CONCLUSION
Like other Princely States of India, twenty-six Princely States of Orissa had been semi-independent territories. Although British rules and regulations were not applied to them, the Government used to interfere in their internal affairs, whenever the people suffered oppression and injustices, and whenever there arose problem of disputed succession and of popular disturbances. Of course, such interference did not remove fundamental defects of the feudatory administration. In 1905, the post of Political Agent was created to encourage the chiefs to govern their states efficiently and in the interest of the people. The Political Agent was to act as the friend, guide and philosopher of the king. He tried to impress upon the chiefs, the need for governing their states in a better way but without displeasing them. Such a policy did not prove helpful in bringing about any improvement in the administrative and economic condition of the states. The sufferings of the people of the states knew no bounds.

The prevalence of deep and widespread economic distress among the people of the states was primary cause of growing discontentment and hostile feeling against the princes. The outbreak of series of popular risings in the 19th and 20th century bore ample testimony to this. Under the impact of the
National Movement for freedom, the growing discontent of the peasants assumed new dimensions and led to the wider peasant movement known as Praja Mandal Movement. The Praja Mandal Movement was a struggle of the people of the states for the removal of economic grievances and mal-administration and establishment of responsible and popular Government in the states.

Under the pressure of the changing political condition, the princes adopted some reformative measures to remove the economic discontent of the people. But these were too inadequate to serve any useful purpose.

After 1905, the princes thought of conferring on the ryot's rights in the lands. But in actual practice nothing substantial was done in this direction. None of the states possessed a properly codified tenancy law before the merger. In some states, there were some fragmentary rules to control the tenancy rights for a long time. But there was practically nothing as would help the actual cultivator against the state or whims of the Ruler or any officials.

Among the measures adopted by the Princes to develop agriculture, the following deserve mention. Firstly, the darbar administration encouraged and assisted the people to repair the old tanks and wells and construct the new ones with a view to provide irrigation facilities. Secondly, two irrigation
projects undertaken by the Maharaja of Mayurbhanja one at Balidiha and the other at Haldia irrigated 12,200 acres of land. Thirdly, chiefs of most states, recognising the value of the new varieties of crops, actively fostered the planting of cocoanut, orange, lemon, mango and other fruit trees, stimulated the cultivation of cotton and sugarcane and induced people to try potato and other European vegetables. Fourthly, agricultural exhibition had been held to popularise new crops. Fifthly, in the states like Bonai, Athmallik, Rairakhol, Bamara, Gangpur, Daspalla, Boud, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Talcher and Mayurbhanja, immigration was actively encouraged for the reclamation of lands. This led to the increase of cultivated lands. Sixthly, realising the podu cultivation was a wasteful system of cultivation, the states tried to check it by encouraging proper conservation of forest. Seventhly, Agricultural Department had been opened in several states to encourage and instruct the people in the improvement of agriculture. Eighthly, there were one or two agricultural farms in every state to acquaint the people how to grow various crops and supply good seeds.

Very feeble efforts were made in the field of industries. All the Cottage Industries were carried on in a disorganised manner. The important cottage industries in the states were handloom weaving, pottery, making of brass and bell-metal utensils, carpentry, blacksmithy, jewellary, oilpressing, basket making, mat-making and lac-pressing. The machine
industries were almost conspicuous by their absence. The benevolent administration in the states of Bolangir and Mayurbhanja led to the establishment of some small scale industries like Textile and Tannery.

The development of means of communication and establishment of markets gave an impetus to trade and commerce. The railways had been helpful in carrying in export and import trade of the states of Mayurbhanja, Kalahandi, Patna, Talcher and Gangpur.

These reformative measures fell short the expectations of the people of the states. There was no radical change in the form of Government prevalent in the states. It was autocratic and medieval. The administration was generally carried on according to the caprice or personal discretion of the ruler and not in accordance with laws. The laws if any remained in paper only and were never implemented.

The economic situation in these states was getting more acute everyday by the increase in rents, which knew no check. The peasantry was naturally restive and showed signs of impatience for the lightening of the burden. Much valuable land remained uncultivated as the outside people were not attracted by the conditions on which it was given on rent. Insecurity of tenure and liability to arbitrary increase in rents were
the two stumbling blocks which created serious difficulties in the way of increasing cultivation over vast blocks of rich land which might bring prosperity to the local population and add substantially to the state treasury.

There had been several popular uprisings aimed at securing redress of some urgent economic grievances. People in Boud, Bamra, Rairakhol, Ranpur, Nayagarh, Nilgiri, Talcher and many other states had spontaneously risen several times against arbitrary enhancement of land rent bethi and other crying economic grievances after 1900. Severity of bethi, requisitioning of goats and buffaloes for sacrificial purposes, fees for killing wild beasts damaging the crops in the fields, grazing fees and increment of land rent were some of the immediate causes which have led to these risings.

The militant mass struggle directed against autocratic and reactionary princes, and their inefficient and corrupt administration known as Prajamandal Movement engulfed Orissa states during the period, 1938–40. It revealed how the people of the states were living in inhuman condition. But it not lead to any significant change in the attitude of the princes towards their subjects. Even after 1938 no prince was known to have taken real interest in the removing poverty of the people. The result was that the impoverishment of the peasantry continued. The people died in millions whenever droughts or floods caused failure of crops and produced scarcity.