The present dissertation is an attempt to investigate the nature of the evolutionary process of the so-called state formation that gradually crystallized in the form of *bhum* territories in the Chhotanagpur plateau region, primarily, based on the archaeological evidences. The *bhum* or *bhumi* or *bhuma* territories were apparently emerged in the core areas of the Chhotanagpur plateau and its adjoining areas of present Orissa, Bihar and West Bengal during the early-medieval-medieval periods. They gradually evolved from the phase of tribal settlements to *Rajyas* or principalities and then to the state system and this journey had probably taken place in the early-medieval-medieval periods. These *bhum* territories were successful in forming separate identities of their own. They gradually developed from tribal principalities to more or less independent or so to say semi-independent autochthon principalities or *Rajyas* in pre-state or sub-state condition and then to the state system. Their relationships with the neighboring principalities and to a certain degree with the distant and hierarchically superior administrative and revenue machinery of Delhi – all constituted the kernels of their internal dynamics. So far the eighteen *bhum* territories identified by Paramananda Acharya are *Manbhum, Mallabhum, Samantabhum, Gopabhum, Nagbhum, Senbhum, Singhbhum, Dhalbhum, Sikharbhum, Tungbhum, Surbhum, Aditbhum, Bagbhum, Bhawalbhum, Bhanjabhum, Brahmanbhum, Barabhum* and *Birbhum*. The present study includes the archaeological and historical data related to the evolution of the *bhum* principalities geographically confined to the core and fringe areas of the Chhotanagpur Plateau region, spatially extending into the present districts of Palamau, Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Singhbhum and Santal Parganas in Jharkhand and its adjoining districts of Purulia, Bankura, Barddhaman, Birbhum, and the undivided Medinipur in West Bengal.
Here, acknowledging the fact of the partial scope of the availability of important epigraphic and other literary sources, we have humbly attempted to delineate systematically the accessible archaeological sources associated with the origin and evolution of bhum territories in the region under purview. In the process of reviewing the archaeological data, we have tried to show the possible distribution patterns of sites / mounds / occurrences, settlement clusters, and archaeological relics in the form of secular and non-secular structures, sculptures and architectural remains. The work has been divided into the following scheme of chapterization:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The introductory chapter primarily deals with the basic concepts associated with the developments of bhum territories in the Chhotanagpur plateau region, and different theoretical devices of early state formation, particularly in the pre-colonial India to formulate a comprehensive idea about the subject concerned. The chapter also focuses on the scope and the methodologies applied for the present work.

CHAPTER II: HISTORIOGRAPHY

The second chapter concerns with the historiography and the major researches that highlight different issues regarding state formations during the early-medieval-medieval period. Some of the works are the indicators of a shift in methods, theories and paradigms in explaining diverse aspects of the state formation processes in the concerned region. The works of Ronald Cohen, Hermann Kulke, Peter Skalnik,
CHAPTER III: LAND AND PEOPLE

The third chapter broadly introduces the study area by summarizing its physiographic characters, climate, flora and fauna, soil, metal and mineral resources and the demographic profile.

CHAPTER IV: POLITICAL HISTORY

The fourth chapter briefly traces an outline of the political history or the rise and growth of bhum territories with special reference to Manbhum (Purulia), Gopabhum (Barddhaman) and Mallabhum (Bankura) which may well be viewed as the 'representative' bhums in the context of incomplete capacity of available data regarding the rests for the reconstruction of political history of the concerned region.

CHAPTER V: DISTRIBUTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

The fifth chapter attempts to give a brief summary of the archaeological database recorded from the study area, following the traditional method, i.e., by giving a brief description of the sites / settlements and the analysis of the archaeological data mainly in the form of architectural and sculptural remains. The sites described here include both the excavated and the explored ones. Among the explored sites / settlements, most of them have already been reported in relevant
District Gazetteers and Census while a few newly reported sites were recorded during the course of the present work. The religious ideologies involved herewith have also been given proper attention for the reconstruction of the overall religious developments witnessed in the study area and their geo-political implications. The discussion of the sites has been arranged following their emergence in the concerned units of the bhums like, Manbhum, Gopabhum, Mallabhum, Birbhum, Baghbhum and Brahmanbhum located in the present state of West Bengal. The sites situated in the state of Jharkhand have been discussed as per their location into the respective districts. The sites located within the administrative units of West Bengal have been covered widely in relation to those evolved in the eastern extension of the state of Jharkhand. It is expected that the sites / settlements placed under the administrative configuration of the districts of Palamau, Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Singhbhum and Santal Parganas require a thorough analysis.

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter summarizes the entire retrieved data discussed in the foregoing chapters by giving an overview and suggestive notes on various aspects of the formation of the socio-political and economic history related to the emergence of the bhum territories in the region under study.

Here, a ‘Bibliography’, related to the study, along with relevant maps, tables and plates have also been incorporated in this dissertation.