CHAPTER - IX
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The prime objective of this thesis is to study the problem of hunger and deprivation (nature, extent and causes) in the state of Orissa and find out a suitable policy for reducing the impact of the same in the state. As it is perceived from the experiences, observations and literature, in the contemporary society (21st century) studying hunger independently (which has multiple dimensions) is a difficult task, because hunger is not confined only to food deprivation but contagion with many other non-food deprivations. Hence, to study hunger, it requires studying some other types of basic non-food deprivations as well.

Given that conceptual clarification, the problem of hunger has been examined by analysing the trend and pattern of some outcome indicators, such as calories, protein and fat intakes, income and perception based poverty, and anthropometrics-based poverty, such as stunting, wasting, under weight and Body Mass Index etc. The problem of basic non-food deprivation has been examined by analysing the outcome indicators pertaining to housing, health and education. To study the causal factors of hunger and deprivation, the study adopted an interdisciplinary political economy approach as hunger and deprivation are related with many disciplines, such as economics, sociology, political science and so on but within that the two major causes of hunger and deprivation are (a) inadequate amount of growth, which may be a necessary but not a sufficient condition to reduce hunger and deprivation; and (b) unequal distribution of wealth, which are the product of political economy (the institutional set up and the process of structural changes in the society). Therefore, the dominant approach adopted in this study is the political economy approach, which relates the existing hunger and deprivation of the state with the process of her structural and institutional changes. The study is focused on Orissa – a state with the highest incidence of below poverty line population among all Indian states. Further the incidence of poverty has not reduced since 1993-94 (as per the estimation of Planning Commission of India).

Apart from conceptual clarification, chapter one examined the trend and pattern of hunger and deprivation in India and Orissa. Higher adversity of hunger and deprivation
has been observed in Orissa compared to any other Indian states. The results show that the position of Orissa in terms of hunger and deprivation is worse than almost all other Indian states. At the end, the chapter presented the objectives, hypotheses, theoretical framework, methodology, and data sources for the study. It also set the theoretical framework to study the problem of hunger and deprivation in the context of Orissa, where the conventional political economy of class relations or the role of state in public provisioning as well as the social hierarchy aspects of hunger and deprivation have been brought in.

First objective of the study is to:

Examine the mass (inadequate growth) and class (unequal distributions) character of hunger and deprivation in Orissa.

Chapter two, three and four dealt with this objective.

Chapter two presents the structure of hunger and deprivation within the state of Orissa. In Orissa, the political economy aspects of the problem has been seen through (i) the history of the accumulating and de-accumulating groups; (ii) the higher and lower strata of the society and their access to wealth, health, education and housing; and (iii) the gender and regional dimensions.

This chapter inferred that the levels of both hunger and deprivation are not only high, they have also been the regular features of Orissa economy and society. The reasons are (a) failure of agriculture (b) the institutional and structural rigidities and (c) the colonial rule. However, a single most important variable that can explain the higher incidence of hunger and deprivation in Orissa to a greater extent is the social structure and social hierarchy prevailing in the state, where the SCs/STs, women and children faced most disadvantages. The results also show a higher variation of hunger and deprivation across social groups, geographical regions, occupations, educational status, landholding, and dependency ratio. In other words, hunger and deprivation are higher for those who reside in rural areas, who have low human capabilities, who belongs to low social groups, who
possess less assets (specifically land) and who have less earning members who contribute to employment and livelihoods.

Agriculture has been the major source of income and employment in the state, where 80 percent of the manpower was engaged but the sector largely depends on uncertain monsoon. The agricultural sector is characterised by disguised unemployment, low labour productivity, and low wages. Moreover, the topology and geography of the state are such that they accentuated the mass hunger and deprivation in Orissa through various natural calamities, such as drought in Southern-Western part of Orissa and flood and cyclone in the coastal part of Orissa. Agriculture being the main source of livelihoods, uncertainty in it leads to a mass hunger and deprivation in the state.

The high levels of hunger and deprivation become a multiple burden on certain sections and communities of the Orissa economy and society due to the existence and functioning of certain institutions. The caste-based institution is one of the dominant mechanisms, the operation of which brings unequal share to the agents of the factors of production and the least share to the labourers. Caste as a social institution works in such an extent that irrespective of the place of living, the SCs/STs are more prone to hunger and deprivation. In that social system, there was also no place for SCs/STs in the traditional power structure. Thirty eight percent of the people of the state belong to SCs/STs, who were traditionally excluded from the state affairs and continued to face various exclusions. Hence, they got marginalized over a period of time and became victims of hunger and deprivation. Further, in the caste-based institution the division of work was such that the least remunerated ‘occupation’ has been assigned to lower strata of the society (broadly the SCs and STs). The findings here suggest that irrespective of place of living, incidence of hunger and deprivation among SCs/STs are higher. Historically, these communities did not possess adequate wealth (notably land), neither they had access to any valuable socio-cultural institutions like school, temple and other public places, which might have been the reasons for higher levels of hunger and deprivation among them. Therefore, these communities are in need of special attention from a developmental state but as it will be seen in later chapter that the problem of social exclusion is pervasive in the state. So is the case of women in the Orissa society, who have less access to education, land
and other public spheres. Therefore, within the mass problem of hunger and deprivation in the state, these sections/communities had to face multiple incidences of hunger and deprivation.

Geographically too, these communities concentrate in specific regions (southern and part of northern Orissa), far away from the centre of decision-making of the state. Lack of awareness among the people of this region on one hand and lack of interest of the state to this region on the other, together failed to bring development in a sustainable manner to reduce hunger and deprivation. Instead, certain investments were made (mostly in mines and coal), which are highly extractive and unsustainable in nature. That added to the hunger and deprivation through displacement and destroying the main and sometimes the only source of livelihoods of these people.

Apart from the state’s systemic failure, which was responsible for the creation of hunger and deprivation, the British land revenue system was an additional breeder of hunger and deprivation through their various exploitative land revenue policies historically.

In the post independent era the problem could have been ameliorated to a great extent but so far the social elites are the political elites and are the principal agents of policy matters. They had little political will or desire to bring the disadvantaged sections to the mainstream. This systematic negligence might be one of the reasons that the incidence of hunger and deprivation continued to remain high in Orissa and in fact, remained relatively the highest in the country.

In brief, it seems the strong social hierarchy, which existed in the socio-cultural history of Orissa is still persisting in different forms even now. This remains an important barrier to reduce hunger and deprivation in the state.

Chapter three analysed the growth and structural transformation aspects of hunger and deprivation in Orissa. The analysis shows a high degree of product transformation from primary to service sector, but the secondary sector remained passive in this process. Further, the employment transformation did not follow the output transformation. The growth rate of output since 1970s made the structural transformation (in output) to
happen, however, that growth has failed to trickle down and reduce hunger and deprivation. In other words, the rate of change in output has not much effect on the rate of change in poverty, as there is less employment growth in the primary sector.

The rate of growth in output is higher than the rate of growth in employment during the previous 27 years in Orissa. Further, the rates of annual compound growth rates of both output and employment were found to be higher in service sector than in primary sector since the 1990s. Since most of the workers are dependent on primary sector (63 percent) and the rate of growth is lower in the primary sector, poverty situation has worsened. Further, the study of the employment transformation reveals that there is negligible shift of work force from primary to secondary to service sectors. The relatively more dependency on primary sector might be due to the less impressive growth and employment in the secondary sector.

The low and negative employment elasticity exhibits the lack of absorptive capacity or displacement of employees from the particular sector. Hence, the rate of change in employment did not bring about reductions in poverty. However, the growth in employment during the late 1970s to early 1990s perhaps accounts for some reduction in poverty in the state. But the momentum in growth in employment in subsequent period did not keep pace. However, the analysis of output and employment shows that the poverty reduction is more sensitive to the primary sector growth.

In brief, the analysis of the output shows that the primary sector has a scope to grow and the analysis of employment shows that the poverty reduction is more sensitive to the primary sector growth. Hence, the primary sector development ought to be the primary focus of the policy makers in Orissa to tackle the worsening situation of poverty and hunger in Orissa.

While the empirical exercise has been seen in terms of dual model of the development economies, it shows that there is almost no transfer of labour from rural to urban sector. There is transfer of some labour force from agriculture to non-agriculture, yet the percentage of workers in the agricultural sector still remains high. In other words, contrary to what one would expect from theory, the labour productivity in the agricultural
sector or in the primary sector has not increased in Orissa. Therefore, it can be suggested that, the Orissa economy is still waiting for a big push, especially in the secondary sector for overall development of the state and for poverty reduction. Chapter three responded to the first objective and part of the first hypothesis that hunger and deprivation are due to the problem of economic growth. The analysis suggests that hunger and deprivation in Orissa can be related more to the growth (both employment and output) of primary sector rather than overall growth rate.

The regional analysis within Orissa reveals interesting results. For most of the indicators analysed, Southern region of Orissa remained at a disadvantaged position and Coastal region remained the best performer. The Northern region remained in the middle of the other two regions in terms of overall performance. In Southern Orissa, poverty level is the highest, casual labour is much higher, share of ST population is much higher and literacy level is much lower. Due to these inter-related factors, hunger and deprivation are much higher in Southern region of Orissa.

Among all the major factors, social group is the most disadvantaged. The ST population has the highest level of poverty regardless of regions. Of course, poverty level among ST population in the Southern region is much higher as compared to their counterparts in the other two regions. Next in order is the SC population who are also disadvantaged, especially in Southern region followed by Northern region. On the whole, Southern region of Orissa and ST and SC communities play a dominant role in the overall deteriorating situation of hunger and deprivation in Orissa.

Given this background and growth exercise, chapter four examines to what extent the land distributions contributed to the existing hunger and deprivation? No clear relationship has been found between the operational holdings and income poverty, which might be due to lack of overall agrarian reforms. It was inferred that, land reforms or land holdings are necessary but not sufficient for poverty reduction. While one would disagree with the concentration of land, the point derived from the case studies of Orissa, Kerala and West Bengal is that ensuring equitable landholding alone is not a panacea for poverty.
reduction; rather poverty reduction through land reforms is conditional on complementary economic and social policies of the state.

Key findings from this chapter are presented below:

(1) First, the significant growth in agricultural output in Kerala, Orissa, West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh has not contributed to poverty reduction during the 1960s. Chapter three also shows that during the 1990s, Orissa had healthy growth but poverty has not reduced much.

(2) Secondly, the social justice approach to poverty reduction has been implemented in all the three states of Kerala, West Bengal and Orissa. In Orissa, though the share allocated to the social sector is comparable with that of Kerala and better than that of West Bengal, the per capita assistance in Orissa remained very low. And the large dependence on public provisioning together with insufficient growth is a threat to the sustainability of such schemes.

(3) Thirdly, in Orissa, it becomes extremely difficult for the households with high incidence of poverty to even access public support. Therefore, adopting the alternative approach to social justice, by providing land entitlements to the landless through land reforms is important from a poverty reduction point of view. In Kerala and West Bengal, however, many other conditional factors played an important role in facilitating land reforms which led to poverty reduction.

In Kerala, the overall rural transformation (particularly social and economic transformation) was made possible not by land reforms alone but rather by combining land reforms with supportive measures in labour and credit markets including the agricultural investment (both private and public). In West Bengal also, it was not land reforms which directly reduced poverty, but rather, as pointed out by the Economic Review of West Bengal (cited in Government of West Bengal, 2004) and Roy and Pal (2002), agricultural investment (public investment for minor irrigation and private investment for bore wells), non-land inputs such as credit, seed, fertiliser, and irrigation facilities which played a significant role in bringing about agrarian change and reducing rural poverty in West Bengal (See Lieten, 1996:121). Although Orissa had an advantage over Kerala and West Bengal in terms of both occupational distribution and land
distribution at the initial point, this has not only failed to reduce poverty but the pattern of land distribution has gradually worsened. Such conditions can be attributed to deficiencies in rural credit systems (Sarap, 1991), agricultural investment and irrigated areas. These may have contributed to keeping the agricultural wages at a low level in Orissa, unlike in Kerala and West Bengal. In other words, comprehensive agrarian reforms may have been able to save the smallholder from becoming landless. Further, the failure of the institutional system to retain the land with the smallholder leads one to infer that the cause of poverty in Orissa lies not only with weak policy but also in its institutional structure.

From these lessons, we can make the following concluding policy points:

(i) As Orissa's experience of land possession/landlessness has shown, land holding alone does not ensure poverty reduction. Rather, irrigated and productive land holding is important as shown by West Bengal and Kerala. Therefore efforts should be made by both private and public agents to transform the land into productive assets.

(ii) In a developing economy concentration of land is not desirable, despite the fact that it may facilitate economies of scale and increase growth of agricultural output with the help of technology. This is because the introduction of technology can cause unemployment, and therefore, in the absence of strong and adequate redistributive measures, worker households may be driven to a state of poverty. An examination of the NSSO data also shows that concentration of land is occurring in all the three states but it is most visible in Orissa. Therefore a minimum amount of land holding should be considered as a basic need for every agricultural household in an economy. This may justify institutions stipulating that, for the welfare of the people, if a household (or person) possesses only the specified minimum amount of land, then legally, neither he/she be allowed to sell nor any other household (or person) be allowed to buy the piece of land. This study argues that the scenario 3 type of agrarian structure is better, at least from a poverty reduction perspective.
Raj (1974: 11) stated "Even a toe-hold on land means a great deal to those who are seriously handicapped because they have none", but the attempt has been a failure in case of Orissa due to lack of other supportive measures. Hence, Raj's statement should be qualified by saying that other factors - at least a minimum amount of irrigation (or an adequate amount of water) is necessary to make even a toehold land an effective instrument for poverty reduction.

Second objective of the study is to:

**Examine social exclusion dimensions of hunger and deprivation in Orissa.**

The conventional approach to political economy mostly deals with the distribution of forces of production and relations of production, which apparently study the history of class conflicts between the bourgeoisies and proletariats. It is the persistent class struggle that determines the political and economic power of a person and subsequently state whether a person will face hunger and deprivation. But in India, the socio-cultural history is such that caste as an institution divided the society into different groups in a social hierarchical order and that order determines the political economy power of a person. Apparently, the higher is the order in a social hierarchy, the higher is the wealth, education, occupation, income and well being and hence lower levels of hunger and deprivation and vice versa. Therefore, hunger and deprivation among the socially lower order bear a historical reason. In the social history of Orissa some groups have been excluded from various mainstream activities and this social exclusion reinforce the hunger and deprivation among them.

Chapter five examined how the caste based social exclusion contributes to the existing hunger and deprivation in Orissa. From the review of literature and empirical data analysis, we can infer that social exclusion (caste based) does prevail in the state to a great extent and that might be the reason why the incidence of hunger and deprivation among the SCs and STs are higher. As shown below, the macro level analysis reveals the precarious socio-economic and demographic conditions of SC and ST households in Orissa:

1. As regards caste composition of the population in Orissa, there are 22 percent of ST population, 17 percent of SC population and 61 percent of 'other' social
The occupational structure shows that the share of agricultural labourer among the STs is 47 percent as compared to 46 percent among SCs and 26 percent among 'other' caste group.

2. During 2004-05, the incidence of poverty is the highest among the ST households (75 percent) followed by SC households (53 percent) and 'other' category of households (25 percent).

3. In education too, the STs and SCs remained backward with 37 percent and 56 percent of literacy rate respectively compared to 74 percent among 'other' category.

4. In terms of housing too, most of the dilapidated houses are found among the SCs with 16 percent followed by other castes (10 percent) and STs (8 percent).

5. The infant mortality rate is also the highest among the SC/ST group as compared to 'other' castes in Orissa.

The social exclusion is so deep that even after 60 years of constitutional efforts a segment of people remained backward in terms of almost all basic necessity. It is also inferred from the micro level case studies that there is prevalence of exclusion (in explicit or implicit form) of Dalits and SCs/STs from various socio-economic spheres, such as exclusion in the socio-cultural institutions like educational institutions, religious institutions like temple and economic institutions like labour market etc. And that might be the reason why Dalits and SCs/STs are more prone to hunger and deprivation compared to any other community of other castes.

So far the study has inferred that neither the growth (output and employment) nor the distributive justice is enough to reduce mass hunger and deprivation in the state. Further, both types of employment and possession of land have shown a pattern where the SCs/STs are more vulnerable to hunger and deprivation. And this chapter further confirms that within SCs/STs, there are socially excluded groups such as Ganda, Ghansi, Chamar, Hadi etc, whose access to capability enhancing facilities are restricted by the structural factors of caste system. While the SCs/STs remain at lower level both in economic power and social ladder, the women mass from these communities are further pushed down by the cultural norms, where there are restricted access of women to
education, health and other capability enhancing programs. Therefore, the role of public provisioning is crucial here to reduce hunger and deprivation among such disadvantaged groups.

The third objective of the study is to:

Examine the role of state and institution (public action) to reduce hunger and deprivation and formulate policy for the same for the state.

Chapter six aims to understand 'to what extent functioning of the various public provisioning schemes are helpful in reducing the intensity of hunger and deprivation in Orissa'. A large number of schemes have been introduced in the state—most of them are central schemes, some are state assisted schemes and recently some schemes are also introduced by some voluntary and non-governmental organizations. These schemes have been broadly classified into five groups, such as nutritional support, educational support, health support, housing support, support for the old person and women. Despite the functioning of these schemes, the incidence of hunger and deprivation has remained at a high level in Orissa in general and higher among SCs/STs of the state in particular. At the macro level, some of the factors responsible for the ineffectiveness of these schemes are the inadequate entitlements and inadequate coverage of these public provisioning leading to a slow pace of ameliorating hunger and deprivation.

A micro survey was also conducted to understand the details of the functioning of these schemes. The analysis is based on two levels - the institutional and the household. At the institutional level, it found that various institutions do exist though less in numbers but their functioning to achieve the desired goals are very poor. Such poor performances are due to several factors - inadequacy of the institution (such as inadequate infrastructure and manpower) to manage the task, influence of the few groups for the functioning of the institution and lack of regular government attention etc. From the household perspective, some of the reasons for the ineffective functioning of the schemes are inadequate coverage, irregular and insufficient entitlement, wrong targeting of household, wrong targeting of commodities and meagre assistance (subsidy). Therefore, when the support-
led development has been considered an alternative to achieve development quicker, there must be adequate coverage with adequate amount.

The thesis concludes that, at the initial period itself, the level of hunger and deprivation remained higher in Orissa than any other Indian states. In the absence of effective policies, the problem is getting accentuated. The incidence became more visible in certain regions, such as among some social groups, occupation groups and among uneducated. In certain cases, all these variables (backward region, lower social groups, agricultural labourer and uneducated household) are found to be existing together and hence they bear the multiple incidence of hunger and deprivation. Their counterparts (the developed region, higher social groups, capitalist and higher educated household) get rid of hunger and deprivation in multiple ways. The investigation also suggests that the society and economy are ruled mostly by higher castes, which hold the political, economic and social power and make decisions favouring the non-poor. Hence, the state interest gets undermined when their self interest gets hampered and therefore the state might have shown a tardy progress in reducing hunger and deprivation. However, some improvements have been achieved due to the contribution of democracy, which also needs to be well developed in every sphere for the rapid amelioration of structural and institutional changes in the state.

The fourth objective of the study is to:

Examine the external sources of hunger and deprivation in Orissa.

As mentioned in the previous sections, hunger and deprivation in Orissa are largely due to absence of distributional justice, which makes the socially excluded groups more vulnerable. In addition, the socially excluded groups do not benefit from the public provisioning. This further gets intensified with the external shocks like natural calamities and displacement. Therefore a greater incidence of hunger and deprivation is found among them. This then leads to a vicious circle for the vulnerable populations even if the economy may be growing.

Chapter seven examined the drought (famine), flood and cyclone and their impacts. The descriptive analysis found that, while the western and southern part of Orissa are more
prone towards famine or drought; the coastal Orissa is more prone towards flood and cyclone. While drought and flood are the regular phenomenon, cyclone, though not a regular phenomenon, can do much harm to the society and economy. In fact, the reviews of some studies and empirical data reveal an increasing trend in loss of per capita value (in rupees) due to natural calamities. In spite of that there are no preventive or permanent solutions to the problem. Similarly, though it has been observed that the coastal Orissa is regularly hit by flood, the efforts are too less either for preparedness or for rehabilitation measures. In recent years, the occurrences of famines have been avoided due to general improvements in the administrative system and timely flow of information that reaches people faster. However, the bureaucratic delays let to forced migration and even to starvation deaths in the drought affected areas in the western and southern parts of Orissa. However, such problem can be considered as class problem—the economically backward people are more affected by draught than the economically better-off people. Moreover, the coping mechanism and survival strategy for the draught-affected people become more difficult in the absence of assets. In Orissa, it was also observed that lack of adequate physical infrastructure, and educational backwardness still determine the incidence of hunger and deprivation in the drought-affected region, which the Government alone can ameliorate. The chapter infers that external shock is responsible not only for the creation of hunger and deprivation in the state, it also remains a hindrance in state’s economic progress. The natural calamities disproportionately affect the already vulnerable and push them into vicious circle of hunger and deprivation even if the economy may be growing. The chapter suggests that the constructions of small and medium dams/reservoirs may partly solve the dual problems of drought and flood.

The fifth objective of the study is to:

**Examine the displacement induced hunger and deprivation.**

Chapter 8 examines the issues related to development-induced displacement in Orissa. The analysis suggests that in Orissa there have been huge social costs of major development projects. The impact is felt disproportionately among the SCs/STs, Dalits or untouchables. The question of land and displacement directly affect these communities
due to greater demand for land as well as mineral and forest resources located in regions inhabited by these population groups. Due to development-induced displacement, these communities lose natural resource-based livelihoods and land. Under the new policies of economic liberalization, there has been rapid increase in land alienation by the state for private industries and mining companies, including the promotion of SEZs. This has further aggravated the situation leading to heightened levels of hunger and deprivation among the poor, mostly the socially excluded groups.

The displacement not only affects the current agrarian situation by reducing output and increasing unemployment, it also reduces the capacity of the growth of industry in the state in future as the raw materials needed for industrialisation is draining away. So far, there are not many instances in Orissa that the already settled mines companies might have established manufacturing firms with vertical integration. Rather, the main motives of the company is just extraction of iron ore or coal and then drain these to other countries to develop the manufacturing sector like tractor, auto mobiles and so on. In the absence of such vertical integration, the state becomes the victim and the displaced unemployed also move towards lumpinisation.

This chapter examines how the displacement in the name development is producing hunger and deprivation in Orissa. The benefits of development do not often reach displaced people. In the process of development, the local inhabitants are the victims of irrigation projects, hydro and thermal electricity projects, mineral-based industrial project, etc. Yet there is also a long list of projects, which may displace more people if the projects get approval. In the absence of a sustainable rehabilitation and resettlement policy, the displaced people may fall into the net of hunger and deprivation.

The results suggest that development induced displacement in Orissa has started at least from the later part of 1940s and is continuing till date (in almost all decades there have been displacement in the state due to one or the other developmental project). In the last decade, the promotion of SEZs led to huge social costs by directly displacing people and by destroying the common property resources on which people were directly relying for their livelihoods. There was no proper rehabilitation and resettlement (RR) policy for the
displaced people of the state until a revised RR policy was introduced during 1994. The new RR policy has some effects in ensuring some amount of compensation for the displaced people but the policy has failed to provide a sustainable compensation to the displaced people and hence the displacement has added to the existing hunger and deprivation in the state, which is also depicted by the micro level case study.

The political economy aspects of displacement shows that the SCs/STs are most affected victims of displacement as most of the projects undertaken are found largely on SC/ST populated area. Further, as the development project destroyed forests (the major and perhaps the only source of livelihoods for the poor and the tribal), the ultimate burden of displacement threatened the food security and might be pushing these disadvantaged groups into hunger and deprivation.

So far the thesis has attempted to understand the problem of hunger and deprivation in interdisciplinary political economy approach. It examined the problem not only through the dominant political economy approach of distribution of forces of production and relations of production; it also incorporated Sen’s political economy approach of entitlement failure and capability failure. Further, we have discussed the social history of the people of the state to explain the problem. The contribution of social structure to the existing hunger is very high, which may be true in any other Indian states. But in Orissa, the social structure is the fundamental cause of hunger.

Since there are regional and social disparities, it is required to reduce the disparities to reduce the higher incidence of hunger and deprivation in the state. The disparities can be reduced through land redistribution followed by other agrarian reforms (as landlessness is increasing and as there is low productivity and large dependants in agriculture), through effective implementation of public provisioning and through positive discriminations.