Questions addressed to the Rajahs and Chiefs of the Regulation and Tributary Mehals, by the Superintendent, in 1814, and the Answers given thereto, Illustrating the Established Practice regarding Succession to the Guddee, &c." in Jogendra Chunder Ghose, *The Law Of Impartible Property*, R Cambay and Co. Calcutta, Vol. 1, 1916, pp.508-526. Also cited in J K Samal, *Orissa Under The British Crown-1858-1905*, p.321.

[14] Triveni Sangam is located in present-day Bansberia, Hooghly district of West Bengal. Gadadhar Bhanja (coronated as King in 1839) maintained cordial relations with the British and supported them during the 1857 mutiny by supplying arms, sepoy, and provisions. He aided Colonel W.R. Forster's military operations in 1958

against rebel Raja Arjun Singh of Porahat. His loyal services earned him the title of 'Maharaja.' He died on March 22, 1861, suffering from Cholera. See Prasanna Kumar Mishra, *Political Unrest in Orissa in the 19th Century*, Punthi Pushtak, 1983; J K Samal, *Orissa Under The British Crown-1858-1905*, Sultan Chand, 1977.

[15] Gadadhar Bhanja had two sons from his wife, Phoola-Bibhai, Kamala Devi: Dhanurjay Narayan Bhanja and Chandrasekhar Narayan Bhanja.

[16] See, J K Samal, *Orissa-Under British Crown*, pp.320-321

[17] After compiling the responses to the Pachees Sawal (25 Questions), the East India Company codified the governing principles in Regulation XI of 1816. This regulation established the legal framework for the administration of the sixteen tributary mahals of Odisha that fell under the British authorities in Cuttack. Together, the Pachees Sawal and Regulation XI of 1816 formed the cornerstone of British policy toward the tributary states of Odisha. By codifying customary practices and integrating them into colonial legal structures, the British exercised decisive influence over the internal affairs of these semi-autonomous polities. While presented as a mechanism for preserving local traditions, the system effectively placed the legitimacy of rulers and the settlement of succession disputes under colonial control. This framework later played a critical role in shaping political tensions in several Garhjat states, including Kendujhar. See, Jogender C. Ghose, *The Law of Impartible Property* (Vol 1), R Cambay and Co., Calcutta, 1916. pp. 499-526.

[18] Prasanna Kumar Mishra, *Political Unrest in Orissa in the 19th Century*, Punthi Pushtak, 1983.

[19] Lalatendu Das Mohapatra, "Kendujhar Uprisings", in Bhabani Charan Ray, Mahesh Prasad Dash, Chittaranjan Mishra, Atul Chandra Pradhan, and Nihar Ranjan Patnaik (ed), *Freedom Struggle In Orissa Pre-Nationalist Era: Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1, Orissa State Archives, 2004.

[20] For a detailed discussion on these economic factors, see Prasanna Kumar Mishra, *Political Unrest in Orissa in the 19th Century*, Punthi Pushtak, 1983.

[21] Ibid.

[22] D.J. Paikray, *Kendujharare Adibasi Andolanara Itibas*, Chitrotapala Publication, Salepur, 2009.

[23] See, *Orissa-Under British Crown*, pp.320-321

[24] CE Buckland, *Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors*, Vol. 1, S. K. Lahiri, Calcutta, 1901.

[25] Biswamoy Pati, “The Diversities of Tribal Resistance in Colonial Orissa, 1840s-1890s: Survival, Interrogation and Contests.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48, no. 37 (2013): 49–58.

[26] Ibid. Also see, Prasanna Kumar Mishra, *Political Unrest in Orissa in the 19th Century*, 1983, p. 141.

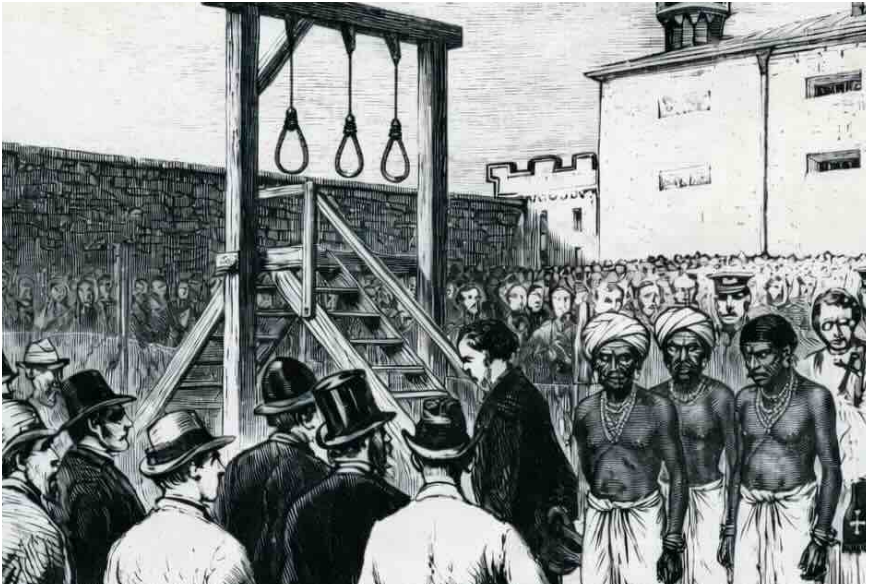
[27] Prasanna Kumar Mishra, *Political Unrest in Orissa in the 19th Century*, 1983.

[28] Historical accounts suggest that the King of Pal Lahara, driven by political ambition and loyalty to the colonial authorities, played a crucial role in betraying Ratna Nayak and handing him over to the British.

[29] See the Appendix for the Judgment of the Kendujhar Trial 1968. Different chroniclers documented different numbers of convictions and sentences. CE Buckland mentioned 4, including Ratna Nayak, who was sentenced to capital punishment. While J K Samal, Ratna Nayak, and 4 others were sentenced to death. Appendix Source: HK Mahatab, *History of The Freedom-Movement In Orissa*, Vol. 2, 1957. p 130.

*APPENDIX:*

## Judgment on the Kendujhar Trial (1868)



*Public execution in Cuttack, 1868. (Representational Image)*

### 1. Capital Punishment (Execution)

Total Executed: 7

1 Ratna Naik (Leader)

2 Dasarathi Kumar

3 Baikuntha Kol

4 Padu Naik

5	Tuni Pradhan
6	Margasiri Kol
7	Bairagi Kol

## 2. Transportation for Life (Imprisonment)

1	Babu Naik
2	Rania Kol
3	Nanda Pradhan
4	Juang Dehuri
5	Charan Dehuri
6	Gadadhar Singh Babu
7	Kanhu Adhikari
8	Ghana Ulabhai
9	Dhana Dehuri,
10	Chemta Padhan
11	Chandra Behera Kabatsingh
12	Keonjharia Juang
13	Ghasia Patra
14	Pindika Sahani
15	Dasa Naik
16	Majua Juang
17	Baidhara Naik

18	Nanda Mallika
19	Sukra Padhan
20	Oriya Juang
21	Uddhaba Jena

### 3. Transportation for 12 Years and Above

**Total: 13 individuals**

1	Bikrama Mahapatra
2	Banamali Rana
3	Gangadhara Patra
4	Tila Phaudakara
5	Kambu Mahapatra
6	Sukanath Mahapatra
7	Basu Padhana
8	Phagu Dehuri
9	Sudananda Naik
10	Bamadeva Rana
11	Kusa Juang
12	Bhanjakara Majhi
13	Bhadri Dehuri

### 4. Transportation for Imprisonment (10 Years)

**Total: 10 individuals**

1	Pathania Smanata Garhnaik
2	Danai Phaudakara
3	Rajiba Jujarsingh
4	Panchu Mahapatra
5	Prahlada Dandasena
6	Bisi Gadnayak
7	Isvar Nayak
8	Krushnakhala Babu
9	Senda Garhnaik
10	Patita Singh

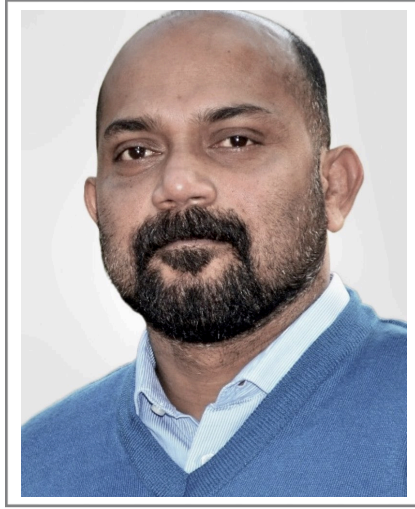
## 5. Additional Sentences

**30 individuals → 7 years imprisonment**

**51 individuals → less than 7 years**

**10 absconders → rewards announced**

*Source: H K Mahatab, History-Of-The-Freedom-Movement In Orissa, Manmohan Press, Cuttack, Vol. 2, 1957.*



Animesh Roul is a founding member and currently serves as the Executive Director of the Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict (SSPC), an independent policy research group based in New Delhi. He is actively engaged with a range of security think tanks, media platforms, and policy-oriented institutions in India and internationally, contributing to research, analysis, and informed public discourse on security and conflict-related issues. Roul holds an M.Phil. from the School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, and a Master's degree in Modern Indian History from Vani Vihar, Utkal University, Odisha. His academic training reflects an interdisciplinary grounding in international relations and historical inquiry. His areas of interest span security, strategy, and philosophy, with a sustained engagement in exploring the dynamics of history and human conflict. He also maintains a strong research interest in military history and the colonial history of India, examining how historical processes and imperial legacies continue to shape contemporary security environments and conflict trajectories.





# Gonasika Research Foundation

38

KEONJHAR STATES  
SCALE 1 INCH = 16 MILES.

<https://gonasika.org>

REFER  
COMMON BOUNDARY K. —  
PABRI BHUYAN & JUANG