PREFACE

The period between the resignation of congress ministries in 1939 and the achievement of independence in 1947 witnessed the greatest transition in the history of our anti-colonial struggle. This climatic phase of colonial rule in India was marked by intense political activity, an unprecedented mass upsurge and the tragic partition.

While the Indian national congress was the organization which spearheaded the struggle for India’s liberation from foreign rule, it was at the same time supplemented with more or less parallel or associated movements at various stages which championed the cause of certain classes of the society. These movements formally organized themselves outside the domain of the mainstream nationalist movement. Although the evolution of the ideas, ideologies, methods and means of struggle were different, these movements established a complex relationship with the main stream nationalist movement and were at times mutually supportive, each sustaining and intensifying the other.

During the last few decades many studies on different facets of the freedom movement at the national level and the regional level have been spelt out. Because of the number of works, probably many would admit that the scope of the study of the nationalist movement at the all India level is partly well-exhausted. Many significant and wide ranging questions pertaining to it, which have been thrown up in these works now require a more indepth and detailed analysis at the regional, state and village level. It is more or less universally recognised that only an extensive study of the movement in all its diverse aspects at the regional level can enable us to have a better understanding of the movement at the national level.
It is also increasingly felt that there are still lot of areas which are less explored and deserve adequate attention of the scholars.

In a vast sub-continent like India, where nationalism encompassed pluralistic ethnic, linguistic and economic diversities, a true picture of the freedom movement can be drawn when the complex relation between the movement at the all-India level and at the state level is studied in its totality.

This is an endeavour to make an indepth analysis of the major political trends, role of the masses, their aspirations and perceptions of various political and socio-economic forces during this decade. This analysis is, however, confined to the regional segment of Orissa and would probe into the nature of the complexities of the anti-Colonial struggle in its entirety.

The work is divided into five main chapters apart from the introduction and conclusion. Regional peculiarities, and the nature of the regional articulation of nationalism in the context of the anti-Colonial movement are two significant aspects of the study. In chapter-1, I have tried to discuss briefly the inter-relationships of modern forces like colonialism, nationalism and regionalism which formulated the socio-political developments in the province till the outbreak of the Second World War. Issues like the language agitation, shaping of the Oriya identity, the Oriya movement, entry of Orissa into all India politics and the Congress Ministry at work are discussed in brief.

Chapter II covers the period from 1939 to 1942. This period was a period of acute crisis for the Congress organization. It was more like a lull before the storm of 1942. The Congress was slowly but steadily inching towards another mass movement. Ideological, political and organizational preparations for the Quit
India movement and the limited nature of the individual civil disobedience movement is covered in this Chapter.

Chapter III deals with the Quit India movement in Orissa. The course of the movement, broad features and the extent of the movement in the province, its nature, pattern and composition have been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter IV analyses the inter relationship between the Congress-led nationalist movement and the state peoples movement in Dhenkanal. It covers the historical background of Orissan States, their relationship with Orissa province, popular agitation in the State and developments leading to the merger of the State with Orissa.

The chapter V deals with the post 1942 developments till the attainment of independence in 1947. It discusses the role of the Coalition Ministry, the impact of the Bengal famine of 1943, the acute food crisis and other political developments on the eve of independence.

I have tried to make my analysis as rigorous as possible. In the concluding part I have summed up my views. It is hoped that this analysis would help us to identify the areas which can be taken up for further research at appropriate levels.

The issues proposed in this work, though promising and full of possibilities are not without any limitations. Due to resource constraints and constraints of time it has not been possible to exhaust all primary sources.

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Despite the good books and good counsel, the errors that remain are entirely mine.

Suryakant Nath
Suryakant Nath
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