

# **The Grandeur Of Mayurbhanj Maharaja Krushna Chandra Bhanjadeo : A Guide To His Reign**

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## **Abstract:**

Mayurbhanj, once a princely state and now the biggest district of Odisha was ruled by Bhanja dynasty during the colonial period. During this time the state seen major developments that include proper infrastructure, health facilities, water supply, education etc. Many rulers from Bhanja dynasty during their golden ruling period, contributed to these developments. One of the prominent ruler of Bhanja dynasty was Maharaja Krushna Chandra BhanjaDeo who brought the wave of developments in the state during his ruling period. His contribution to overall development of the state is unforgettable. His legacy remain carried forward by his successors. This article is a honest approach to showcase his overall contribution to the state during his ruling period in short.

**Keywords:** Mayurbhanj, Maharaja Krushna Chandra, Bhanja Dynasty, Baripada

## **I. Introduction:**

Men and Women come and go and most of them become only distant memories. A few however leave behind impression, powerful enough to continue to remain almost as living presence long after they have gone. Maharaja Krushna Chandra BhanjDeono doubt has left a rich legacy behind him and indelible footprints on the sands of time.

Krushna Chandra BhanjaDeo was born in 1850. His father was ChhotraySitanathBhanja, the second son of Maharaja JadunathBhanja. He was an intelligent and young man of pleasing manners. Having been endowed with the qualities of head and heart he wisely heeded the advice of T.E. Ravenshaw in bringing about a series of administrative reforms. After overcoming the initial period of court intrigue of some officers the deceased king and the Rani he set down with sincere zeal to promote the welfare of the State.

## **Contribution of Maharaja towards the State:**

Maharaja Krushna Chandra BhanjaDeo was one of the benevolent rulers of Mayurbhanj State. He never received any higher education. He had learnt reading and writing in Oriya, arithmetic of village school. With this elementary schooling his education ended. Krushna Chandra Bhanja was awarded the title of Maharaja in 1877 by the British Government in recognition of his good administration of the State and for his public liberality<sup>1</sup>. During his rule the State made progress in different fields as highlighted in the following sections

## **Administration:**

Maharaja Krushna Chandra's first bold step was to modernize the administration. He created every department essential to grease the administrative machinery while setting up the civil and revenue courts and appointed special officers to take care of their charge. For the first time a recorded administration was set up with provision to keep all orders systematically in a record room. In judiciary all case records were maintained, statements and deposition of witnesses along with judgement of the magistrates were ordered to be retained on paper. The tradition of using palm leaf came to an end. In the record room the documents, papers and registers were kept carefully under the custody of responsible persons. The establishment of a registration office with a sub-registrar to function under the collector resulted in keeping records on death, birth, mortgage, sale etc. The Maharaja himself acted as the appellate court disposing of cases after hearing the judgment of lower courts<sup>2</sup>

**Police Department:**

Maharaja Krushna Chandra laid the basic framework of the police department. In each Pargana the Sardar was bestowed with the power of investigating crime and adopt preventive measures as and when necessary. The Sardar was equivalent to a modern Sub-Inspector who dealt with minor offence and crimes. Since in Bamanghaty and Panchpir the tribals were more in number and they were of volatile temper steps were taken to setup Police station at Jashipur which was equidistance from the both. The new police station had one sub-inspector and some constables. The state saw its first prison or Hajat for under trial prisoners and convicts. It was located at the center of the town which now accommodates the daily market. To cook food for the prisoners a Brahmin cook was appointed. The convicts were kept engaged in physical activities like gardening, building road and houses.<sup>3</sup>

**Land Revenue Administration:**

The Maharaja had to take up land revenue administration as a permanent source of income for the state treasury. There were certain malpractices like leasing out land without record of measurement. The unscrupulous Pradhans or Tax collectors imposed tax at their free will. There was necessity of proper land settlement and classification. The system of taxation had to be rationalized. The state was divided into districts and Parganas. Each Pargana was placed under a Sardar for revenue collection through the Pradhans. The Sardar deposited revenue in the state treasury. Legal action was taken against defaulters for non-payment of land tax by filling rent suits. The Sardars and the Pradhans were accountable for lapses if any.<sup>4</sup>

**Establishment of PWD:**

The State established a department of public works with J.L Atkinson, the engineer who supervised the construction of roads and public buildings. As roads and bridges were essential for communication in the context of law and order and efficient administration the Maharaja completed Highways from Baripada to Balasore in the east and Bahalda in the north. Among important public buildings mention may be made of the palace, school, police station, post office, jail, and the rest house at Baripada. The public works department also started the construction of an irrigation project in the RasuniaParagana.<sup>5</sup>

**Education:**

The Maharaja was eager to promote education for which the department of education was established under Doctor H.C. Bowzer. For the school at Baripada and English knowing teacher and Sanskrit Pandit were appointed. To provide free elementary education in the rural areas several Pathshalas under Oriya Abadhanas were also setup. His friend T.E. Ravenshaw as the Commissioner of Odisha division had been instrumental in establishing an intermediate college, an Engineering school and a Medical school at Cuttack besides doing various other significant works. The college was later named after T.E. Ravenshaw which in course of time developed as the premier Educational Institution of Odisha. The Maharaja contributed a huge sum of Rs. 27000/-for the construction of a permanent building for the college<sup>6</sup>

**Health Care System:**

The State took care of the health and hygiene of the people of Mayurbhanj. Therefore, Doctor Bowzer organized a Charitable Dispensary at Baripada. At first the Dispensary started functioning in the palace in a separate room. The Doctor prescribed western medicines to a people who were sceptic about its usefulness. Out of disgust, Doctor Bowzer resigned.<sup>7</sup>

**Establishment of Printing Press:**

The Maharaja had realized the significance of a printing press in spreading education So he setup a printing press at Baripada which not only printed forms and documents of the Government, but also a news letter called "**Mayurbhanj Fortnightly**" Magazine. To promote reading habit among his people he setup a public Library and a beautiful public garden called Golap Bag as a recreational facility for the citizens.<sup>8</sup>

**Introduced Postal System:**

Krushna Chandra introduced the postal system in his State. A post office at Baripada and another at Balasore were established. The Maharaja appointed one clerk at Baripada and another at Balasore for postal work. The letters posted in Baripada were carried by state runners to Balasore and letters addressed to Baripada were carried back and distributed to the addressees at Baripada. He had established a few more post offices at the expense of the State.<sup>9</sup>

**Contribution toward Chhow Dance:**

The famous Chhow dance was greatly patronized in Mayurbhanj during the reign of Maharaja Krushna Chandra BhanjaDeo. One man named RamahariJitBebarta who married in Saraeikala had witnessed the Chhow

dance there and impressed the Maharaja about its splendour. Accordingly by the order of Maharaja, one teacher named UpendraBiswal was brought from Sareikala to teach dance in the northern portion of Baripada town and granted rent-free land with other benefits.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Contribution toward Railway:**

The Maharaja made contribution for the construction of Railway in Odisha. A committee was formed in the town of Balasore and the Maharaja was himself a member of the Railway committee. A share of three and half lacs was collected for the Railway work and the Maharaja had a share of two lacs<sup>11</sup>

#### **Popular Uprisings:**

From 1866-1882 two popular uprisings broke out in Mayurbhanj. The first uprising broke out before the accession of Krushna Chandra Bhanja to throne. But he played an important role with the help of the British Government to suppress the uprising. Another uprising broke out during his reign. The uprising of 1866 gave an opportunity to Krushna Chandra to capture the powers over the entire Mayurbhanj. In 1878, Bamanghaty was restored to the direct control of Krushna Chandra Bhanja for his able and efficient rule.<sup>12</sup>

### **II. Conclusion:**

Maharaja Krushna Chandra Bhanja died on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1882 by small pox disease. With the death of Maharaja, Odisha lost one jewel of her land. His death gave a great shock not only to the hearts of the inhabitants of Mayurbhanj but also to the people of Odisha. Honesty reflected in his character in the matters of maintaining his State and improvement of the conditions of his subjects. He had earned a reputation for himself. In the uprising of 1881, he had no fault. Still he gave more importance to his duty for the welfare of his subjects.<sup>13</sup>

The foundation stone of the administration which was laid by him, by replacing the primitive rule of his ancestors, gave him a high place in Odisha. Sri Rama Chandra Bhanja, his son had to build the edifice of the State on the foundation of his father. He was well and faithfully aided by the officers whom he had wisely chosen to carry out his plans. The important officers were his Dewan and after his death, Dewan Prasanna Kumar Ghosal, settlement officer, Durga Prasad Das, Treasury officer, Artatrana Mahapatra and JitBebarta. His institutions were continued and improved upon under Government management in the hands of H.P. Wylly<sup>13</sup>. In recommending his name, the Governor argued that during the next eight years (1882-1890) till the crown prince attained majority and assumed the ruler-ship of the State, a good European officer would be able to introduce an enormous amount of improvement in every branch of the State administration so that Mayurbhanj should be a model to other states.

Therefore, the management of the State was entrusted to Mr. H.P. Wylly who managed everything on behalf of the court of ward. He managed it efficiently till 1892 when Sri Rama Chandra Bhanja, the son of Maharaja Krushna Chandra became the ruler Of Mayurbhanj.

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