



ICHR Sponsored National Seminar

on

The Forgotten Flames of 1857: The Untold Saga of Kudopali

28th - 29th March, 2026

School of History, Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur, Odisha

The Seminar

India's independence was achieved through immense sacrifices, many of which remain unknown and underrepresented in mainstream history. One such significant yet largely forgotten episode occurred on 30 December 1857 at Kudopali, Sambalpur, where 53 revolutionaries were martyred, followed by the execution of four more freedom fighters. This tragic event, often referred to as "*The Unsung Story of 1857*," was comparable in magnitude and brutality to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, highlighting the extraordinary courage and resistance of the local freedom fighters. Prior to recent commemorative efforts, a tribute meeting was held to honour these martyrs (Hutatmas), including the legendary Veer Chhabila Sai. Families from regions such as Khinda, Kulabira, Ghens, and Lakhnupur played a crucial role in this struggle, yet their contributions remained largely obscured for decades. This seminar seeks to honour these unsung heroes and acknowledge their supreme sacrifices.

The struggle for Indian independence was a long and complex process shaped by widespread resistance against British colonial rule. Following the British occupation of Odisha in 1803, popular resistance emerged across the province in the form of armed rebellions, protests, and uprisings. The first major revolt occurred in 1804 at Khurda under the reign of Raja Mukunda Deva II, with his valiant minister Jayee Rajaguru becoming Odisha's first martyr after being executed in 1805. Continued exploitation through oppressive land revenue policies and administrative injustices led to further resistance, most notably the Paik Rebellion of 1817 under Buxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mohapatra. Subsequent uprisings included the Tapangagarh rebellion (1827) led by Samanta Madhaba Chandra Samantaray, and the Ghumsur rebellion (1835) under the Kondh leader Kamal Lochan Dora Bisoyee, who opposed British interference and supported the restoration of indigenous rulers. The British responded with severe military repression, resulting in mass executions and imprisonments.

In Sambalpur, resistance reached its most sustained and formidable form under Veer Surendra Sai, who led an armed struggle against British authority well before the Revolt of 1857 and continued resistance until his capture in 1864. Other notable contributors from the region included Madho Singh of Ghens and his sons, who actively participated in the uprising of 1857. Tribal resistance formed an integral

component of Odisha's freedom movement. Leaders such as Laxman Naik, Ratna Naik, Rindo Majhi, Dharanidhar Nayak, Tama Dora, and many others laid down their lives in defense of freedom and dignity. Alongside celebrated national figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh, and Rani Laxmibai, countless lesser-known heroes sacrificed their lives for India's independence.

Remembering and honouring these forgotten martyrs is both a historical responsibility and a moral imperative, ensuring that their sacrifices continue to inspire future generations.

Aim and Objective:

The main aim and objective to organize this seminar to exploring the **forgotten flames of 1857: the untold saga of Kudopali**. The seminar will provide a platform to bring out all facts about lesser-known freedom fighters, popular movements, contributions of unsung women freedom fighters and role of unknown tribal leaders in the freedom struggles to Kudopali.

Subtheme:

- Echoes from the Past: Oral Histories and Folklore of Kudopali
- Unwritten Pages: Oral Histories of Kudopali's Freedom Movement
- Political and Resistance Narratives
- Unsung Heroes: Kudopali's Role in Anti- Colonial or Local Movements
- Local Heroes, National Spirit : Unsung Freedom Fighters of Kudopali
- The Kudopali Rebellion: A Microcosm of India's Resistance
- Popular Movements and Contribution of Tribal leaders in the Indian Struggle
- Lesser-known chapters; Stories of Unsung heroes, freedom fighters
- Key milestones during the freedom struggle
- Unsung women freedom fighters

About the University

Gangadhar Meher University, one of the oldest and largest institutions of higher education in Odisha, traces its origin to 1944, when it was established as Gangadhar Meher College through the strong initiative, determination, and tireless efforts of visionary members of the Trust Fund. Recognizing its long-standing academic legacy and growing contribution to higher education, the institution was upgraded to a State University in 2015. Over the decades, Gangadhar Meher University has made remarkable progress and has emerged as a premier centre of learning in the state. The University continues to scale new heights of academic excellence through quality teaching, innovative research, and community engagement, thereby contributing significantly to the intellectual, cultural, and socio-economic development of the region.

The university offers quality teaching and research facilities at the Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and Research levels across a wide range of disciplines. Within a relatively short span, it has made a notable mark in the academic arena by imparting quality education, organizing national and international seminars and workshops, and encouraging regular publications in reputed impact journals. In recognition of its strong teaching and research performance, the institution has been accredited with an **'A' grade by NAAC.**

School of History

The School of History is one of the oldest academic units of this prestigious institution, with its origins dating back to 1944. Since its inception, the School has played a pivotal role in fulfilling the academic and intellectual needs of students from Western Odisha in particular and the state of Odisha at large. Over the decades, it has evolved into a vibrant centre of teaching and research, contributing substantially to historical scholarship and heritage studies. At present, the School offers Undergraduate (U.G.), Postgraduate (P.G.), and Doctoral (Ph.D.) programmes, along with a Certificate Course in Tourism and Heritage Management. It envisions its growth as a centre of excellence at the national level through the adoption of a critical and reflective pedagogy of history.

The School of History places strong emphasis on experiential learning and regularly undertakes archaeological explorations, excavations, and heritage tours, providing students with hands-on training in the reconstruction and interpretation of the past. It also organizes national and international seminars, workshops, and invited lectures, fostering academic interaction and scholarly exchange. Recognized as a centre of scholarly distinction, the School has nurtured generations of students from Odisha and across the country. Its academic approach integrates global historical perspectives with a sustained focus on the regional history and cultural heritage of Odisha, including studies of art and architecture, inscriptions, numismatics, social traditions, and economic life. Students gain practical experience through archaeological excavations, ethnographic studies, field surveys, and heritage documentation. Major excavation projects were carried out at Barpali Asurgarh and Purunagarh, Rairakhol, after obtaining due permission from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), New Delhi.

Exhibition and Poster Presentation

The School of History, Gangadhar Meher University, will provide designated stalls for the display of documents, photographs, and poster presentations. Scholars interested in participating in the exhibition or poster presentation are requested to contact the convener for further details and necessary coordination.

Registration fee:

Kindly submit your registration fee along with the duly filled registration form, abstract of the research paper, and your itinerary (clearly indicating the date and time of arrival and departure) on or before 20th March, 2026, to enable us to arrange your accommodation and schedule the presentation of your research paper in the academic programme.

Registration Fees:

- Teaching Faculty & Research Scholars: ₹700
- Students: ₹500

Please send your filled in registration forms to Dr Atula Kumar Pradhan, Convener of the Seminar. The bank account details with QR code given below.

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CONVENER

Dr. Atula Kumar Pradhan, Head, School of History, G.M. University, Sambalpur

CO-CONVENER

Dr. Sasmita Rani Shasini, Asst. Professor, School of History, G.M. University, Sambalpur

ORGANISING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Santosh Kumar Mallik, Asst. Professor, School of History, G.M. University, Sambalpur

Dr. Paramatap Pradhan, Asst. Professor, School of History, G.M. University, Sambalpur

Anjali Rani, Asst. Professor (Guest Faculty), School of History, G.M. University, Sambalpur

Shankhananda Dehuri, (Guest Faculty), School of History, G.M. University, Sambalpur

For queries & correspondence

Dr. Atula Kumar Pradhan, Head, School of History, G.M. University, Sambalpur

Mobile: 9754875987, Mail: atulcgculture@gmail.com

Registration form
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To,

Dr Atula Kumar Pradhan

Conveners

School of History

Gangadhar Meher University, Amruta Vihar

Sambalpur, Odisha- 768004

Mobile: 9754875987

Sex _____ Age

Address _____

---Post Code -----

Email: _____ Contact No. _____

Title of the Paper _____

Details of the delegate fee (Pl attach bank remittance receipt).....

Accompanying person (if any):

Date and time of Arrival:

Name and No. of Train/Bus:

Date and Time of Departure

Food Preference: Vegetarian: Non-Vegetarian:

Signature with Date