CONCLUSION

It is advisable for a theologian to accept Vivekananda's view that - 'religion is a vision, an inspiration, a plunge into the unknown and unknowable, making the unknowable more than known, for it can never be known. This search has been in the human mind, as I believe, from the beginning of humanity'. (Complete works, Vol.-III:1). But to explore the scope of religion and to understand the fundamental features of its evolutionary growth, it is advisable to undertake an anthropological study of religion. Because, "religion is a life to be lived not a theory to be accepted or a belief to be adhered to, it allows scope and validity to varied approaches to the Divine" (Radhakrishnan, 1968:25). It is further advisable to explore the wide range of approaches to the divine prevalent in Hinduism.

Ever since the role of regional Hindu traditions in Indian culture has been ascertained, scholars have pursued the study of the traditions of different regions of India. In this regard, the concept of 'Great and little traditions' of Redfield and the concept of Sanskritization of Srinivas have provided the guidelines. Orissa, the land witnessing an uninterrupted cultural development, the land, possessing a strong tribal element, has offered ample scope to scholars, who are interested in the study of this aspect of religion. In this piece of research, the researcher has tried to focus some light on this feature, through two aspects of minor religious cults.

Here, two main features have been traced out i.e.

(1) The religious practices of the simple people of ancient times continues till to-day and thereby widens the scope of religion.

(2) The cyclical process of interaction perennially binds the great and little traditions together.
To establish the first feature, it has been pointed out that objects like tree and earth were worshipped by the simple people at a time, when no action of them was justified theoretically. But these objects continued to be deified, even after the metaphysical concepts of religion developed. The worship of tree and earth originated, because, they proved to be beneficial to man or were regarded as animistic, or were conceived by man as 'infinite'. But to-day, the degree of veneration attached to these two objects is in no way lesser than that demanded by other objects of worship.

Secondly, it has been pointed out that the Tree Cult and the Earth Cult are equally prevalent both in the little and great traditions. The tribals worship trees as abodes of spirits, whereas in popular faith, worship of tree is indispensable in the performance of various religious vows and fasts and in the holy scriptures, tree is regarded as divine and sacred.

Chapter-II of this work projects trees as the tribal shrines, as the shrines of innumerable gods of the peasants, community and at the same time as the shrine of Sanskritized gods.

Chapter-III of this work explores the cult of wooden posts and wooden images and thereby, links the cult of wooden posts with the Jagannath cult. Thus ultimately, significance of Tree Cult in the regional tradition of Orissa has been ascertained.

Similarly, the regional importance of the Cult of Earth is traced out in Chapter-IV by establishing its link with the Jagannath Cult. In this regard, the prevalence of Vaishnavite elements in the worship of gadis (heaps of Earth) at Benupada monastery (in Puri district) has provided the clue.
The abode of goddess Baghei in Bhunpur, a village where there is no erected temple.

The abode of goddess Mangala in Bhunpur
The abode of goddess Chemedi Dei in Bhinpur.

The abode of goddess Bata Bhuasum in Ogalapada
The abode of goddess Vanadurga in Ganganagar, Bhubaneswar.

The abode of goddess Khandua in Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar.
The image of goddess 'Khanduali' in Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar.

The "Siddha Bakula" tree in the Siddha Bakula Monastery, Puri
The wooden post worshipped at Manikagoda.

The movable post and the proxy of goddess Bhagabati in the Bhagabati temple, Banapur.
The 'Danda' or wooden post, worshipped as the symbol of Lord Siva on the occasion of the performance of 'Dandanata' in village Mukunda Prasad in Khurda district.

Performance of the inaugural rites known as "Panitola" on the eve of the Dandanata in village Mukunda Prasad in Khurda district.
The decorated form of the wooden images of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana.

The decorated form of the wooden images of Rama, Laxmana and Sita in the Raghunath Temple in Odagaon.