CHAPTER - III

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF
NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY
Early Life

A saint by conduct and appearance, a socialist in approach, the founder of socialist movement in Orissa, a man of simple living and high thinking, and an unconventional follower of Gandhiji, Nabakrushna Choudhury was a man of multi-dimensional personality. He was a renowned freedom fighter and crusader for social reforms. He was popularly known as ‘Naba Babu’ among the people of Orissa and fondly called TUNA by his parents (Maharana 2010). He was born on 23rd November, 1901, at Swaraj Ashram, Cuttack, in an aristocratic zamindary family of Raibahadur Gokulananda Choudhury, a lawyer by profession of village of Kherash in Jagatsingpur (now a separate district), in the then undivided district of Cuttack, in Orissa province. Gokulananda Choudhury was one of the close associates of Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das and thus was associated with Utkal Union Conference. His mother Padmavati Devi, a pious lady, was the daughter of Sadananda Mohanty, one-time zamindar of Bentakar, a big village, much closer to Cuttack town. Padmavati was the mother of eleven babies, born within close gap, out of those, seven died prematurely and of rest four, two were son, the eldest one, Gopabandhu Choudhury and the youngest, Nabakrushna Choudhury.

After his early schooling in the primary school, Nabakrushna was later admitted to Pyarimohan Academy, a non-government high school in Cuttack town, where from, he passed his Matriculation Examination at the age 16 in 1917. But, as ill-
luck, it was for Nabakrushna Choudhury, he lost his father in 1915, just two years before he passed his matriculation examination

After his father’s sad demise, the entire family burden was shouldered by Nabakrushan Choudhury’s elder brother Gopabadhu Choudhury, who was then getting ready for his Civil Service Examination. Being inspired by the Gandhian philosophy, he joined the freedom movement and worked for the welfare of the poor villagers and also had made immense sacrifice for the freedom movement in Orissa and served as the president of Cuttack District Board (1924) and also act as the president of the Orissa Pradesh Congress Committee (Nayak 2001 3)

However for his higher studies, Nabakrushan Choudhury found Ravenshaw College² in FA class in 1917 and cleared his FA Examination in 1919, and thereafter, got admitted to BA classes. His college education was literally financed by his elder brother, Gopabandhu Choudhury, who was then working as a Deputy Magistrate, a lucrative government job, which he relinquished later on to join the freedom movement (Mohanty 2005 70)

During his student days in the college, India’s freedom movement was already in full swing. This movement fascinated Nabakrushna so much that, while studying BA he discontinued his studies, left the college and joined the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1917. A few others also followed him and they were Rajkrushna Bose, Nityananda Kanungo and Sri Harekrushna Mahatab who also joined Freedom Movement. Infact, the call to the students and youth of Orissa to join the Non-Cooperation Movement was given by Gopabandhu Das, who in his address in a public meeting held in the river-bed of Kathajori, at Cuttack town, had inspired them towards the non-violent freedom struggle.
Nabakrushnan Choudhury was one of the founder members of Bharati Mandir, a library established, at Bakhrabad in Cuttack Town in early 1920’s by Gopabandhu Choudhury. Apart from Nabakrushna Choudhury, the other founder members of the library were Bhagirathi Mahapatra, Nityananda Kanungo, Jadumani Manguraj, Harekrushna Mahatab, Prahallad Sahu, Bashir Saheb, and Nikunja kishore Das. It was intended to inspire the educated youth for achieving cultural and political independence. At that time ‘Bharati Mandir’ became a centre for progressive political discussions (Mohanty 2005:170).

Subsequently, Nabakrushna left for Sabarmati Ashram, which was set up by Gāndhi and stayed there for long two years with Gāndhi. There, he learnt the art of spinning and weaving that helped him a lot in the later years, when he worked as a teacher at Alaka Ashram, which was established by Gopabandhu Choudhury, (elder brother of Nabakrushna Choudhury) near Jagatsinghpur. On return from Sabarmati Ashram, Nabakrushna proceeded to Santiniketan in 1926, an open–air natural school, founded by the Nobel laureate, Viswakavi Rabindranath Tagore for imparting higher education. There, Nabakrushna studied ‘Rural Economics’ along with Political Science and Bengali Literature. In fact, he was deeply influenced by the cultural environment that prevailed around the school (Maharana 2010).

During his stay at Santiniketan, Nabakrushna was so deeply impressed by the amazing personality of Malati Sen, a Bengali educated girl of a well-to-do Bengali family of Bramho Samaj, that he, on his own, proposed her to marry. Despite all protest of his family members including his widowed mother, with the lone exception of his elder brother Gopabandhu, he married Malati Devi in July 1927, at
Calcutta (now Kolkata) and thus Malati Sen became Malati Choudhury, the beloved wife and life partner of Nabakrushna Choudhury (Nayak 2001). After marriage they left Santiniketan in 1927 and settled down in a small village named Anakhia (now in Jagatsinghpur, Orissa) and there, Nabakrushna Choudhury started improved sugarcane cultivation (www.enotes.com/topic/Malati-choudhury-Asram). There, he also started various types of social activities regarding rural development. They helped poor farmers to improve sugarcane cultivation and also started adult education in the surrounding villages (www.indianetzone.com> >Indian freedom fighter).

**NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY AND FREEDOM MOVEMENT**

The people of Orissa, in large numbers, had actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement of 1940 and the Quit India Movement that came in 1942. Among the prominent Odias, who joined and actively participated in these three spectacular movements, were Pandit Godavarisha Mishra, Pandit Nilakantha Das, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Harekrushna Mahatab, Biswanath Das, Acharya Harihar, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Surendranath Dwivedi and many others.

Nabakrushna Choudhury was popularly known among the then Odias as Naba Baboo, actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 and was arrested in 1932 for violating the famous ‘Salt Law’ at Enchudi, a place in Balasore district. He was shifted to Hazaribagh Central Jail from Cuttack, along with a few others, including his elder brother Gopabandhu Choudhury and his wife Malati Choudhury. In the Jail, both Nabakrushna Choudhury and Malati Choudhury taught...
the fellow prisoners and propagated Gandhiji’s thought and views and were released from jail on 8th November 1930 (www.wikipeetia.org/Historic-sites-in-Orissa)

The Salt-Satyagraha of 1930’s was a memorable chapter in the history of India’s freedom movement. Salt Satyagraha, as was popularly called and continued in the coastal areas of Orissa in full swing and was successfully organized in Baliapal and Bhograi areas of north Balasore district. Thousands of villagers participated in that movement. About the participation of the villagers in the Salt Satyagraha, Prana Krishnasa Padhiary, the secretary of Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee made the following observation:

This movement has found recruits from the masses, exclusively, so to say people from remote villages have enrolled themselves as volunteers and are given splendid support to it. The apathy of the rich landed classes, as well as, the people receiving and having received higher English education are marked. In refreshing contrast, the enthusiasm of the so called illiterate masses and the mercantile community in general, is very encouraging. The sight of rustic men and women defying European officers is worth remembered for (Pranakrushna Padhiary’s Report).

Most of the people, jailed during that time including Nabakrushna Choudhury, because of their active participation in it. He was also arrested at ‘Srijanga’ in Balasore district, in July 1930, for his active participation in ‘No-Choukidary Tax’ payment campaign. However he was released on 8th November 1930. Out of that movement, emerged women leaders like Rama Devi (wife of Gopabandhu Choudhury), Malati Choudhury (wife of Nabakrushna Choudhury), and Sarala Devi who played an important role in the nationalist movement and the public life in Orissa (Government of Orissa 2009).
During the period of slow down in the freedom movement, after 1931, Nabakrushna Choudhury shifted his family to Alaka Ashram in 'Chatara Village' (now in the district of Jagatsinghpur) which, his elder brother, Gopabandhu Choudhury had established. Both Nabakrushna Choudhury and Gopabandhu Choudhury engaged themselves in teaching the people. Co-relation between head and hand was the hallmark of this Ashram. There, they got engaged themselves in several community welfare constructive programmes for the villagers, including fight amongst untouchability, which was a social taboo in those days (Maharana 2010).

Nabakrushna Choudhury got himself engaged in several constructive programmes for the welfare of the community. He was like Gandhiji, also organised the people for taking up some constructive programmes, the most important of which was attaining self-sufficiency in clothing through spinning and weaving. Unfortunately, spinning and weaving had been completely stopped in Orissa. In 1922, Nabakrushna Choudhury went to Sabaramati in Gujarat to learn all about Khadi, the principal philosophy of spinning and weaving and within ten months, Nabakrushna Choudhury tried to organize Gandhian constructive programmes in Orissa despite opposition from his own family and others (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_choudhury).

Like Gandhiji, the constructive programmes of Nabakrushna Choudhury were mainly concerned with the formation of local government. Before the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, efforts were made to decentralize the power to the Gram Panchayats, was progress towards the actual dream of Gandhi’s “Gram Swaraj.” The fundamental concept of ‘Gram Swaraj’ is that every village should be
its own republic, independent. The virtue of “small is beautiful” is always preferred by Gandhi as he visualized the future of India lies in the development of these small villages.

The universalisation of Primary Education. Like Gandhi, Nabakrushna Choudhury regarded education as the light of life and the very source from which, was created an awareness of oneness. Gandhian way of education put emphasis on the development of body, mind, heart and soul. His scheme of education he called “Nai Talim” a beautiful blend of craft, art, health and education in one and covers the whole education of the individual till death. His education is more for girls than the boys.

Nabakrushna Choudhury gives utmost importance towards the development or empowerment of women. Realizing this virtue of women empowerment, he writes man should learn to give place to women and a country or community in which women are not honoured can not be considered as visualized.

Last but not the least, his constructive work was mostly stands for breaking the gap between touchable and untouchables and he always stands for the welfare of the people mainly belonging to the downtrodden section of the society.

**NABAKRUSHNA AND THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT**

About half a dozen of young congress men of Orissa, led by Nabakrushna Choudhury, the prominent among them were Gourang Charan Das, Udayanath Sarangi, Ramakrishna Nanda and Manmohan Choudhury, secretly formed ‘Utkal Congress Communist League’. It was the socialist organization of Orissa born prior
to the formation of the congress socialist party at the national level. All its members took the vow not to own any private property and at the same time, to give away to the new born league, whatever private property, had they owned. Interestingly, Nabakrushna Choudhury’s beloved wife, Malati Choudhury donated to the league all her jewelries that she had got from her parents, at her marriage time. Nabakrushna Choudhury did also donate to the league the small agricultural farm that he had in his possession, in Anokhia village (now in Jagatsinghpur district) (Ghosh 1991: 29).

The young congress-socialists did have labour hard in helping the peasants with relief support during the high flood of 1933. A news letter, ‘Sarathi’ as the mouth piece of the league in Orissa, which was brought out on 1st May 1933, with the head line, ‘Workers of the World Unite’ (Mohanty 2005: 320).

Nabakrushna Choudhury was one of the foremost leaders of the peasant movement in Orissa and figured prominently in the All India Peasant Conference. He founded the journal ‘Krusaka’, to uphold the cause of the peasants. In lunching the peasant movement in the organized form of a mass agitation, he seemed to have adopted the Gandhian style of symbolic action. His clear instruction to the peasants not to lie prostrate before the landlords, but to stand erect and politely fold the hands as equals, had the desired results. The peasants of British Orissa, who marched into the princely states, almost in the Garibaldian manner, and waged a war against the princes (Mohanty 2005: 320).

The failure of civil disobedience movement in 1932 made the younger generation in congress party totally disillusioned and was critical of effective leadership and guidance of party in the freedom movement, in the days to come.
Being dissatisfied and disillusioned, a few young congress men having their faith, intact with the socialistic principles, took initiative in organizing the ‘Socialist Group’ in Bihar (1931), in Utter Pradesh and Bombay (1933-34). Its main objective was to create “a progressive radical leadership in their struggle for freedom”

Prominent among them were Jayaprakash Narayan (popularly called J P), Ashok Meheta, Achyut Patwardhan, Yushuff Meherally, N G Goray and S M Joshi with whom joined Acharya Narendra Dev, Sampurnanda and Shripaksh. Latter on all these young men were deeply convinced that the formation of ‘Congress Socialist Party’ would give a new dimension to India’s freedom movement.

The first All-India socialist conference was held on 17th May 1934, at Patna and was presided over by Acharya Narayan Dev. About 100 delegates attended the conference, in which emphasis was laid on fighting amongst Zamindars—capitalist alliance and to support the cause of lower middle class and the workers. It was decided in the Patna conference to form an All-India Congress Socialist Party and a committee to draw up its constitution was setup, with Acharya Narayan Dev as its President and Jayaprakash Narayan as its Secretary and other members of this committee were Abdul Bari, Minoo R Masani, Sampurnananda, Purushottamdas Tricumdas, Faridul Huq and, C C Banerjee (Chandra 1989 304).

The first session of the ‘Orissa Congress Socialist Party’ was held in the residence of Nabakrushna Choudhury at Cuttack in 1934, which was presided over by Acharya Narayan Deva, the principal of Kashī Vidyapītha (Dwivedi 1984 65).

The socialist group had its first meeting held at Bombay in 21st October 1934, and Sampurnananda was unanimously elected as its Chairman. This conference was
attended by 150 delegates. The prominent among those who had attended this conference, included Dr Ram Manohar Lohia, F M Ansari, Jayaprakash Narayan, Sampurnananda, Mohanlal Goutam, M R Masani, Mrs Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Achyut Patwardhan and P K Pillai. The Bombay meeting endorsed the idea of formation of the ‘All India Socialist Party’ All-India Congress Socialist Party was organized with delegates from thirteen states. Thus the formation of Congress Socialist Party in 1934 was regarded as a landmark in the history of the freedom struggle in general and the socialist movement in particular. From the very beginning, the Congress Socialist Party agreed upon the basic proposition that India had to be freed. Nationalism was the necessary stage to socialism and that the socialist must work inside the National Congress, because, the latter was the primary body leading to national struggle (Chandra 1989:320).

On 10th June 1935, a peasant conference was held in the Cuttack town hall, under the chairmanship of Godavarish Mishra. The socialists of Orissa formed a Kishan Sangha, with Hare Krushna Mahtab as the President, on 10th August 1935. In April 1936 the annual session of Indian National Congress and All India Kishan Sabha were held at Lucknow. S N Dwivedi and Nabakrushna Choudhury attended the subject committee of the All India Kishan Sabha, held in Lucknow, under the Presidentship of Swami Sahajananda of Bihar. From Orissa, the following dignitaries were elected as the member of the working committee of All India Kishan Sabha - Harekrushna Mahtab, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Malati Choudhury, Dibakar Patnaik and Gatikrushna Swain (De 1964:1).

The socialist leaders like Nabakrushna Choudhury, Pranananth Patnaik, Gangadhar Mishra, Gatikrushna Swain, Gokul Mohan Rai, Chudaman, Mohan Das,
Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi and others tried to unite the peasants under the socialist banner in a meeting held at Puri on 10th May 1936, a committee was formed, consisting of Nabakrushna Choudhury, Harekrushna Mahtab, Godavarish Mishra, Jagabandhu Singh and Gorachand Patnaik to look into peasants grievances and consult public opinion regarding the amendment of Orissa Tenancy Act (Pradhan 1997:82).

A meeting of the working committee of Utkal Provincial Kishan Sabha was held at Puri on 14th August 1936. A committee was formed consisting of Harekrushna Mahtab, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Rajakrushna Bose, Lingaraj Mishra and Malati Choudhury to inquiry into the grievances of peasants and submit a report to Provincial Congress Committee (Mahtab (ed) 1969:25).

On 1st September 1936, All India Kishan Day was observed in different places of Orissa and a resolution was passed, demanding reduction of rent, amendment of tenancy laws and relief from peasants' indebtedness (Mahtab (ed) 1969:25).

**NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY AND THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1937**

Orissa became a separate province on 1st April 1936, being separated from Bihar, of which it was a part since 1912. The general election to constitute the new provincial legislative assembly of Orissa and of other states was held in 1937 and it was the first such election fought on party lines (Chandra 1989).

Election to provisional assembly of Orissa was held for 56 electoral seats, out of the total strength of 60. The election took place in January 1937 on the basis of limited franchise, it was not held like the present day practice of Universal Adult Franchise. The limited suffrage system prescribed certain educational qualifications.
and put stress on having regular source of income. Thus, those who were assessed for income tax, passed an examination not lower than final middle class examination, or assessed to chaukidari tax not less than nine annas a year, paid rent and land revenue not less than two rupees per annum or local cess not less than one anna (in Cuttack, Puri, Balasore districts and Anugul Subdivision) or paid land revenue not less than two rupees per annum (in the district of Ganjam and Vzagapatam and Khandmal Subdivision) or paid land revenue not less than one rupee per annum or village cess not less than one anna (in the district of Sambalpur) were given the right to vote (Government of Orissa 1937 10-13).

Out of 60 seats, 56 were open to contest and 4 were reserved for nominated representatives of backward tribes. Again out of 56, 41 were general rural seats, 6 were for scheduled castes, 2 for women, 2 for landholders, 4 for Mohammedans and 1 for Christians. Out of a total of 4, 90,381 voters in the 56 contested constituencies, 2,65,261 - i.e. about 54%-recorded valid votes (Ghosh 1991 31).

In this election, The Indian National Congress won 36 out of 40 seats it contested. Nabakrushna Choudhury was elected from East-Cuttack Sadar (Ersama) general constituency, to the provisional assembly (Mahapatra 1941). He did not join the congress ministry led by Biswanath Das and choose to confine as an M.L.A in pursuance of the guidelines laid down by the socialists at the All-India level.

**NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY AND CONGRESS FACTIONALISM**

Factionalism has been an inherent feature of the India’s party system. What is a faction? A “faction” is “a clique with a longer fluctuating membership (Brass 1956, P-56) In general, the factors arise in their struggle for power and are generally engaged in intra-party fights (Hartman 1982 46).
The then, Orissan party politics from 1937 to 1947 and beyond was no exception to factionalism. The Orissa Unit of Indian National Congress was then split into three factional groups, the Swarajists, the Gandhians, and the Communist–Socialists.

The Gandhian group, led by Gopabandhu Das, includes young and non-brahmin holders from districts of Cuttack and Balasore. Such as Harekrushna Mahatab, Nityananda Kanungo, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Jadumani Ray, and Raj Kishor Bose.

The Swarajist included Brahmin from Puri District and included Pt Godabansh Mishra, Pt Nilakantha Das, Acharya Harishara Das, Lingaraj Mishra, and Krupasindhu Mishra who were the pioneers of the Satyabadi School founded at Sakhigopal, in Puri district by Gopabandhu Das.

The Congress-Socialists in Orissa led by Sarangdhar Das and Nabakrushna Choudhury formed a separate political entity and emphasized on ‘Agitational Politics’, directed against feudal lords. It was one of the political developments of that time (Das and Choudhury 1993, 54-82).

**NABAKRUSHNA CHoudhury and 1946 Assembly Election**

With the end of Second World War in 1945, Orissa got ready by November 1945, for the incoming election for the Provisional Legislative Assembly to be held in 1946. This election, like one of that 1937, was to be fought on basis restricted franchise. Nabakrushna Choudhury, by that time left Congress Socialistst Party and had come nearer to Harekrushna Mahatab and the Indian National
Congress Nabakrushna Choudhury won the election uncontested as Congress Party’s nominee from north-Kendrapada constituency. The election result had revealed the increased position for the Congress party. It got 47 seats (out of 56 seats) including 36 seats, won uncontested. The rest 9 seats were won among others, by the Muslim League (4 seats), Independent Candidates (4 seats) and by the Communist Party of India (1 seat).

Subsequently, the Governor nominated four from the backward area, such as Rev. E. M. Evans, Shri Hari panji Jennah, Shri Balabhadra Narayan Samanthroy and Shri Radha Mohan Panda, who were respectively represented the Ghumusar-Udayagiri, and Serango (in Ganjam District), and Nowarangpur, (Koraput District) and Rayagada (Koraput District). A Congress ministry was formed and assumed office on 23rd April 1946, with Harekrushna Mahtab as the Prime Minister of Orissa. Mahtab ministry included four ministers including Nabakrushna Choudhury who was in the charge of Revenue, Supply and Transport. Other three members were Nityananda Kanungo, Lingaraj Mishra and Radha Krushna Biswasray.

Nabakrushna Choudhury could not serve a full term and had resigned on 23rd April 1948. He was by that time had completed only two years in office, following the sad demise of his beloved son, Kalu. But, for this incidence, Mahtab had a different view. He felt that Nabakrushna Choudhury was feeling uncomfortable as some of his close associates in Congress Socialist Party like Malati Choudhury, Gangadhar Das had distanced themselves away from Hare Krishna Mahatab (Mahtab 1972: 359).
NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY AS THE REVENUE MINISTER (April 1946 to April 1948)

Nabakrushna Choudhury had a short stay as the Minister, but during his tenure as the Revenue Minister, he did a lot for the betterment of the ‘Bhag Chasi’s (Share cultivators) who were invariably exploited by the Zamindars of that time (Rabi 2010).

Nabakrushna Choudhury, as the Revenue Minister led the committee on ‘Land Tenure and Land Revenue’ in Orissa in 1946, that recommended for abolition of Zamindar System and other intermediary. In the process of decentralization of administrative authority, he introduced Anchal Shasan system by enacting Anchal Shasan Bill, which was meant to empower the people. It was his spectacular achievement as Revenue Minister.

As a Revenue Minister, Nabakrushna Choudhury had constituted a committee of 15 members on land reform as early as 15 November 1946, with the agenda of recommending legislative and administrative measures for an equitable and uniform rent structure, elimination of intermediary interests, prevention of fragmentation, improvement of agricultural production and raising the standard of living of the cultivators. The basic recommendations of the committee’s were accepted formally in November 1948 which sound radical even today and were based on two principles such as decentralization of administration and de-provincialisation of revenue.

Under decentralization of administration, the committee recommended constitution of Anchals as administrative units, each comprising one Police station and Tahsil, under the local authority called Anchal Shasan. Anchal Sasan shall consist
of one elected body called Anchal Sabha comprising of elected representatives from Gram Panchayats, and also an Executive Officer called Anchal Sarvadhikan. The Anchal Sarvadhikan shall administer all estates, tenures and lands vested in the Anchal, in a word, the revenue administration of Anchal. The Anchal Shasan shall also gradually take over the financial and administrative powers and responsibilities in respect of such areas of public concern as education, health, agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperative, cottage industry and rural welfare in general.

On the front of de-provincialisation of revenue, the committee recommended the withdrawal of the legal right of the state to collect a certain portion of the produce of every plot of land (Khajan or Desh Bhag) and vesting of the same in the community to be administered through Anchal Sasan. As regards the assessment and collection of land revenue, it shall be done by Gram Panchayat through a collective exercise by the cultivators or raiyats of the particular village. In the event of a persistent failure by a raiyat to pay, the Gram Panchayat shall be competent to take over his land and return it to him only after realization of the arrears.

In the areas of land administration, the committee recommended the following-

(a) Repeal of all existing tenancy laws

(b) Providing for definite rights of raiyats

(c) Fixing maximum and minimum assessment on raiyats

(d) Ban on sub-letting of land except by widows, minors, idiots, lunatics and disabled
(e) Protection of tenants from eviction by raiyats (through Orissa Tenants Protection Act) and along with protection of raiyats’ right over tenanted land

(f) Restriction of transfer of land in case a person holds less than a minimum area of land

(g) Restriction on transfer of land by backward tribes

(h) Prevention of fragmentation of land and importance on the consolidation of land holdings

(i) Updating revenue records of Rights by Anchal Sarvadhikari and

(j) Payment of ‘Desh Bhag’ in kind to the government as approved by Anchal

(http://chitabehera.com/miscwork/Orissa%201a)

In 1948, Nabakrushna Choudhury’s only son Vinayak, committed suicide. This was a great shock for Nabakrushna Choudhury, completely shaken, he resigned from government and decided to work for the welfare of the people. He became the organizer of basic education for the state of Orissa. His thinking on and interest in, basic education got a chance to be put into action in the practical field and worked hard to make basic education pragmatic as well as viable.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India and one of the friend and well-wishers of Nabakrushna Choudhury wanted that Nabakrushna Choudhury should return to Government and became the Chief Minister of Orissa, thus he tried his best to persuade him, but did not succeed. A series of letter exchanged between Nehru and Malati Choudhury and Nabakrushna Choudhury was persuaded through Malati Choudhury to became the Chief Minister of Orissa, 259981
and eventually he became the Chief Minister (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_choudhury).

NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY AS THE CHIEF MINISTER OF ORISSA

In the year 1950, Nabakrushna Choudhury was elected to the state legislative assembly in a by-election from Chandbali constituency. Under the pressure from Biju Patnaik and Biren Mitra, Mahtab sponsored the candidature of Nabakrushna Choudhury, who was unanimously elected as the leader of the congress legislature party as the Chief Minister. The council of Ministers headed by Nabakrushna Choudhury sworn in on 12th May 1950 was as follows

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<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Portfolios</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nabakrushna Choudhury</td>
<td>Chief Minister, Minister of Finance, Local Self Government, Forestry, Cooperation, Excise, Relief, Rehabilitation, River Valley Development and planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nityananda Kanungo</td>
<td>Minister of Home Affairs, Law and Industries</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Lingaraj Mishra</td>
<td>Minister of Education and Health</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Lall Ranjit Singh Bariha</td>
<td>Minister of Tribal and Rural welfare</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Sadasiva Tripathy</td>
<td>Minister of Revenue, Supply and Transport</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Pabitra Mohan Pradhan</td>
<td>Minister of Commerce, Labour and Public Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rajkrushna Bose</td>
<td>Minister of Roads &amp; Building, Irrigation, Drainage, Electricity</td>
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Latter, Kapileswar Prasad Nanda was included in the council of ministers and was allotted the portfolios of Local Self-Government, Cooperation, Agriculture and Forestry. There was a reshuffle of portfolios among the member of the council of ministers. The ministry resigned on 20th February 1952.

1951-52 ELECTIONS TO THE STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Politics in Orissa assumed new dimensions and a different colour when the twenty-four native states merged with Orissa and their rulers sought to enter into the democratic pattern of Orissa body politics. The rulers had the initial advantage of financial stability with the Privy Purse and allowances. They posed a real challenge to the congress and other political parties.

After 1950, the first general elections to the house of people (Lok Sabha) and the state legislative assembly were held in the year 1951-52, on the basis of universal adult franchise and this poll was spread over 36 days. The election was conducted on the basis of balloting system of voting. In this system of the voting, separate ballot boxes were earmarked for each contesting candidate with his name and symbol pasted thereon and kept hidden from public view in the polling booth and the electors are invited to cast their vote and put it in the ballot box of their choice.

There were 107 constituencies in the state to elect the 140 member state Legislative Assembly, out of which 33 were double member constituencies and 74 single member constituencies. There were a total of 517 candidates who finally contested the 1951-52 elections to the state legislative assembly. In this election, the Indian National Congress Party secured 68 seats out of 135 seats that the party had contested. Nabakrushna Choudhury was elected from the Barchana constituency in a five-cornered contest defeating his nearest independent rival Jagannath Das.
Nabakrushna Choudhury secured 57.54 percent of the valid votes polled as against his nearest rival Das who secured 23.88 percent of the valid votes were polled.

There was a devastating flood in 1955 which brought untold miseries for the people of Cuttack. The government led by Nabakrushna Choudhury failed to prove its efficiency in dealing with the natural calamity of this magnitude. His government could not withstand the impact of disaffection of the people, divided party loyalty and the miserable economic condition of the state, which forced him to step down from the Chief Ministership of the state on 18th October 1956 (Maharana 2010).

The reorganization of states in 1956 did not affect the state of Orissa and no territorial changes took place in the state or district boundaries. A few administrative measures, such as, the abolition of the Zamindari system resulting in the vesting of all the estates in the government, direct collection of land revenue by the introduction of Naib-Tahasildari system, problems arising out of the maintenance of law and order and administrative expediency in certain cases, however, necessitated changes in the jurisdiction of some of the subdivisions, taluks and police station during the decade 1951-60.

Soon after the attainment of independence, provision was made by the Orissa Gram Panchayat Act, 1948 to establish village or Gram Panchayat as units of self-government. Thus, in the post-independence era, rural development was recognised as an important approach for reducing the abject poverty, gross inequalities in income distribution, chronic unemployment and distressed living conditions in rural areas. Nabakrushna Choudhury as the chairman of land revenue and land tenure committee recommended the abolition of the Zamindari system and envisaged a
scheme of decentralization of authority for proper revenue administration and
developmental activities in the rural areas (Government of Orissa 1980-90)

Nabakrushna Choudhury became the Chief Minister with the support of
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India Thus, in 20th February
1952, a congress ministry was being formed under Nabakrushna Choudhury The
other ministers were Radhanath Rath, Dinabandhu Sahu, Sadasive Tripathy, Kishore
Chandra Bhanja Deo and Sunaram Soren The deputy ministers in this council of
ministers included Bhairab Chandra Mohanty, Basanta Manjari Devi, Krupasindhu
Nayak, Tirthabasi Pradhan and Anup Singh Deo

The council of ministers were as follows -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Portfolios</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nabakrushna Choudhury</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>Home, Work, River Valley Development, Relief &amp; Rehabilitation, Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dinabandhu Sahu</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Law, Development and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Raja Saheb Shri Kishore Chandra Deo Bhanj</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Industries, Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sunaram Soren</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Tribal and Rural welfare, Labour and Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Smt Basant Manjari Devi</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Bhairab Ch Mohanty</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
<td>Work</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Nilamani Routray</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Anup Singh Deo</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
<td>Public Relation, Relief &amp; Rehabilitation, Animal Husbandry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Santanu Ku Das</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
<td>Local Self Government, Cooperation and Fisheries</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The council of ministers headed by Nabakrushna Choudhury as on 11 May 1954 was as follows -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Portfolios</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nabakrushna Choudhury</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>Home, Work, River Valley Development, Relief &amp; Rehabilitation, Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sadasiva Tripathy (Assumed charge on 26 02 1952 and resigned on 22 09 1956)</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Law, Development and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Raja Saheb Shri Kishore Chandra Bhanja Deo</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Industries, Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sunaram Soren</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Tribal and Rural welfare, Labour and Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Radhanath Rath (Assumed charge on 07 04 1952)</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Finance and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satyapriya Mohanty (Assumed charge on 24 04 1954)</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Law, Home and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bhairab Chandra Mohanty</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
<td>Work</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Smt Basanta Manjari Devi</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Anup Singh Deo</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
<td>Public Relations, Relief and Rehabilitation, Animal Husbandry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Santosh Kumar Das</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
<td>Local self government, Cooperation and Fisheries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tirthabasi Pradhan (Assumed charge on 05 03 1952)</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
<td>Transport and Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Krupasindhu Naik (Assumed charge on 05 03 1952)</td>
<td>Dy Minister</td>
<td>Supply and Agriculture</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The ministry resigned on 19th October 1956 (Government of Orissa 2006 504)
After the first general elections, Nabakrushna Choudhury was elected as the leader of the congress legislative party and remained in the office as the Chief Minister of Orissa from 12th May 1950 to 18th October 1956. Nabakrushna Choudhury succeeded Mahtab on the recommendation and requests of Mr. Bijayananda Patnaik and Biren Mitra.

Under the new constitution of India, the central government had conducted its first general election from 20th December 1951 to 15th January 1952. The election for Lok Sabha and Orissa State Assembly were simultaneously held. There were 20 MPs for Lok Sabha and 140 MLAs for the state assembly. Though, the congress party did not succeed in winning the overwhelming majority, but managed to get the support from 6 independent MLAs and finally formed the congress ministry of 74 MLAs. Finally, on 20th February 1952, Nabakrushna Choudhury took oath as the Chief Minister of Orissa.

The tenure of Nabakrushna Choudhury as the Chief Minister of Orissa from 18th February 1952 to 18th October 1956 was a period of political turmoil, intrigues and conspiracy. Nabakrushna Choudhury was basically a simple man, stand completely away from nasty politics. Besides, the Bhoodan movement of Vinoba Bhave and participation of his wife, Malati Choudhury in the Bhoodan movement diverted the attention of Nabakrushna Choudhury.

The unexpected artificial and natural events like the “Nepalibaba” of Ranthalei Village near Angul, it was the story of 12 years cow herd boy, who was touted to have spiritual powers to cure incurable diseases. As the rumor spread thousands of people came to this small place near Anugul called Ranttai for curing touch of this
‘Baba’ Soon, there were so many people and so little water or food. In that unhygienic situation, soon cholera epidemic started, and people still continued to come in the hope of cure of incurable diseases. Government could not act in the fear of law and order problem, and yet there was enough pressure to act as the epidemic was going out of hand. Thus due to all that calamities, Nabakrushna Choudhury was highly disturbed and confused about what to do. In that harsh situation Malati Choudhury (wife of Nabakrushna Choudhury) helped him in finding the solution. She herself went to the place where the young boy (Nepali Baba) resided and challenged him to show his supernatural powers. When he failed to do so, she gave him a big slap with comments “Michchtare pala lageichu” (“you have falsely started this drama”), then the baba ran away crying and was picked up later by the police and sent to jail (http://www.orsissociety.org/souvenirs/souvenir.pdf). The Naga Sadhu-Police conflict at Puri town (1955) and Delei Ghai (Earthen flood protective dam at Dalai to check the flood water entering into the low-lying areas) flood of 1955 shook the administration of Nabakrushna Choudhury.

The greatest problem Nabakrushna Choudhury faced during his short span of Chief Ministership was his failure to retain the Odia speaking Sareikala and Kharsuan princely states with Orissa, before the State’s Reorganization Commission appointed by the central government. In 1955, the State Reorganisation Commission’s Report was published, which recommended merger of Saraikela and Kharsuan predominantly Odia-speaking princely states with Bihar. This led to a widespread agitation against the recommendation of the commission.

Secondly, he could not utilize the fund allotted by the central government for the developmental works in Orissa within a stipulated time for which the money
was returned. Besides, he was mostly dissatisfied with the unbecoming conduct of his close associates and the party.

All these adverse circumstances, forced Nabakrushna Choudhury to resign from the post of Chief Ministership. On the other hand, the most ambitious politician of Orissa Dr Harekrushna Mahtab was hoodwinked by the congress party and was not taken into Nehru’s Central Cabinet. Out of disappointment, Mahatab once again wanted to come back to Orissa politics. Nabakrushna Choudhury, whom Dr Harekrushna Mahatab wanted to work as his dummy candidate in Orissa has developed a personality of his own during his tenure as the Chief Minister and made himself free from the control of Mahatab by asserting his own views on many important policies like land reform, kendu leaf policy and anchal administration. Thus Mahatab, on the other hand, out of disappointment, utilized through his daily newspaper “Prajanatra” for criticizing Nabakrushna Choudhury and his style of administration. The government act of omission and commission was vehemently criticized. Many other supporters of Dr Harekrushna Mahtab such as Biju patnaik, Biren Mitra, Nilamani Routray, Dinabandhu Sahu and Banamali Patnaik also criticized Nabakrushna Choudhury’s government openly.

Dr Harekrushna Mahtab who was serving as the Governor of the then Bombay Province (which was subsequently separated into two provinces of Maharastra and Gujurat) was apprehensive that Nabakrushna Choudhury might be able to stabilize his political career in Orissa which would not be a positive sign for his own political future in the state. Exploiting the weaknesses of Choudhury administration, he was eagerly looking for the first opportunity to come back to state politics (Ghosh 1991).
As an administrator, Nabakrushna Choudhury was not very successful in comparison with his predecessor Harekrushna Mahtab. The opposition was critical of his administration. The bureaucracy in the state became powerful and the ministers were engaged themselves in their own matters of narrow personal interests (Rabi 2010).

The chief minister's interest, for instance, was Bhoodan and Ashram schools for adivasis. In 1938, the government of Orissa had appointed a committee under the chairmanship of A V Thakkar for studying the various problems of the 'Partially Excluded Areas' and the recommending special measures for the good of the scheduled tribes. The committee, otherwise known as the "Partially Excluded Area Enquiry Committee" recommended in 1940, a special department called Backward Class Welfare Department to be created to deal exclusively with the problems of the backward classes (http://www.Orissa.gov.in/e-magazine/Orissa review). It may be noted here that Nabakrushna Choudhury as a member of the partially excluded area enquiry committee, 1940, in the minutes had recorded his note of dissent in the following words:

The dismal story of Bethi (forced free service), Mamal, Gudam, Gothi (bonded labour) etc. related in the report of the committee sufficiently demonstrate the unreality of the kind of the special protection of the aboriginal and backward tribes, in the name of which these tracts have so far been kept out of the perview of the popular legislatures and under the unlimited control of the executive officers responsible only to the British government.
NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY AND HIS CONCERNS FOR TRIBALS

The usual plea put forth in support of this policy of special protection had been that, the interests of the aboriginal tribes are likely to be overlooked by the advanced people of the plains who constitute the majority in the provincial legislature. But how this policy has been worked out in practice? In the course of tours and investigations as members of committee we found a matter of fact and history that backward tribes of the tracts under our enquiry had been left completely at the mercy of the non-aboriginal Maharajas, Rajas, Hill Chiefs, Bisoyis, Patros, etc and what appeared to me to be the worst aspect of thing that whereas these non-aboriginal local overloads in the pre-British days had been often been kept in check in their dealing with the hill-tribes which were then quite militant, by the fear of a violent rising against them, the British government removed that natural check on their capacity and medieval tyranny by making it abundantly clear to the tribes that the mighty British government stood behind the chieftains and that they would be crushed in the name of law and order if they dared to rise against the latter.

Though Nabakrushna Choudhury was not very successful as a politician and as an administrator, yet nobody denies his concern for the weaker section of the society and towards the social development of the state. He was being described as a very progressive chief minister who could visualize far ahead of his time. The age-old Zamindar system was ultimately abolished. The farmers became free from the exploitation of the Zamindar and got ownership right on their land. Nabakrushna Choudhury's achievement as the Revenue Minister speaks of his great visions and missions. His concern for the welfare of the people made 'Anchal Shasan' a reality.
which was the precursor to the community development programme lunched in Orissa on the Gandhi Jayanti Day of 1952. He was one of the practical statesman. Mere formulation of rules and regulations with the appointment of officers did not mean much to him. He used to supervise and regulate the administration of the target areas by himself without depending much on the bureaucrats (Maharana 2010).

The Hirakud Dam was constructed during his chief ministership. There was resistance and opposition from many quarters who were not in favour of having the dam. Even some of his close associates belonged to the opposition camp, but with that adverse situation, his strong determination made the project successful and at last the dam was constructed as per the plan.

In those days officers were reluctant to visit the tribal areas due to lack of communication facilities. Some officers posted in those areas were exploiting the people. Money lenders were also exploiting them by forcibly occupying their land and employing them as bonded labourers, such exploitation of the simple tribal people went on increasing, as a result of which the tribals of Koraput district revolted against the erring officers and tyrant money lenders. Government officers wanted to suppress the same through the application of force, but Nabakrushna Choudhury did not permit them to do so. He sent some honest and efficient officers there to understand the problems of the tribal people. He himself went to those areas to have a first hand picture of the situation. He used to walk alone in those areas to investigate and discussing with the people regarding their problems. When the chief minister was going to the people to know and understand their problems, the
government officials, land owning farmers and money lenders could not able to exploit them. That was one of the progressive approaches made by Nabakrushna Choudhury (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_choudhury)

In 1954, an Agriculture College and Veterinary College were established at Bhubaneswar. An engineering college was also established at Burla, Sambalpur. The agriculture and veterinary colleges subsequently became Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology, which also had a department of Architecture. Nabakrushna Choudhury was a member of its governing body for many years. The Burla Engineering College subsequently earned name and fame as an autonomous institution.

Nabakrushna Choudhury realized the importance of Odia as the official language without which administration cannot be a people-oriented government. Therefore, he formulated rules for using Odia as the official language in all the administrative process. As an MLA, he himself used to speak in Odia in the assembly and participated in the debate and discussion in the same language (Maharana 2010). In 1946, the question of what language to be used in the assembly was raised. Lalmohan Patnaik, as the speaker, desired that English should be used as before. But Nabakrushna Choudhury stood in favour of Odia language. The language spoken and understood by common masses was being used instead of English. And his genuine demand was not only retained, but sustained till today. For this he had to face much opposition, but as a man of strong conviction he did not listen to anyone. An “Encyclopedia of Odia Language” was prepared. Odia type writers were also fabricated. But all these initiatives taken by him discontinued after he left the government in
October 1956 The then prime minister Nehru persuaded him again and again not to leave the chief ministership, but Nabakrushna Choudhury was adamant in his strong decision to leave the post. To him service to the people was more important than to stay in power. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_choudhury)

Acharya Vinoba Bhave had launched the Bhoodan and Gramdan movement when Nabakrushna Choudhury was the chief minister. He was deeply involved in that movement. He was moving with Vinoba from village to village in order to spread the message of Gramdan. Not a single pie was spent from the government funds for this purpose. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_choudhury)

In 1957, Nabakrushna Choudhury was elected as the president of the ‘Sarva Seva Sangha’, whose activities were always appreciated by him. The fundamental principles of this movement were to promote the all round development of the people in the villages. This movement aimed at social as well as economic development of the villagers through a non-violent method. Non-violent method and voluntary action were the characteristics of that programme. (Nayak 2010)

**NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY AND STATE REORGANIZATION COMMISSION REPORT**

When the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was appointed, Orissa government opened a separate department headed by the then finance minister Radhanath Rath to create public opinion in favor of merger of certain odia-speaking tracts with Orissa. After the commission came out with unfavorable report, the chief minister stated in the state legislative assembly, that the State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) recommendations were more devastating than the natural
calamity of floods and called upon all parties to jointly fight against it and to create massive public opinion in order to achieve their objective. The executive committee of the provincial congress committee headed by Banamali Patnaik passed a resolution asking the ministers and MLAs to resign (Ghosh 1991 80)

Jawaharlal Nehru, the then prime minister of India, was one of the true friend and well-wisher of Nabakrushna Choudhury, who had tried his best to persuade him, not to resign from the post of chief ministership. Thus, in order to succeed in his intention, he wrote a series of letters to Malati Choudhury (wife of Nabakrushna Choudhury) requesting her to persuade her husband not to get frustrated and resign. But as Nabakrushna Choudhury was very much adamant in his decision and moreover, he could not rebuff the united attack of Mahtab and his supporters and ultimately was victimized of a great political conspiracy. The congress high command U N Dhebar replaced Nabakrushna Choudhury (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_choudhury). Mahtab, who was then the governor of Bombay, was monitoring the ouster of Choudhury (Jena 94 285-298). Natural calamities, student agitations and protests over Hirakud dam project put the Nabakrushna Choudhury government under pressure.

On October 19, 1956, Nabakrushna Choudhury resigned from the office and also from the primary membership of the congress party and left for his Angul ashram on foot accompanied by his wife Malati Choudhury - both carrying their personal belongings on their own shoulders to join the Sarvodaya movement and never to return to active politics of Orissa (Ghosh 1991 86).

Nabakrushna Choudhury renounced the party based politics, the movement, he relinquished the post of chief minister, but politics (party based) did not leave him
till his last. He never hesitates to congratulate, praise, and appreciate those persons who were adorned with dedication and sincerity irrespective of their affiliation to any party or organization in their special trait and character. He always came to forefront to oppose and protest against unjust and unlawful discrimination perpetrated at any where in India as well as Orissa till his last (Nayak 2001 278).

**NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY’S STORY WAS INCOMPLETE WITHOUT MALATI CHOUDHURY**

Writing about Nabakrushna Choudhury without Malati Choudhury is like telling an incomplete story. Malati Choudhury was Nabakrushna Choudhury’s most sincere friend, devoted wife, and worst critic, all at the same time. They were comrades in arms. Nabakrushna Choudhury was the thinker and brain, and Malati Choudhury was the executioner. Thus, together they made an excellent team (Maharana 2010).

In 1934, almost two years before the Congress Socialist group was established in Orissa, when the young man involved in it like Surendra Dwivedi, Bhagabati Panigrahi, Prananath Pattnaik and others wanted to start a monthly Odia magazine named ‘SARATHI’ to propagate the idea of rights of day labourers and farmers. For this, the money came in the form of Malati Choudhury’s donating of her personal jewelry, worth about Rs. 30,000 in those days. Nabakrushna Choudhury with Malati Choudhury started Civil Right Group in Orissa to propagate the idea that this was not a law and order problem but a political problem. It was a symptom and not the disease. And unless the disease, landlessness, and food security problems are resolved, this movement of landless will not go away.

When one met Nabakrushna Choudhury or Malati Choudhury, one knew that one’s head simply bowed in reverence and awe for all they have done in life. They
were the natural leaders, and motivated each other and everyone around them (Maharana 2010). It was a period in India when patriotism was at its peak, and this young couple radiated ideas, enthusiasm and abundant energies were used in this direction. Their exposure to such rich culture and tradition, and the belief system, which grew from that exposure, are reflected in the institution which was established both by Malati Choudhury and Nabakrushna Choudhury on 11th May 1946, in Angul, Orissa. This Baji Rout Chhatravas was originally established to provide residential facilities and educational opportunities for children of freedom fighters. But later on, it was expanded to provide educational facilities and educational opportunities to the children belonging to scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes along with under privileged sections of society coming from all over Orissa (www.orissa society.org/ sourenirs/souvenir2004.pdf)

At Baji Rout Chhatravas, both Nabakrushna Choudhury and Malati Choudhury led a Gandhian way of life, to serve people in need, and to live in equality. They put their ideas and way of life into practice. Being inspired by the educational philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, Smt Malati Choudhury, Nabakrushna Choudhury and their dedicated team introduced an innovative pattern of education, called ‘Nai Talim’, in Baji Rout Chhatravas (Nayak 2010). In the system of ‘Nai Talim’ which was popularly know as basic education, Gandhiji advocated by Gandhiji on the complete development of the children through the use of his body, mind and spirit, or in other word, the union of his hand, heart and intellect, in which emphasis was given on art, craft and manual work.

Rabindranath Tagore’s emphasis on education is the complete harmony between creator (nature) and its creation (Man). When a child learns agricultural
work scientifically, he uses his hand, heart and intellect and also becomes close to nature. Therefore, Baji Rout Chhatravas aims at developing the aesthetic sensibilities of a child so that he grows as a self-reliant and non-violent human being (www.brcangul.org/history/BRC.htm).

Nabakrushna Choudhury with the help of Malati Choudhury had established one of the elementary school at Chapatimunda close to Angul. Nabakrushna Choudhury was keenly interested to transform the school into an ideal “Uttar Maulika Bidyalaya”. He had almost arranged required gadgets, instruments and facilities to start Elementary Basic Science Education there. Nabakrushna Choudhury managed himself there depending on his own physical labour and its remuneration and somehow managed the school with the help and co-operation of students there. He had reared some cows inside the school campus and with the co-operation of students, he used to send students to sell the milk at a distance of three kilometer and the proceeds/earning was utilized for the maintained of students itself (Mohanty 1994).

How much, Nabakrushna Choudhury was interested for elementary school, was clearly known from a letter written to Karunakar Parida in 2nd June 1948, as under: “you can achieve very big things in your life, if you accept and learn Maulika Shiksha. The future of India is depending very much on the success of this educational system. Many important scientists and engineers are there in the country and will be there. But the art and science of creating good human being was the need of the hour for the country as well as for the world.” He had spent more time in Bhoodan Movement initiated by Acharya Vinoda Bhave and also took active participation in the agitational programme of “Congress Hatao” frequently. For all these reasons,
he was not able to manage school at Champatimunda successfully. His opposition in the government action of suppression, in Naxal affected area, and giving more time for that, create obstacle in innovative application of new system of education started at Champatimunda in Angul. In spite of all these difficulties, Nabakrushna Choudhury with Malati Choudhury in 1974 managed to stay at Chapatimunda and tried their best to convert it in to a pioneer institution in the field of elementary education and tried till last, to manage and to sustain the school (Nayak 1991).

LAST PERIOD OF HIS LIFE

Few peoples are born free on earth and left their footprints to follow by others. Nabakrushna Choudhury was one of them, who left his ideas for philosophy which are still buzzing around the policy makers while making developmental policies for the people. Nabakrushna Choudhury was a leader but a man of simple living and led a pure life throughout his life time. He decided to lead a simple life. He completely identified himself with common people of Orissa, who took them as their own kith and kin. He disliked ostentation and never paid much attention to his attire. To him a person is best known for his/her services and action rather than appearance. His personal belongings were few till death. He never owned any property. Equality of opportunity - this is a sound principle for him, which remained constant without any compromise till his last breath. Nabakrushna Choudhury based all his programmes on this doctrine. Being a true lover of mankind, he had a soft corner and feelings for the poor and weak. He had immense self-confidence and sympathizes with people who were in distress. Respect to women and bringing them to the mainstream of society was one of the prime concerns of Nabakrushna Choudhury (Maharana 2010). He always found himself working for the wellbeing of farmers.
labourers etc and realized their misery and pain. Realizing the pain of distressed and miserable people, he used to pray at God with the following lines in Odia, which depicts how deeply he was attached to the people—

“Seithaku Mote Niya Mahaprauvu,
Jeuthare Khali Luha
Ajivan Jean Kandachhi Khali
Pochivi tau Akhi Luha”

(which means ‘Oh God! Take me to that place where people are having tears throughout their life, I will have to wipe out these tears)

During the last part of his life, he was weak due to old age, but mentally strong enough. Finally, on June, 24th 1984, immortal soul of Nabakrushna Choudhury left his body forever. Common people of Orissa were shocked totally when the news of his death came out. Orissa lost a true leader, son of the soil, who dedicated himself to serve for the cause of common people with developmental mind set. He will be remembered for his outstanding programmes and policies as a policy maker and as a true lover of mankind, who always stood for the people and brought changes in the field of social development and as an architect of modern Orissa.
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19) Pradhan, Bijaya Kumar (1997), *National Movement in Orissa (1920-1936AD)*
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20) *Pranakrushna Padhiary Report*, AICC file, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

21) Rabi, Sailaja (2010), as revealed in the course of discussion with him about Nabakrushna Choudury, who happened to be his contemporary

22) [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_Choudhury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_Choudhury)

23) [http://www.Orissa.gov.in/e-magazine/Orissa_review](http://www.Orissa.gov.in/e-magazine/Orissa_review)


25) [http://chitabehera.com/miscwork/Orissa%20201a](http://chitabehera.com/miscwork/Orissa%20201a)


27) [www.enotes.com/topic/Malati-choudhury-Asram](http://www.enotes.com/topic/Malati-choudhury-Asram)

28) [www.indianetzone.com>&IndianFreedomfighter](http://www.indianetzone.com>&IndianFreedomfighter)

29) [www.wikipeetia.org/Historic-sites-in-Orissa](http://www.wikipeetia.org/Historic-sites-in-Orissa)
NOTES:-

1. Raibahadur Gokulananda Choudhury, a then leading practicing lawyer, lived at Sahebzada Bazar in Cuttack town and was the close associate of Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das. He was actively associated with Freedom Movement and the Utkal Union conference. A lawyer of eminence and a member of the British Legislative Council, Gokulananda (1862-1915), died on 15, 1915 at the age of mere 53.

2. The Premier educational institute of Orissa which has played a historic role in the socio-political life of Orissa.

3. It was established by Gopabandhu Choudhury, where all sort of constructive work was carried on Gandhian line.

4. Malati Choudhury otherwise know as Malati Devi, a powerful Congress leader of her time, was a product of Tagore’s ‘Santiniketan’

5. The results of 1951-52 elections indicated a type of bipolar politics. The influence of the congress was confined to the coastal and the former British Orissa while the Ganatantra Parishad a party primarily consisting of the rulers of princely states and fendow land lords did well in their ruling territories.

6. The party-wise strength of the parties in the state Legislative Assembly after this election was Ganatantra Parishad-31, Socialist-10, CPI-7, Forward Block-1, Independent and other - 23.

7. The other candidates who contested the elections included Kulamam Mahapatra of socialist party securing 13 91 percent, Kanhu Charan Jena of...
Communist Party securing 34.9 percent and Suryamani Jena (independent) securing 2.15 percent of valid votes polled

8 The total electorate of the constituency was 50,216, out of which 22,235 valid votes were polled.

9 The Act received the assent of the Governor-General on 11 December 1948. It aimed at establishing and developing local self-government at the village level and at making better provision for their administration.