CHAPTER-I

THE PROFILE OF KALAHANDI

Kalahandi is one of the thirty districts of the Orissa state. Since 2nd October, 1992, the erstwhile Kalahandi has been re-organised into two districts viz., Kalahandi and Nawapara. The present Kalahandi district occupies 115th rank in India so far as its land area is concerned. The land landmass of Kalahandi district is 7,920 Sq. km representing 4.68 percent of the area of the Orissa state. It comprises 3.64 percent total population of Orissa. The literacy rate in the district is 62.45 percent as per 2001 census. Scheduled Tribes constitutes 28.84 percent while Scheduled Caste constitutes 17.67 percent of total population of Orissa. The State Highway SH-6 connects this district with Bhubanesar. 74 km rail track under East Coast Railway zone passes through the district covering five rail heads namely: Kesinga, Rupra Road, Kandel Road, Lanijigarh Road. Table 1.1, shows the demographic features of Kalahandi in Orissa.

Table No. 1.1: Demographic Features of Kalahandi and Orissa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Orissa</th>
<th>Kalahandi</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Area (sq.kms.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
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<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,80,94,580</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio</td>
<td>972</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Population</td>
<td>3,12,10,602</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Population</td>
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<td>1.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural-Urban Ratio</td>
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<td>92:8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population density</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td>63.61</td>
<td>46.20</td>
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</table>

1.1. History of Kalahandi

Kalahandi, with her historical background, is today confronted with problems of poverty, and hunger which had brought utmost suffering for the people. Nevertheless, the region is repute with rich cultural heritage. Archaeological evidences are suggesting that a great civilization flourished in the region since 4th century B.C. Now Kalahandi from a state of plenty has been reduced to a state of poverty and starvation. It is on this backdrop, a study of the past and present of Kalahandi is crucial to understand its historical heritage as well as the present state of affairs.

The region of Kalahandi has a great antiquity. Starting from the Mahabharata, various literatures refer to this region in one geographical unit or the other. The Mahabharata mentions the region in the name of Kantara, meaning forest track or wilderness. Kautilya (4th century B.C.) in his Arthasastra mentions a place known as Indravana, which has been identified by historians with modern Kalahandi. Ashoka in his rock-edicts also mentions the place as Atavi or Atavika rajya, during the 3rd century B.C. Samudragupta said to have defeated king Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara as revealed from Allahabad pillar-inscription, during the 4th century A.D.\(^{37}\) The Mahakantara is identified with the modern region of Kalahandi district. After the downfall of Mahakantara, Kalahandi became a part and parcel of Nala rule of Podagarh for a brief period. However, with the rise of Sarbhapuriyans, in the 5th century A.D., Kalahandi lost its political identity and became a part of South Kosala. By the 9th - 10th century A.D., Kalahandi came under the Somavamsis and was reckoned as Trikalinga.\(^{38}\) The Somavamsis were some how supplemented by the Chindaka Nagas during the 11th century A.D. It is in the 12th century, under Gangas, this territory was identified with Kamala Mandala, which continued up to the Maratha period. The present Naga Dynasty replaced the Gangas during the 13th/14th Century A.D. with modern Junagarh, also known as Kalahandi Nagar as its capital. In 1940, the British Govt. recognised the Ex-king of Kalahandi as the Maharaja and ruler of Karonda State. With the merger of Princely States of India, the


\(^{38}\) Ibid
Maharaja of Kalahandi P.K. Deo signed the merger agreement in December 1947; consequently Kalahandi was merged in Orissa on the 1st November 1949. 39

1.1.1. Feudalism, Colonialism and the Formation of Crisis System

The Umrao system existed in the pre-colonial period. In this system, villages had common lands, and cluster of them were under the tribal chiefs. 40 These indigenous people had played a vital role in clearing the forests and in producing the surplus which sustain the region. There were numerous instances where the Marathas and the pre-colonial ruling class attempt to seek the legitimacy from the tribals, especially the Konds and Gonds. For instance, Khariar chief got his daughter married to a tribal (Gond) chief of Narra to strengthen his position vis-à-vis the Maraths. 41 Gradually it leads to Hinduization and Peasantisation of tribals.

The evolution of the caste structure in medieval Orissa, scholars talk of the migration of Brahmins into Orissa. Securing social legitimacy and claming Kshatriya status among the tribals accentuated land grant to Brahmin. 42 This implied the migration of Brahmins from the Sambalpur-Raipur area into the interior tracts like Kalahandi. Consequently, there was evidence of the Konds resisting the pressures exerted on them in the 18th century. 43

The clearing of forests and the availability of agricultural space proved to be attractive to the Kultas of the Raipur-Sambalput. Consequently the alliance of Brahmins-Kshatriya-Kultas, extended its power and encroached the agricultural cleared by the indigenous people. 44

39 http/www.orissagov.nic.in/panchayat/kalahandi, chapter-1,
44 Foreign Dep./Pol. A Branch July 1882, Nos. 296-429, National Archive of India (NAI).
The failure of crops in the hills and the plains of Kalahandi, and the desertions owing to the famine and disease as well as ‘ruined tanks’, lead to the ‘mariah sacrifice’ (a form of human sacrifice in land).\textsuperscript{45}

The indigenous (Konds) people rebelled against the king for the suppression of mariah sacrifice.\textsuperscript{46} However, the Konds could not withstand the alliance of feudal-colonial power although many sacrifice their life, like Rando Majhi who is still remembered. They abandoned the cultivable land and took shelter in the hilly, forested interior of Kalahandi.\textsuperscript{47} Consequently, the Konds adopted dongarchas (shifting cultivation) as there was no other alternative.\textsuperscript{48} Since rice production was difficult in hilltops that led to a greater dependence on mandia (millet) other cereals. The diet began to shift, from one that was based on rice, to dry crops. This also implied drinking mohwa instead of handia.\textsuperscript{49}

Kalahandi came directly under colonial rule during Udit Naryan Deo’s reign, in 1863, and this was formalised by the sanad of 1867.\textsuperscript{50} During his tenure, he encouraged Kultas to occupy the agricultural space instead of the Konds whom he considered as ‘unproductive’ ‘lazy’ Konds. Survivals of the indigenous people were at stake, due to land alienation, imposition of high rent and menace of the Kultas who had been constantly outmaneuvering the Konds.\textsuperscript{51}

When Udit Narayan Deo died in 1881, the Kond gave a signal of rebellion, accompanied by Gonds, Dombs and Goudas.\textsuperscript{52} To appease the indigenous people land leases were issued but the Konds wanted Kultas to go. The ‘bent arrow’ and the ‘rope with a knot’ circulated in different parts of the state and signaled the beginning of the rebellion in which some Kultas were killed. In vengeance 13 Kond village were burnt

\textsuperscript{45} John Campbell, (reprinted Delhi 1986) \textit{Human Sacrifices in India}, pp. 52 and 244.
\textsuperscript{46} Fate Naryan Deo’s reign (1831-1853) and his son Udit Narayan Deo succeeded him in 1853. Both the king suppressed the mariah sacrifice and brought other communities like Kultas, to the tribal land.\textsuperscript{53}
\textsuperscript{47} See Campbell, 1853.
\textsuperscript{49} Campbell, op.cit, p.19. Handia (a drink made from rice) was their common drink, Mohwa is distilled from the Mohwa tree.
\textsuperscript{50} Senapati and Kuarr, op.cit. pp. 59-60.
\textsuperscript{51} Foreign Dep./Pol. A Branch July 1882, Nos. 396-429, National Archive of India (NAI).
\textsuperscript{52} They destroyed 142 villages, 69 villages belong Kultas, 27 to the Telis, 17 to Malis, 12 to the Gonds, 9 to Kombhrs, 6 to Gowdas, 1 each to Johis and the Mohanties. See Berry’s Report.
down, that follow a cycle of violence. In the pre-colonial and colonial period, the loss of land of the indigenous people, and their shift into the hilly and forested interior is clearly visible.

The settlements contributed significantly to reinforce the process of social stratification, which was pre-colonial origin. The social/power structure was dominated by the raja at the top, who had five to six zamindars under him. The raja held the Khalsa land directly under him and granted maufi tenures to others. The latter paid a paltry amount call peshkush to the British. The zamindars had sub-zamindars under them they were quite powerful and levied their own tolls and taxes as they close association with the colonial administrators.

There was a highly developed mechanism of trade, through which the durbar, zamindars, goantias and the traders made massive profits. For instance, during the 1943 Bengal famine 50,000 tons of paddy was exported to Bengal. The Gountias dominated the power structure of the village. These were the landed elements who also dominated moneylending and the grain trade. Internal exploiters within the tribals society seek upward social mobility and get fused into the caste system as there were reported Kond Gountias.

Every village was held by a Gountia, and the maufi villages had sikmi Gountias. The parasitism could be understood in reference that the Gountia rights were frequently auctioned off to the highest bidder. They owned the best land (bhogra) and collect tax from the village. They could reclaim waste land and take over land surrendered by ejected peasants. They were assigned to construct water sources and subsequently rewarded for that but through forced labour they built the water sources and got the reward. Consequently, in the post-colonial phase the water system being stolen and monopolized by the Gountias. The table 1.2, shows that occurrence of drought during colonial rule.

53 See Berry's Report, op. cit.
54 Ramdhyan, op.cit. p.117.
55 See Elliot 1856.
Table No.1.2: Drought and Famine during Colonial Period

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nature of Crisis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1856</td>
<td>Food scarcity</td>
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<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Food scarcity</td>
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<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Famine</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-20</td>
<td>Famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922-23</td>
<td>Partial scarcity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925-26</td>
<td>Partial scarcity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
<td>Partial scarcity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Orissa District Gazetteers: Kalahandi (Cutack 1980).

By now it can be easily seen that a highly parasitic system emerged to siphon out resources and sustain itself. However, what the people produced, the system denied them to consume that. Consequently they live on ragi, edible roots, leaves and the like. Occasional droughts and famine, high land tax, exorbitant rate of interest on credit and social hierarchy couple with the crisis system virtually pushed the indigenous to inhuman conditions. Although Gountia system was abolished in 1956, the power and position of Gountia have remained intact.

1.2. Geographical Condition of Kalahandi

Kalahandi is one of the most backward districts of the Orissa, spreading over an area of 7920 sq kms, which is about 7.56% of the total area of the State. Out of the 30 districts of Orissa, it occupies 7th position in area. It is situated between 19° 8' N to 20° 25' N latitude and 82° 32' east and 83° 47' east longitude. It is located in the south-western part of Orissa. The district is bounded by Bolangir on the north, Phulbani on the east, Rayagada on the south-east, Koraput on the south, Nabarangpur and Raipur on the west and Nuapada district on the northwest. There are 2 Sub-Divisions, 7 Tahasils, 13 Blocks, 1 Municipality, 2 NACs, 12 Police Stations, 273 Grampanchayats, 2068 villages and 137 uninhabited villages in Kalahandi district.

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1.3. General Information about the District

1.3.0. Physiography
Physiographically the district may be broadly divided into two different natural divisions, the hilly tracts and the plain country. The former chiefly comprises of the ranges of hills which ran from the north-east to the south-west of the district and the latter constitutes the river valleys of Tel and its tributaries, and the Jonk. About eight kilometres south-east of Bhawanipatna, the mountain tracts called the Dongarla start which cover a vast area of about 3665 sq km. on the eastern side of the district and south-wards to the Koraput order.57 These tracts vessel in a serious of precipitous hill ranges from the plains. The path by which the ascent on Karlapat side is made quite impractical even for “sagads” (solid wheeled carts) and many parts are inaccessible except by foot. The hillsides are covered with dense Sal (shorea robusta) forest, and it is not until the open valleys at the higher elevation are reached that cultivation is met with. These valleys are mostly fertile and are splendidly watered being intersected by perennial streams. There are patches of regular rice and wheat cultivation, but for the most part, the country is given over to “Dahi Cultivation or Jhuming”. The hill tracts form a conspicuous land mark in the scenery and the wild precipitous ranges which mark their border, stand up from the plains like a vast wall and are visible for many miles. The principal plateau lands are the Karlapat, Thuamul Rampur ranges and the Baphilimali hill, a fine plateau on the district border near Madhupatna. They are in an elevation, of 1220 metres and over above sea level. In these hills of the Dangarla area the splendid stream of the Indravati takes its rise near Thumal. It makes its way through the hill range which forms the southern boundary of Kalahandi. Not far from the place where the Indravati flows south through this barrier the Hati river rises on the northern slopes and flows due north in exactly the opposite direction. The principal hill ranges belong to the Eastern Ghat. It covers almost the entire eastern and southern parts of the district. These ranges are named at different.

points differently after the village near their base. The main peaks in these ranges are Tangri Dongar (1229m), Karlapat (1213m) and Kattighara (953m).

1.3.1. Drainage

The asymmetrical patterns of drainage system strongly reflect the character of relief and the climate differences. The Tel, Indravati and Jonk, which form tributaries of large rivers like the Mahanadi and Godavari, may be mentioned among the principal rivers of Kalahandi. Besides, the Tel receives a large number of effluents in the district. The scenery along the banks of these streams during their course through the hills specially on the Indravati and the Raul, a feeder of the Tel, is exceedingly fine and varies from wild raging torrents sweeping over bare rocks, to placid stretches of deep pools with the stream swirling in the eddies between rich meadow land, verdant with grass and banks overhung with willows. Most of the hill streams of the district are perennial. The rivers in the open country seldom carry a large flow of water in the hot weather.

The Tel, Sagada, Hati, Ret and Uttei are mostly reduced to tiny streams in their lower reaches from February to June. On the other hand, the Raul throughout its whole length, most of which lies inside the forest, holds a fair flow of water even in the month of May. The Sagada, Ret, Indravati, Bada Nala and many others carry a strong stream of perennial water in the upper and middle reaches and only lose it in their sandy beds when they descend to the plains. Tel is the longest and most important river in the district, rising in the hills of Nabarangpur and entering Kalahandi district, a few kilometers west of Dharamgarh flowing through an alluvial tract. The important feeders on its right bank are the Motel, Hati, Sagada, Ret, Bulat and Raul. The Raul rising in the hills of Kandhamal district flows through the mountain tracts in the north-eastern part of Kalahandi district, enters Bolangir near Sikerkupa and joins the Tel a few kilometres from the borders of Kalahandi. It receives most of the drainage of Madanpur-Rampur area. The Uttei rises on the same hills and receives a few feeder in the fertile tract of M. Rampur area and joins the Tel on the border of Bolangir-Kalahandi districts near Belkhandi. It drains the wide

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58 Ibid, p.6-7

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plain between M. Rampur and Narla. The Hati, a large tributary of the Tel, rises in the high hill ranges of Jaipatna and joins the Tel about 12 kms north of Junagarh. The Bulat rises at the southern end of Gundi Dangar about 12 kms south of Bhawanipatna and flows past the town in a northwestern direction under the name of Pipal Nala before it turns northwards to join the Tel near Karlapada.\footnote{Ibid, p.7-8} Indravati is the largest river system of this area, which supplies water to most parts of Jaipatna, Junagarh, Koksara, Thuamul Rampur, Dharamgarh and Kalampur Blocks for irrigation purpose. Tanks are found in almost every village. They are generally classified as Kata, Sagar, Bandh and Sara. The tanks are chiefly used for bathing, drinking, pisciculture and irrigation purposes. Phurlijharan, one of the most perennial waterfalls, about 15 kms from the Bhawanipatna township area, is the most attractive place and picnic spot for the tourists.

1.3.2. Climate

The climate of this district is extreme and on an average it experiences monsoon variety of climate. Summer season is intensely hot and winter is very cold. The year is divided into four seasons. The hot season starts from March to May followed by the south-west monsoon season from June to September. October and November constitute the post-monsoon season. The cold season is from December to February. The average annual rainfall is 1378.00 mm. The variation in the annual rainfall from year to year is not very large.\footnote{Ibid, p.30} However, there are discrepancies within different government report regarding annual rainfall. In some government documents it is 1200 mm and in some other it is 1150 mm annual rainfall.

There is a meteorological observatory at Bhawanipatna which has started functioning very recently. Table 1.3, show 20 years of rainfall record with an annual average 1410.74 mm.

According to the meteorological observation at Bhawanipatna, the hot season commences by about the beginning of March when temperature begins to rise. May is the hottest month when the mean daily maximum temperature is about 41\(^\circ\)C and mean daily
minimum temperature is about 28°C. On single day the maximum temperature was 49°C at Bhawanipatna on the 23rd May 2002.\(^61\) December is the coldest month with the mean daily maximum temperature at about 28°C and mean daily minimum at about 11°C. The temperature of the coldest day was 2.5°C at Th. Rampur on the 29th December, 2003.\(^62\)

The relative humidities are high during the southwest monsoon and post-monsoon months. The air becomes gradually drier thereafter. The summer is the driest part of the year with the relative humidities, particularly in the afternoon, often going down below 30%.\(^63\)

**Table No. 1.3: Monthly Rainfall Distribution of the Last 20 years of Bhawanipatna Block of Kalahandi (1983-2002).**

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Mar</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
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<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>154.0</td>
<td>169.00</td>
<td>334.60</td>
<td>188.00</td>
<td>263.00</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1148.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>97.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>254.50</td>
<td>328.00</td>
<td>216.00</td>
<td>133.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1126.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>567.50</td>
<td>120.00</td>
<td>464.00</td>
<td>79.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2394.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>37.00</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>202.00</td>
<td>62.50</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>435.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>13.52</td>
<td>15.87</td>
<td>30.40</td>
<td>359.45</td>
<td>202.19</td>
<td>71.29</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1410.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: District Collectorate, Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi.*

1.3.3 Soil Types:

Soil is a natural part of the earth's surface being characterized by layers paralleled to the earth's surface resulting from modification of parent materials by physical, chemical and

\(^{61}\) "The Sambad" (Oriya Daily) 24th May 2002.

\(^{62}\) "The Sambad" (Oriya Daily) 29th December, 2003.

biological processes operating under varying conditions. During varying period of time the classification of soil in Kalahandi District is made after the scheme of U.S. Soil Conservation Service by the Survey of India in their district planning map series. It is done with a purpose for better soil management. The soil of Kalahandi district is an admixture of Red, Black and Sandy loam. The district has five different types of soil broadly classified as (i) Red Laterite (ii) Black clay (iii) Sandy Loam (iv) Clay and (v) Red Sandy loam but it has been broadly divided in three categories.

Table No. 1.4: The percentage occurrence of the major soil types in Kalahandi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil types</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red soil</td>
<td>31.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black soil</td>
<td>15.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay and sandy loam</td>
<td>52.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Soil Conservation Department, Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi

The red laterite soil which is deficient in phosphorous and nitrogen is found all over the district, mostly at the foot hills and hillocks. In Bhawanipatna and Dharamgarh occurrence of heavy soil is common. It is rich in potassium and nitrogen but poor in phosphorous. Sandy loam is seen in Lanjigarh and parts of Bhawanipatna Tahasils. The soil on the river banks of Tel, Udanti, Uttei and Sagada are alluvial, sandy and sandy loam. The fertility of soil in Dharamgarh and Jaipatna areas is high.

1.3.4. The Evolution of Land Use

Rural communities have emerged as a part of our socio-economic system. The amount of land utilised by specific activities and their special distribution reflect the requirement of the system. In local communities, however, the existing arrangement of land use, though essentially functional, is not a criterion of modern community design. The pattern is to a large extent a product of the past growth and activities, which do not represent the most efficient pattern. Despite lack of proper planning in the early villages, the land use pattern

64 The data about soil classification is collected from the Soil Conservation Department, Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi.
that has evolved is essentially functional. With the increasing population, the need for re-arrangement of land use, and the more intensive use of land was felt. Thus it is apparent that the land use patterns as well as the amount of land utilisation for a particular purpose and often the density of population are constantly undergoing changes. Indeed these changes reflect response to the changing needs of the community.

The term ‘land’ use denotes the multiphase use of land in which we study to assess the use of the land. Land use refers to man’s activities on land which are directly related to the land. Land use and land cover are closely related and interchangeable. The purpose for which land is used is commonly associated with the type of cover whether they are agricultural, forested, and residential or water area. In the condition of acute shortage of land the importance of waste land is immense and the planners take it to determine the optimum use of every acre of land. Multiple use of land must be promoted wherever possible. Land planning must start from the present position and should be based on a careful objective and detailed survey. There are various types of use of land by man which are food production, shelter, work, recreation, movement and security.

Different tracks of land vary in their value for agricultural production and their suitability for different types of crops and livestock. With growing population pressure on normally fixed supply of land, it is important that this variation in land quality should be studied and mapped in order to obtain the maximum return from this valuable resource. No country can be considered to be adequately mapped unless a land classification map of this kind on a sufficiently large scale is available. Taking into account the use of land, land use planning can be made rationally. Von Thunen’s model is concerned with optimal pattern of land use within the constraints laid down by various assumptions concerning production and transport cost and market demand. The economic principle underlying Thunen’s model is worthy of study but the real world situation influences on production, irrational nature of decision making. So the optimal and ideal model is very hard to be found.
The available land resources of a country exercise a lasting effect on the economic life of the country because the production of raw material is dependent on the nature of landscape. The space available to village people leaves a stamp on their socio-economic life. Thus the relation of life to the earth’s area is a fundamental question of rural geography. Land is a basic economic activity and the prime resource of a man. Since the beginning of human existence man has directed his activities with reference to earth’s resources and he knows how to use this for his own benefit. At present there is a pressing need for planned land use of villages. Two factors are responsible for this trend. Firstly, population is increasing at a faster rate while the means of production are limited. They are unable to fulfill the increasing demand. Secondly, with increasing population, food consumption is also increasing. Accordingly the land and water resources must be used judiciously so that the same land can support more population.

1.3.5. Types of Rural Land Use
By land use we mean the distribution of land in accordance with its use or in the study of village land, we are concerned with surface utilisation. The concept of land use is a key concept for understanding rural land use. It includes many broad categories and their sub-categories and level of management which may exist with certain defined types of land use. The present pattern of land use can be studied in the following ways:

1. **Forest**: Forest include all lands classed as forest under legal enactment dealing with forest or administered as forests, whether state owned or private, and whether wooded or maintained as potential forest land.

2. **Land under non-agricultural use**: This category includes all lands occupied by buildings, roads and railways or under water. e.g. rivers and canal.

3. **Barren and uncultivable land**: This category covers all barren and uncultivable lands, including mountains, deserts which cannot be brought under cultivation except at a high cost.

4. **Permanent pastures and other grazing land**: This category covers all grazing lands whether they are permanent pastures or meadows.
5. Land with **Miscellaneous tree crops and groves not included in the net area sown**: Under this class are included all cultivable land which are not included under the net area sown but are put to some agricultural use.

6. **Culturable waste land**: This category includes all lands available for cultivation or not taken up for cultivation even once, but not cultivated during the current years and last five years or more in succession.

7. **Current fallow**: This class comprises cropped areas which are kept fallow during the current year only.

8. **Net area sown**: This term denotes the net area sown under crops and orchards, counting areas sown more than once in the same year only once.

The total area of Kalahandi district is 7920 sq kms out of which 2,12,800 hectares of land are cultivated area and out of this 1,83,000 hect. are paddy cultivation area. Out of the total area of the district 1,07,889 hect. of land are irrigated for Khariff and 61,521 hect. for Rabi crops. The cultivated lands of the district are classified as Bahal, Berma, Mal, Att and Bhatta. Bahal and Berma lands are low lying area and are most fertile, and give better yield than the other lands. Most of the cultivable lands are used for double crops i.e. Khariff and Rabi. The Bahal lands are available for paddy and after that grams like Mung (green gram), Biri (black gram), Kulthi (horse gram) are cultivated. The medium paddy requires less amount of rainfall. Generally the Bhatta are used for cereal cultivation like Horsegram, Til, Mustard.

**Table No. 1.5: Landholding Pattern in Kalahandi**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of holding</th>
<th>No. of holders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marginal farmers (below one hect.)</td>
<td>64,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small farmers (1 to 2 hect.)</td>
<td>42,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi medium farmers (4 to 10 hect.)</td>
<td>35,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large farmers (10.09 hect. and above)</td>
<td>1,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landless agricultural labourers</td>
<td>77,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,39,654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: District at a glance, kalahandi.nic.in*
1.3.6. Cropping Pattern

The general features of the cropping pattern of India are the wide variety of crops and the preponderance of food grains over non-food crops. Paddy is the principal crop which alone accounts for 60% of the gross cropped area of Kalahandi district. Other major crops are Wheat, Jowar, Bajra, Maize, Ragi, and Pulses.65

Rice: Rice is the staple food of the people. There are three regulator rice crops namely Autumn, Winter and Summer and locally known as San dhan, Bad dhan, and Am dhan. Dubri, Jhilli, Puagi, Mahipal, Asamchuri are the popular local varieties whereas Parijata, Ratna, Arnapurña, T-141, Swarna are the highyielding varieties of paddy gradually gaining popularity in this region.

Wheat: Wheat is another important crop of this region which is cultivated under irrigated as well as non-irrigated conditions. Sonalika and Janak are two dominated high-yielding varieties of this region.

Maize: Vikram, Vijaya, Jawahar, Protina and the like are the well known maize varieties of this region. Major maize growing areas are Thuamul Rampur, Karlamunda, Lanjigarh, Madanpur Rampur, Narla and Jaipatna.

Ragi: Ragi is cultivated during khariff season and the area covered in the Rabi season is negligible. The total production is 1323 metric tones in 2005. Improved varieties like Dibya Singha and AKP-2 have been introduced in the district.

Jowar: The cultivation of Jowar is mostly practiced in khariff season by the tribal people in hill slopes and its cultivation is almost absent in the plains. Improved and highyielding varieties have also been introduced in the district.

Til: Til is grown on high land or Bhatta both in Rabi and Khariff seasons. The khariff crop is sown in June, September, while the Rabi is sown in October and harvested in January.

Sugarcane: Sugarcane is cultivated in a limited scale in the district mainly in irrigated lands and in homestead lands. But gradually its cultivation is becoming popular among the local farmers. Out of total areas of district, it is grown in 6089 hectares. Improved

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varieties of cane have been introduced in the district. The yield rate of 72 quintals per hectare is more than the state average.

**Coffee Plantation:** The soil and climatic conditions of Thuamul Rampur area of the district is highly suitable for the coffee plantation. The average elevation of the area varies between 2500 feet to 3000 feet (750 mt. - 900mt.) which is suitable to the growth of coffee plants. At present coffee is grown in an area of around 320 hectares. Its plantation has been taken up as a soil conservation measure.

1.3.7. Natural Vegetation

The geology, topography, climate and the soil all have a close bearing on the nature of vegetation. Above all, men’s influence on the flora is no less important. The one time densely wooded tracts on the high hills of Kalahandi are reduced to mere bamboo and dry mixed scrub through denudation brought about by commercial use of forests and stray cases of shifting cultivation. The forests of this region fall into the following categories:

(i) Sal Forest: The Sal (shorea robusta) forest is of a moderate moist type. It corresponds more or less with champions moist peninsular Sal. The percentage of Sal is generally over 80% in these forests. The common associates of Sal are Asan, Jamun, Kendu, Harida, Kusum, Mohul, Bija (pterocarpus morsupium). These forests dominate over the areas of Karlapat, Lanjigarh and more especially in M. Rampur.

(ii) Dry Mixed Forest: The number of species found in such forest is too unwieldy to be mentioned in details. The principal among them are Asan, Dhaura, Bahara, Kasi, Jamun, Bija, Bandhan, Sisu, Haldu, Khari.

(iii) Bamboo Forest: The only bamboo of any importance is the Salia bans. It forms virtually pure patches in the hills. The most extensive areas under this type are to be found in M. Ramipur and Lanjigarh.

(iv) Teak Forest: There was a time when it could be said that there was considerable quantity of teak. Most of it short-boled and yielding little clean timber, situated in the village lands and the adjacent jungle in the valley of the Tel in the north and north-west of Kalahandi. Some few patches of good teak do still exist in the far north-west in the valley of the Udanti.
Table No. 1.6: Classification of forest area by legal status in Kalahandi as on the 31st December 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of forest Area in Sq.Km</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reserved forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demarcated protected forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undemarcated forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-classified forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, timber is the major forest produce. Minor produces of the area are Kendu leaf, Bamboo, Kusumi, Lac, Broom grass, Sabai grass and Sal seeds. These minor forest produces keep the local *adivasis* employed for nearly 4 months. Timber and Kendu Leaves are the main exportable forest products of the district.

1.4. Demographic Profile

The total population of Kalahandi district is 13,35,372 (Male-667526, Female-667968). Pressure of population is highly dynamic. Its pressure varies with the degree of variability of fertility of soil, availability of water and other facilities. The density of population is 168 persons per sq.km and the sex ratio is about 1002 in Kalahandi. Due to migration, under nutrition, malnutrition and death caused by different reasons, there is an unusual slow growth of population in Kalahandi. A brief discussion may explain the reason behind slow growth rate of population.

Historical evidence highlights many socio-cultural activities, affected by the drought and famine, which completely disorganized the human life. People migrate from a place of severely affected area to a safer area to mitigate the severity of famine.

The population of Kalahandi, according to the 1991 Census, was 1,591,984, showing a decadal growth rate of +18.88 percent since 1981. Though higher than the...
decadal growth rate of 1971-81 (+15.06 percent), this is still “appreciably lower” than the state and national growth rate average of 19.5 and 23.5 percent respectively. The child mortality rate is correspondingly higher: 148, which is the same as the Orissa average, while that of India as whole 123. The infant death rate in Kalahandi also shows a virtually unmitigated increase, from 4.44 percent in 1981 to 7.02 percent in 1987.\(^67\) The density of population is also lower than both state and the national average. The sex ratio of the district is much better than the national and the state average which is cent percent especially in the rural areas.

One thing that runs parallel to all the famine, which has so far occurred over a period of time, is mortality and fertility. The epidemics, which follow famine, also lead excessive mortality, and hence the population will differ between the post-famine period and pre-famine period. Certain biological and social factors might lead to changes in the age and sex composition of a population subject to famine.

It is now generally agreed that almost all pre-modern societies were characterized by a regime of natural fertility. So fertility regulation could only occur through variation in nuptiality; that is in the rate and duration of marriage. This convention means that marriage is linked more to a man’s perceived ability to support a family than to the age at menarche. The marriage depends on the ability to earn a livelihood, ensure food supply and the availability of food. People would marry late or not marry at all in times of scarcity, and the reverse in the time of plenty. It has been confirmed by recent research that the rate of nuptiality did indeed respond strongly to variations in food supply in pre-modern England.\(^68\) It is thus clear that the institutions governing family formation had a significant impact on the scope of fertility regulation.

While commenting on the social and demographic consequences of the great Irish famine, Connell observed that “of all the casualties Irish social life in the decades after

\(^{67}\) District Statistical Handbook, pp. 24-25.  
\(^{68}\) See, Schofield, 1983.
the famine, one of the most significant was marriage. But even societies where this adjustment mechanism is non-existent or weak (as in Bangladesh), total fertility still declines because of a reduction in marital fertility. Perhaps the most important reason is the separation of couples that frequently occurs as the male partner migrates in search of work and food, or as the wife sent to her parent's home, or even divorced, to save on food. Besides, extreme under-nutrition can reduce the fecundity as well as libido of both men and women. It is also possible that as lactating mothers tend to prolong breastfeeding as much as possible in order to save on outside food for the children, the resulting prolongation of post-partum amenorrhea bring down the rate of conception. Whatever the reasons may be, the effects are not in doubt.

Post-famine population contains an unusually high proportion of women susceptible to conception, for two reasons. First, excessive infant mortality during famine leaves an unusually high proportion of women who are non-lactating and are thus unprotected by postpartum amenorrhea; and second, the immediate decline in the rate conception following the onset of famine raises the proportion of non-pregnant women above the normal level in the post-famine period. Those who survive the mayhem caused by famine are on average likely to better endowed genetically to withstand the vicissitudes of life that were the pre-famine population.

Famine can have profound effects on sex ratio in long-term. We shall illustrate this point by considering the impact of famine on sex differentials in mortality rate, the irreversible impact. In many underdeveloped societies, female mortality tends to be higher than male mortality in normal times. Interestingly, however, during times of famine and scarcity, male mortality tends to rise proportionately more than female mortality. This has been found to be factual for societies as adverse as Bangladesh of 1974 and Ireland of the 1940s. Several explanations of this Phenomenon have been suggested in this circumstance some of them are given below. First, because of their

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greater store of body fat, women are more able to survive the strain of starvation than men. Women are harmonically stronger to resist their mortality from some fatal infections what man cannot. Thus women appear to certain advantages enhance the relative ability of women to cope with temporary distress situation vis-à-vis men. Second, men migrate more in search of work and food, and end up weaker, living in unhygienic congregations, which make them more vulnerable to infections. Finally, the reproductive composition of the female population changes during the famine period because of a drop in the rate of conception that occurs with the onset of famine. The proportion of pregnant and lactating women falls below normal, and since it is this group of women who are most vulnerable to the stresses of under nutrition and infection, this compositional change exerts and an offsetting effect on total female mortality. Based on above discussion we can articulate that famine affect the age and sex composition of the society through contrasting death rate and birth rate.

However, there is considerable evidence from all over the world that female-headed households belong to the most disadvantaged segment of society.72 The point is simply that, in a society where women face severe constraints in their access to productive activity, any phenomenon that leaves more women to fend themselves without at the same time removing those constraints cannot be to their advantage. But that is precisely the implication of proportionately higher male mortality at time of famine.

Since parents view children as old age insurance in a society where formal mechanisms of social insurance do not exist, an event such as famine that raises the risk of children mortality will discourage parents from exercising fertility control.73 A famine-prone society is also very likely to be a high-fertility society. The above mentioned insurance motive hypothesis implies that threat of high mortality rate discourages parents to go for family planning. This is because the risk of child mortality is a potential threat to the livelihood security of the household. The claim of state that

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73 See Bongaarts and Cain 1983.
slow population growth in Kalahandi is the result of successful family planning could be better countered through the preceding above argument. Through the above discussion we can comprehend the low growth rate of Kalahandi. The surprise decline of growth rate in Kalahandi in 1971-81 was 15.06 percent, 1981-91 was 18.88 and the 1991-2001 was only 17.99,\textsuperscript{74} approximately same as Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The theory of demographic transition has little to explain a sudden transition to a low level of birth rate in the face of a high death rate in the Kalahandi situation. The data show that even when the family planning is not so good, the growth rate is very low. The implication is that mortality especially infant mortality rate must be higher than the reported 148. Moreover, it must have been higher in the interior tribal regions. One must look for intensive surveys on nutrition, morbidity and mortality to substantiate the high mortality thesis.

\textbf{1.4.0. Socio-Economic profile of Kalahandi:}

The recurrent famine, epidemic, perpetual migration and other forms of afflictions left the district with a slow rate of population growth. The district had bad start during the first years of 1921-31, when death rate exceeds birth rate; still the growth rate in the district is very low (in 1981-91 the decadal growth rate was 18.88 percent and 1991-2001 it was 17.99 percent).

Religion: in 1991 out of the total population of the district, which was 1,600.385 the Hindus were in great majority, the total number being 1,586,846 (99.15%) followed by Muslim 5,919 (0.37%), and Christian 5,052 (0.32%). The preponderance of the followers of Hinduism is so high that it occupies the sixth place among the districts of India and second in the state of Orissa. Strictly speaking, all tribes practice their own religious faith with some ritual they adopted from Hinduism. In the Census enumeration they are simply included in the Hindu religion because of proximity. Indeed, almost all the major religions are present in the district including Animism and Naturism. Apart from the major religions some sects, cults and other form of socio-religious organization are present there. Among them the Arya Samaj, Mahima Dharma, Saivism, Saktism, Jaiguru, are well known.

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{District Statistical Handbook Kalahandi,} 2001, DES, Orissa, Bhubaneswar, p.4.
A general discussion on traditional social structure, customs and religious beliefs of some of the castes/communities are given below. Like elsewhere in India, caste plays a very significant role in the socio-economic life of Kalahandi. Numerous castes and sub-castes subsist in Kalahandi. The original inhabitants of this area were the Kondh, Binjhal, Saora and Gond tribes. They are called the ‘khunt catas’ (literally, ‘clearer of tree stumps’). Today, these people are the poorest in the area and the region's prosperous agricultural communities are the Kultha, Agharia, and Kurmi castes and the Brahmins. Their influx began in the late eighteenth century and peaked in the next 100 years. In spite of their small number Brahmins dominate society. The primordial social practice and world view like pollution and purity, caste based social status, wealth, and modern education makes it easy for the Brahmins to be the dominant caste. Brahmins and Kulthas hold the most fertile land in Kalahandi. Most tribals were by then tenants with small holdings in poor land, or were landless. The villages with the best-cultivated land were the first to be alienated, with the tribals retreating farther into the forests. They are the landlords and the significant gainers of the modern agriculture which is a rapid growing sector in Kalahandi. They don’t plough land by themselves but they employ labour to work in their filed. Society and politics in Orissa is much influenced by a brahman-karan middle class affairs. Continued upper caste control over political parties has been made possible by failure of development of caste associations and politicization of lower castes. Neither the adivasis emerged as an independent force, (despite numerical presence,) nor have their leaders been largely co-opted within existing power structures. According to oral tradition they are not indigenous people of Kalahandi who, most likely, came from coastal Orissa. They are also engaged in priestly occupation. The entire community use sacred thread and observe Upanayan. One more priestly community called Bairagi or Dosi are also found in the district. Though they have well defined social status, their economic condition is precarious. They perform religious rituals during marriage, death and other socio-cultural activities. They put on sacred thread; with singing Bhajan they beg from door to door and perform puja. They persuade the innocent people to believe the age old superstitions and taboos to keep them in eternal darkness.
The caste group Karan having a small minority fulfills the function in Orissa as the Kayasthas (moneylender) of West Bengal and Bihar.

Bhulia a new caste possibly have emigrated from Chhattisgarh. Weaving is their chief occupation but they also engaged in agriculture and other activities. They are very much confident about their caste occupying fairly superior rank in caste hierarchy. They strictly follow the caste endogamy.

Goudas are primarily cattle keepers (Narihas), who settled in the district for the lure of pasture, and now most of them have become to agricultural labourers. They worship Lord Krishna and pay special reverence to the cow.

The Kshatriya are the ex-Zamindar of the district, belong to the warrior caste. They observe Upanayan and are ranked next to the Brahmin in Hindu caste hierarchy.

Kultha are good agriculturists, reported to have been brought from Sambalpur area during the time of Raja Udit Pratap Deo. The Kulthas employ Brahmins for religious ceremonies.

Most of the Kurmis are from Chhattisgarh, and rarely follow any other vocation except agriculture. Brahmins officiate all socio-religious functions in their society. The Malis (gardeners) are divided into two groups- Pandras and Koslas, Gardening and cultivation are their occupation respectively.

The Paika constituted the feudal militia and enjoyed Nalia Jagirs in the ex-state. Though economically backward, their social status is high. They worship their ancestral war weapons on the Mahastami day called Khandabasa, in the month of Aswani (September-October). The Sampuas are mendicants who travel about the country exhibiting snakes and receiving their livelihood.

Although some of them depend on agriculture most of the Sunaris are crafts men and jewellers. The Sundhis are distillers of liquor and moneylenders. Owing to the spread of education some of them have adopted other occupations. They are divided into six sub-castes and do not establish any marital relationship within the same clan.
According to 2001 Census the population of Scheduled Castes (SCs) constituted 17.11 percent of the total population of the district. Among them Dombs are highest in number followed by Ganda, Chamar and Ghansi. Throughout the district their occupations are many and varied, but their major work remains unhygienic manual work. The population of the Scheduled Tribes (STs) comprises 28.84 percent according to 2001 Census. There are 46 Scheduled Tribes found in the district; among them are Banjara, Bhunkia, Binjial, Dal, Gond, Kandha, Mirdha, Munda, Paroja, Saora, and Shabar, together constituting more than 95 percent of the total tribal population of the district. Both men and women of the Scheduled tribes are found to be engaged in agriculture. Together, these groups (SCs/STs) account for almost half the entire population of the district, but urbanization and literacy rate among them is substantially lower than the state and national averages. Again the numerical strength of the SCs/STs is unsurprisingly not reflected in landlordship, political participation or any other symbol of development which reveals their deprived state of life in Kalahandi.

1.4.1. Socio-Cultural Practices:
Illiteracy and ignorance impede SCs/STs to overcome some of their age old superstitious believes and social practices. Many of them still believe that diseases occur because of the displeasure of their ancestral spirit. Modern science and technology has little impact on the remote place of Kalahandi. These communities still are cut off from the modern world, living with their age old traditions.

Conventional development indicators suggest the low levels of development in the district. The total literacy rate of the district is below the national as well as the state average. Furthermore, women education in the district is extremely poor. According to 1991 census 9.5 percent of the Scheduled Caste population was literate. Amongst them 20.86 percent were males and 1.58 percent were female. All the more the literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribes is even worse, in comparison to others.

The census report of 1991 revealed that a small community of Scheduled Tribes adopted Christianity. The tribals of the district have preserved their individual identity
based on the clans, dialects and regions, but by no means their cordial and reciprocal relationship disrupted. They are still within the tribe though they have converted into Christianity.

There is modest sign of inter-caste relations. The traditional division of Hindu castes has lost much of its social rigidity due to the impact of western civilization and industrialization. Any form of untouchability now is punishable under law, people of various castes do not hesitate to take food on a common table in restaurant and hotels. The changes of occupations, spread of education and appointment of persons belonging to SCs/STs in public services have reduced the traditional differences between various castes. Under these circumstances, the traditional structure of the Hindu society based on caste is undergoing a steady change in Kalahandi.

Every community practices its personal divorce and marriage law, but day-by-day the SCs/STs communities are parting off their own practices and adopting some high caste social practices like ‘dowry system’, ‘forbidding of widow re-marriage’ and ‘social seclusion of women’, which were not in their customary law. This change affects the women of the SCs/STs communities which is weakening their social position. Tribal women in Kalahandi work extremely hard in the fields as well as in their homes. But a major chunk of their income is frittered away on alcohol and beedies (local cigarette) by their men folk.

In the district, forest is very close to inhabited areas; hence the poor people prefer the inexpensive and poor quality materials like grass, leaves, bamboo, dry wood and sticks for fuel, and other forest produce for consumption. But the Forest Department without any substitution brings an end to their age-old symbiotic relationship with forest and not allowed the inhabitants to take anything from the forests.

Various dialects of Oriya are spoken in Kalahandi district, which share the broad features of the "Sambalpuri" dialect. It is not just a dialect instead it has close association with the local culture and socio-economic practices. Every language or dialect has its
cultural contents since this language is from a backward region, so is its social status. If
the development industry is to help indigenous people and want their progress, it must
first recognize that this dialect and its wisdom have value. But the state agents in
Kalahandi give least importance to this language and undermine their cultural practices as
well. This is always been seen by the bureaucrats as an impediment in development who
think it is something does not deserve to be learned. Being a native speaker, I spoke to
them in the local dialect but none of them replied in the dialect, either they spoke in Oriya
or in English. Anyone who is a speaker of this dialect considered to be inferior or
subordinate people who do not know the pure Oriya. No one pays any heed in the
government office once the visitor speaks in the local dialect. It is not simply ignorance
to the dialect but all together underestimating and looking down upon the entire practices.
During interview with all top bureaucrats in Kalahandi, I got to know that, only one
person could understand the local dialect. However, the rest easily cover up saying, “it is
not at all a problem, I may not speak the local dialect, but I understand the people,” said
the district sub-collector. It is interesting to know, how would he understands the illiterate
poor. To his embarrassment, some villagers came to meet him, when I was in the district
sub-collector’s office, all of them with their mediator. A little conversation with them
enlightened me that since the villagers cannot speak Oriya they hire these interpreters to
speak to the officials. But the sub-collectors promptly said that despite many assurances
these people don’t come by themselves. The villagers are afraid of the official so they
always come with these middlemen. This speaks much more than what I expected.
Language is a widespread dissatisfaction in this region. Beginning from the primary
education to state apparatus documents, the gap between written and spoken language
makes a lot of difference in the implementation of the programmes. The officials do not
feel the need to learn the language but also undermine the necessity of such attention at
all.

The local dialect has, to a great extent, association with the socioeconomic
practices and has a vast store of Knowledge. Now, with little notice, these archives of
knowledge and expertise are reaching into oblivion, leaving indigenous people in danger
of losing their past and perhaps jeopardizing their future as well. Stored in the memories
of elders, healers, midwives, farmers, fishermen and hunters, the local socio-cultural practices are an enormous trove of wisdom. This largely undocumented knowledge base is Kalahandi's lifeline to a time when people accepted nature's authority and learned through trial, error and observation. But these are undermined and looked down upon by the development industry. As the language and the social practices vanish, so does their irreplaceable knowledge.

Over the ages, indigenous people have developed innumerable practices and transformed it through oral traditions. They have devised ways to farm deserts without irrigation and produce abundance from the rain forest without destroying the delicate balance that maintains the ecosystem. They have explored the medicinal properties of plants and have acquired an understanding of the basic ecology of flora and fauna. If this knowledge had to be duplicated and preserved the state machinery has duty to respect the local practices. Much of this expertise and wisdom has already disappeared, and if neglected, most of the remainder could be gone within the next generation. Indigenous peoples have been threatened for centuries as development encroaches on their lands and traditions. What is different about the present situation, however, is that it goes beyond basic questions of native land rights into more ambiguous issues, such as the rights of individuals to decide between traditional and modern ways. Indigenous knowledge disappears when natives are stripped of their lands, when a different kind of knowledge system is introduced to them which may have scientific value but that undermines much of the local practices. The development industries in Kalahandi have tended to look at the indigenous cultures as an impediment to development. For instance, the administrators, influenced by modern practices only look at the meteorological data which time and again failed the people but the tribals can predict the arrival of the rain by seeing the flora, fauna and other local appearance. Such predictions may also be wrong but they are embedded with the local cultural practices.

In the past decade, researchers in developed countries have realized that they have much to learn from traditional agriculture. Formerly, such farming was often viewed as inefficient and downright destructive. "Slash and burn" agriculture, in particular, was
viewed with contempt. Following this method, tribes' burn down a section of forest, farm the land until it is exhausted and then move on to clear another patch of trees. This strategy has been blamed for the rapid loss of forests. However, researchers have learned that if practiced carefully, the method is environmentally benign. According to James Nations of Conservation International in Washington the forests are not threatened by native practices but by the more commercial agricultural practices of encroaching peasants. An indigenous culture can in itself be a marketable commodity if handled with respect and sensitivity. Preserving local wisdom is as much an issue of restoring respect for traditional ways as it is of creating financial incentives.

1.5. Kalahandi under Special Area Development Programmes
An overview of the performance of various developmental efforts over the years in Orissa reveals that all regions of the State have not uniformly developed and there are wide regional disparities. Therefore, in consultation with the Government of India, State Government has adopted a special area development approach for these regions with a view to focusing attention on them for accelerated development.

1.5.0. Kalahandi, Bolangir, Koraput (KBK)
After the 1985 drought the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Kalahandi to affirm commitment to alleviating poverty. Under Rastriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY) special plan for undivided KBK, the Planning Commission has been providing Additional Central Assistance to this region since 1989-90. Then the Central Government decided to formulate a Long Term Action Plan (LTAP) for the KBK region that was launched in August 1995. A Revised Long Term Action Plan (RLTAP) for the KBK districts was prepared and submitted to Government of India in 1998 which envisaged a total outlay of funds to the tune of Rs.6,251.06 crore over a period of 9 years from 1998-99 to 2006-07. The region has been receiving Special Central Assistance (SCA) of Rs. 250 crore per year under RLTAP effective from the year 2003-04. The RLTAP aims at (1) drought proofing, (ii) poverty alleviation and (iii) improved quality of life in KBK districts.
During 2004-05 an amount of Rs.166.66 crore has been released. Since the inception of scheme, an amount of Rs. 616.66 crore has been released.\(^7\)

### Table No. 1.7: Census of BPL Families for 1992 and 1997 in KBK District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1992 Total (lakh families)</th>
<th>BPL %</th>
<th>1997 Total (lakh families)</th>
<th>BPL %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kalahandi</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>85.77</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nawapara</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>83.64</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolangir</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>75.82</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonepur</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>62.29</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koraput</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>86.59</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malkangiri</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>84.81</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nawarangpur</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>90.56</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rayagada</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>86.04</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The funds were to be utilised for the development of agriculture, horticulture and irrigation; afforestation; drought-proofing through watershed development; providing health care, drinking water and rural connectivity; emergency feeding; poverty eradications and the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Government of India has also included the KBK districts under National Food for Work Programme/ National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), and proposed to include eight districts under Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) retaining the special funding for the region at Rs.250 crore per year. For decades of implementation of these programmes, the percentage of families living below the poverty line (BPL) has shown an increasing trend in some district. Although over all poverty in the undivided KBK has been declining, but there is variation in the declining trend. In fact, rate of poverty has increased over the last five years in two district (out of 8 KBK districts) namely, Nawapra and Sonepur. In 1992 it was 83.63 and 62.29 in the two districts respectively. However,

\(^7\) See Annual Report 2004-05, Planning Commission, (planningcommission.nic.in/0405, pp.56-57)
in 1997 it has increased to 85.70 and 73.07 respectively. Among 3 out of 8 has shown very slow declining in poverty rate, on an average 2 to 3 percent in last five years. However, Kalahandi, Bolangir and Nawarangpur have shown moderate poverty declining rate.

The former 3 districts comprising Kalahandi-Bolangir- Koraput (KBK) now have been divided into 8 districts. The KBK region accounts for 19.72 per cent of the State's population and over 30.59 per cent of its geographical area. The KBK region was divided in 1992 to form eight districts - Kalahandi, Nuapada, Bolangir, Sonepur, Nawrangpur, Malkangiri, Koraput and Rayagada. The people of the region, with 38.72 per cent of them belonging to various tribal communities, suffer from high morbidity on account of under-nutrition and endemic diseases such as malaria, according to the latest economic survey of the State government.

In fact, in August the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) expressed distress over the failure of the State in dealing with the menaces of malaria and diarrhoea in the region. It recommended the extension of the RLTAP beyond March 2007 to achieve the ultimate objective of drought-proofing, poverty alleviation and improving the quality of life of the people. The Commission has been monitoring the development programmes for KBK since 1996 under a Supreme Court ruling. This region also comes under the list of 250 Backward Districts in India identified under Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF).

According to official figures, a total outlay of Rs.6,251.08 crores was envisaged for KBK under the Revised Long-Term Action Plan (RLTAP), covering a project period of nine years, from 1998-99 to 2006-07.

Although numerous schemes have been implemented, employment opportunities continue to be limited. Since agriculture, the main economic activity, does not generate enough employment, the region has been witnessing large-scale distress migration. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) have been facing an acid test in KBK. In the off seasons trains passing through the region continue to be packed to capacity with people migrating to work in brick kilns in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.
Table No. 1.8: Demographic and Literacy Indicators in the KBK Districts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population Density</th>
<th>Population Indicators</th>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (000)</td>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>Rural (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Koraput</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>1,178</td>
<td>49.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Malkangiri</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>49.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nawrangpur</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>1,018</td>
<td>49.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rayagada</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>50.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bolangir</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>1,336</td>
<td>49.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sonepur</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>49.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Kalahandi</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>1,334</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nuapada</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>50.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBK Districts</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>36,707</td>
<td>49.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>36,707</td>
<td>49.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Population density (persons / sq.km). * As per 1991 Census

Lower population density (152 persons per/sqm.) in comparison to 236 for Orissa indicates difficult living conditions in the difficult economic conditions. In the region 89.89 percent of people still live in the village. Literacy rates are also far below the State as well as national averages. The literacy rate stands at 36.58 per cent compared with the State average of 63.61 per cent. More than 60 per cent of the girls in the region marry below the age of 18 as against the national average of 36.80 per cent. Female literacy is only 24.72 percent. Some demographic and literacy indicators are given in Table 1.8.

The recommendations of a three-member team of the Planning Commission that visited the region in July 2005 is still to be implemented. In its 46-page report, the Planning Commission team had suggested that the Chief Administrator, Special Area Development (KBK) Project, should be located in Kalahandi, in the middle of the region, for effective implementation of the RLTAP and be given all powers of Chief Secretary. At present, the project's headquarters is in Koraput. "While inspecting the construction activities, it was observed that the estimates are on the higher side. The quality of construction did not seem to be satisfactory," the Planning Commission team had pointed out. Expressing displeasure over the implementation of the rules that prohibit transfer of land in the Scheduled areas, the Commission said "not much has been done so far in changing land relationships to the legitimate advantage of the tribal population whose
livelihood system was dependent on land resources". All the KBK districts are ecologically disturbed. More than 50 per cent of the forest cover in these districts has degraded, aggravating the problem of poverty. Road connectivity remains a major constraint, making access to markets, health care and educational institutions difficult.

The Commission took strong exception to the failure of the State government in effectively combating the menaces of malaria and diarrhoea, which keep recurring in the KBK region. The shortage of doctors remains a major problem in the region.

1.5.1. The Western Orissa Development Council (WODC)

The State government has constituted the Western Orissa Development Council (WODC), the jurisdiction of which extends over ten districts namely Bargarh, Bolangir, Boudh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Sambalpur, Sonepur and Sundargarh in accordance with the Western Orissa Development Council Act, 2000. WODC aims at accelerating the pace of development in these districts and mitigating regional disparities. The State Government has already provided Rs.50.00 crore to WODC during 2003-04 to undertake conceived development programmes. An amount of Rs. 30.00 crore has been initially provided in the Annual Plan, 2004-05 in favour of WODC to support activities of the Council.

1.5.2. Biju KBK Plan

Under the RLTAP, the state government has launched a new initiative, called "the Biju KBK plan" under state plan.76 The Biju KBK Plan is to be implemented over a period of 5 years effective from the year 2007-08 to 2011-12 and envisages an annual outlay of Rs. 120 crore over and above normal plan allocations, and the Special Central Assistance that may be available to the region under BRGF. Socio-economic development of the

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76. This was a tribute to late Biju Patnaik a Former Chief Minister of Orissa. The Orissa government provides 600 crore to supplement the Central government RLTAP. The Planning Commission total annual allocation under this head is Rs. 250 crore for the KBK district. The funds are provided on a 100 percent grant basis and allocated as additional central assistance to state plan. The fund covers all districts where the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is implemented.
disadvantaged groups, accelerating poverty reduction process achieving millennium development goals, and grass root level planning, and improving the local self governance are the objectives of the plan.

1.6. Conceptualizing Famine and Droughts

Before going to the discussion, the important theoretical aspects of drought and famine must be examined. Quite frequently state documents and scholars and journalists freely interchange the word ‘drought’ and ‘famine.’ Obviously these two mean very different things. A close look at state documents and research done by scholars project make it obvious two different things. However, in the following discussion, we will find, why state prefers to use the term ‘drought’ in Kalahandi than ‘famine’.

1.6.0. Famine

Famine has been defined as “state of extreme hunger suffered by the population of a region as a result of the failure of the food supply.” As Dewall points out, ‘to starve’ originally meant ‘to die’. When applied to the context of famine ‘starvation’ implies death as a consequence. David Arnold summarizes famine as: too many mouths + too little food = famine. Malthus tried to do precisely this by linking famine to food shortage and mass death through starvation. Amartya Sen contested Malthusian hypothesis, while projecting his alternative called ‘entitlement’ approach. The conception of food shortage becomes a necessary and sufficient condition for famine. However as set puts it, famine may occur without a significant decline in the availability of food in the affected area.

Even though Sen’s empirical contention has been disputed, his reconceptualisation of the nature of famine is widely accepted. Famine is thus explained by Sen as a characteristic of some people not having enough food to eat. This argument has partly discredited the

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77 See DPAP documents; KBK project documents; XI, Lok Sabha Debates, Session III (winter); in 1986 in a heated argument some news editors argued that ‘the difference between the two was merely ‘semantic’.


Malthusian thesis, and food shortage arguments have been loosing ground. While contextualizing specifically to India, Dreze comments that the British policy in India was guided by the Malthusian concept. The colonial rulers treated famine as a mass starvation and the famine codes were devised accordingly to prevent starvation death. The ‘burden’ of managing famine was a heavy one for the administrators- a feature that is captured by Fraser.

In fact, both Marison and Fraser argue that famine does not exist in modern times. This indicates that the term famine exists in the mental vocabulary of the people but the way of understanding the term is changing. Now famine is mostly viewed as the lack of access to food and a technical malfunction in society. “Famine is largely a function of institutional, organizational, and policy failure.” According to this view, famine is an extreme symptom of a ‘crisis of underdevelopment.’ The World Bank’s perspective can be outlined at this juncture. ‘Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active healthy life. Its essential elements are the availability of food and the ability to acquire it. Food insecurity in turn, is the lack of access to enough food. There are kinds of food insecurities: chronic and transitory. Chronic food insecurity is a continuously inadequate diet caused by the inability to acquire food… Transitory food security is a temporary decline in a household’s access to enough food.’

A famine is a social and economic crisis that is commonly accompanied by widespread malnutrition, starvation, epidemic and increased mortality. Although numbers of famines coincide with shortage of food, famine has also occurred amid plenty or an account of acts of economic policy that have deprived certain populations of sufficient food to ensure survival.

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As per "entitlement theory," Sen maintains that famine deaths result from a precipitate decline in the entitlements of various persons and social groups to parts of the regional food supply. More recently Sen has argued that 'no famine has ever taken place in the history of the world in a functioning democracy.' While this contention may be widely disputed, the principle of good governance and accountability still applies.

Three common themes have emerged from the above discussion.

Firstly, all scholars in general stress on the access to food rather than only supply. They view food security not just in terms of the level and variability of food production, but also with the causes and dimensions of poverty and with the effectiveness of the public and the private distribution systems.

Secondly, all the definitions highlight seasonal and inter-annual variability in food production, food prices or the ability to acquire food. Thus, the distinction between chronic and transitory food insecurity becomes essential to food security analysis.

Thirdly, broader mandate of food security, encompassing production, marketing and consumption issues have been well recognised.

1.6.1. Drought

Drought results from long, continuous dry weather and/or insufficiency of rain, which causes exhaustion of soil moisture, depletion of underground water supply and reduction of stream flow. Bondyopadhyay (1988) lists four types of droughts, namely (i) meteorological drought, (ii) surface water drought, (iii) ground water drought and (iv) soil-water drought. He argues that the various forms of droughts get generated independently but inseparable and are linked to each other through the water cycle.

The national commission on Agriculture in India defines three types of droughts, namely, meteorological, agricultural and hydrological droughts. Meteorological drought is defined as a situation when there is significant decrease from normal precipitation over an area (i.e. more than 25%). Agricultural drought occurs when soil moisture and rainfall are inadequate during the growing season to support healthy crop growth to maturity and

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causes crop stress and wilting. Hydrological drought may be a result of long term meteorological droughts which result in the drying up of reservoirs, lakes, streams and rivers, and fall in groundwater level.

In most states, indices of distress or scarcity are that of crop conditions, the availability and prices of foodgrains and fodder, the state of employment and trends in wages, unusual movement of labour from rural areas, the state of crime and of other factors indicating signs of distress such as malnutrition among children. 88

"Drought is a slow onset of disaster. It occurs mostly due to lack of adequate rain in the dryland areas or uneven distribution of rainfall during a particular year. In addition, recurring drought tends to reduce the water table. About 70 percent of the total cultivated areas in the state are prone to drought. These areas lack not only irrigation facilities but also receive scanty rainfall. In some areas, rainfall, though plenty, is erratic. The severity of drought is measured by crop cutting experiment, and accordingly declaration of drought area is made." 89 The lack of precise (and objective) definition of drought in a specific situation is an obstacle to its understanding, which leads to political and ideological manipulation. Regardless of the above definition given by the state, the two important features in the definition, declaration and amelioration of droughts are ‘rainfall’ and ‘agricultural productivity.’

Perception also shapes the responses to drought and the confusion on what drought is often cause difficulties in dealing with the hazard. Rathore 90 has summarized the following difficulties, surrounded by perception of droughts.

(i) Drought is perceived as a creeping phenomenon because its onset and end are often difficult to identify. Clear distinction between non-drought and drought is absent;

89 Vulnerability Reduction for Sustainable Development: in the Context of Natural disasters, orissagov.nic.in/p&c/humandevelopment/ summary/ Chapter-07. See also chapter-IV, for detail discussion about the rainfall and per capita income of Kalahandi.
(ii) Drought is generally viewed as a transient phenomenon. As a result, it is usually not taken seriously once the rains have returned; it is considered as a calamity and managed as an event;

(iii) The direct impacts of drought like withering crops, dry watering points, reduced fodder for livestock are obvious. Second and third order effects, such as price rise, increased food imports, surges in rural-urban migration rates, are not recognised. As a result, much of the impacts attributable to drought are difficult to identify.

The problem is further compounded by the fact that government perceives drought as a 'crisis situation' and a short term problem and manages it as an isolated event. On the long run, defining drought only as a crisis situation or natural phenomenon beyond human control undermines the confidence and capabilities of the people and makes them dependent on the state. By calling it natural phenomenon the state not only diverts the attention but also disowns its responsibility by making nature scapegoat. Social resilience is undermined leading to beliefs that nothing else is possible, that there is really no remedy that will promote self-dependence. In turn, the government becomes complacent and believes that its actions are in the best interest of the people and that it is doing everything that is expected of a welfare state.

However, the locals perceive drought as cosmological construction. Droughts were occasions for addressing the social and moral order of the society, which the locals believe is the origin of such occurrence. The ecological and climatic changes were articulated in term of a general conflict within the community. The village elders considered these to be rooted in the moral failure of the youths.

Over the year the locals also have developed different strategies to cope up with the crisis. The villagers change dietary structure and occupation. Even socio-economic relations come to different levels.91

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91 See chapter-V for details, also see, Research in Progress Paper "History and Society", The Eternal Famine, Poverty, Food Scarcity and Survival in Kalahandi (Orissa), Second Series-Number XC.
The above discussion brings us to the point that ‘drought’ and ‘famine’ are two different things. Moreover state institutions in Kalahandi prefer to use the former than the latter.

- Drought crisis has been experienced locally and across the state, while famine is not so widespread and relatively experienced by few pockets of India such as Kalahandi.
- Drought is an unavoidable natural disaster and can happen anywhere in the world but famine is more of an institutional failure where the government has greater role to play.
- Discourse generally placed drought as temporary phenomenon, caused by scarcity of rain. Hence, returns of rain apparently brings normalcy.  

1.7. The Paradox of Kalahandi

Being one of the most backward districts in Orissa, Kalahandi is characterized by the lowest per capita income and consumer expenditure; higher dependence on undeveloped agriculture, low level of literacy, little surface roads, extremely low consumption of steel and electricity; inadequate infrastructure and industrialization. Above all, a state of deep-rooted agrarian crisis often surfaces in the form of poverty, starvation and distress.

The history of starvation and hunger in Kalahandi can be traced back to the days of Princely rule when the first reported drought (1897) related starvation death (81 people per mile). Famine in India in general and the nature of famine in Kalahandi in particular has been gradually changing from a natural calamity paradigm to an institutional failure. The irony of huge stocks of rotting grain in the midst of starvation, hunger characterizes the magnitude of exclusion and deprivation.

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92. See Chapter-V for detail examination, where I have given details of annual average rainfall which 1200 mm and crop production which is more than both state and national average. But paradoxically the state ironically often declared the district as ‘drought affected.’

Kalahandi again had drought in 1974-75, after which the Drought Prone Areas programme (DPAP), including many other antipoverty programmes were launched. After 1965-66, Kalahandi became 'the Ethiopia of India'' in the media world. The district Kalahandi is often in the news for its backwardness and abject poverty. It has made headlines over the years for the sell of children by their poor parents, malnutrition deaths, high infant mortality and weak health conditions. One thing that runs parallel to all the famines, which have so far occurred over a period of time, is state's denial of the occurrence of such things. The incumbent government strictly denied any agrarian crisis in Kalahandi. But ironically, the state government always sought for drought relief assistance from the central government and other international aid agencies. Interestingly enough, even in the good year of monsoon and harvest, assistance from centre and other international aid agencies are sought for. Ever since the drought of 1965-66 the aids and assistance from all corners has been pouring in Kalahandi, but there is no visible result in Kalahandi. It is not to say that Kalahandi is not progressing but the amount of fund would have changed the entire state of affairs if it were used for the structural adjustment instead of relief and emergency programmes.

Impact of the Green Revolution is also becoming an important aspect. The increasing area under cash crops also implied that big farmers are consolidating their holding while the number of small and marginal holders is growing. Between 1971 and 1991 the number of marginal farmers with landholdings of less than one acre increased from approximately 17 per cent to 39 per cent of the total agricultural workforce, whereas the number of large farmers (owning above 10 acres, or four hectares) declined in the same period from 4.7 per cent to 0.9 per cent. However, the emerging trend was the decrease in the importance of the middle peasant (4 to 10 acres of land) from 30.4 per cent to 9.9 per cent during the period. Since the number of small peasants (owning one to four acres of land) did not increase in the same proportion as the decline of the large and middle peasantry, it can safely be assumed that many of the medium farmers may have been reduced to landless peasants or marginal farmers.94 Most Adivasis and Dalits have

94. See Bob (2000) and Gail Omvedt (1996)
been divested of "good and fertile" lands and have become marginal farmers or labourers. Orissa’s poor performance in agriculture (with lack of irrigation as a key constraint, among others) seems to be an important cause of the lack in poverty reduction; though even the poorest districts like Kalahandi and Koraput have been exporters of paddy.95

By now, Kalahandi has become synonymous with poverty, starvation and destitution, and the state government itself describes it, with heavy sarcasm, as “a village with an international reputation.” The state describes Kalahandi as a vast, inaccessible district or region state with extensive jungles and a largely aboriginal population. ‘The system of administration’, the committee reported, ‘is almost of a primitive nature’. Indeed it is not a single factor rather it is a combination of a wider set of factors, particularly the crucial role played by elected representatives in regional government, voluntary organization, the law courts, and other socio-political institutions. The media generally creates the picture, which is presented to us, and the true picture as perceived and experienced by the victims is generally ignored.96 In fact, the political and administrative system reported by the committee invariably remains the same.

At the local level, state becomes paternalistic and unreliable. State institutions push the illiterate poor into submission and routinely extract a price, or commission, for every welfare activity of which they happen to be the implementers. This exploitative relationship is accentuated by the overlap between the interests of politicians, rich farmers, contractors, and traders who concentrate their hold on most of the development activities and enlarge their personal affluence.97 Ironically, however, the exploitative practices of moneylenders are perceived as benevolent and charitable. The political economy of colonial times has been continuing till today. The permanent settlement areas created the stronghold of the landlord system and the remnants like Gountia, Saukar still an intact in the systems. Under colonial system in the region, each village falls under the jurisdiction of a village headman (Gountia), who still holds a commendable position in

96 Report of the Orissa State Enquiry Committee (headed by H. Mahtab), 1939, p.159.
97 See Chapter chapter-vi for detail discussion, how the rich and affluent have been using the development funds for their immediate gain.
the rural affairs. The socio-economic influences and political power of these elites have been reinforced through different means, such as unemployment in the villages, lack of credit institutions. Most of all, numerous development programmes, including ‘Food for Work’ have been implemented under their care, as they are the de facto political representatives of the villages. These parallel institutions along side the state institutions is the striking feature of power relation in Kalahandi villages.

The democratic process is unable to alter this or even mediate it, for the greater the proximity of the state to the sphere of its action, the more pronounced the evanescence of democracy. The local state, as we have seen, manifests the least receptivity to, and participativeness in, the local predicament. Overall growth in the economy without appropriate share to the deprived regions as also to the deprived sections of the people is neither desirable nor acceptable; the first and foremost objective should be to eradicate poverty and regional disparity within a reasonable time frame.

Paradoxically, these structures of democracy actually reduce accountability, instead of enhancing it, and endow with policies and practices that deserve to be interrogated. What appears to be the strength of representative democracy is demonstrably a mask of success, disguising failur. As scholars and other celebrate procedural democracy the search for substantive participatory democracy is altogether abandoned. It is reported that the people of Kalahandi were being compelled by pennilessness into distress sales of their crops, land, and labour. There were also cases of people averting starvation deaths by selling their children. Kalahandi continues to remain officially or informally in the grip of drought and scarcity. Even as widespread hunger and migration in search of employments continue unabated, the government of Orissa, however, firmly denies the existence of every single incident by blaming people and some other causes like previous government.

Kalahandi is the most drought-prone area in the state and is recorded as having the highest frequency of drought related famine. The definition, addressing and management of drought conditions in Kalahandi is an archetype of what is considered to
be the ‘dominant view’ of disasters. It is essentially a naturalistic and technocratic orientation which makes a singular causal relationship between nature and event, and initiate public policy to address these disasters in scientific terms which is formulated and implemented by the bureaucrats. In the naturalistic model the nature is made as scapegoat for the government’s inefficiency and failure, otherwise a region with sufficient rainfall and surplus production won’t be declared as drought prone (see Sainath and Currie) The naturalistic causes of droughts distract attention from the social, political and economic conditions that produce droughts. Droughts in Kalahandi are not merely a natural phenomenon but are results of wider economic and political factors as well. There is a deep agrarian crisis in Kalahandi. The state initiative concerning irrigation and land distribution system are far behind satisfaction. The district continues to be ranked as one of the poorest districts in India. With low literacy and industrial base, it has been declared a ‘backward district’ by the central government, and the region a perennial scarcity ridden area. By labeling the region as ‘backward’, the government undermines all local/traditional socio-economic practices. The labeling provides the base for legitimate state intervention, in the name of ‘development’. The evaluation of Kalahandi in terms of relative economic criteria makes the socio-economic practices of the district subject to change. To alter the existing underdevelopment state introduced ‘development programmes’ involved with the state bureaucracy. It is a mechanism to improve socio-economic of the region.

Persistent drought-related resource and food scarcities in Kalahandi have drawn researchers’ attention to the amalgamation course by which droughts are produced and reproduced. Skewed distribution of resources; obsolete agricultural practices, exploitative agrarian relations, and economic, political and social marginalization make Kalahandi more susceptible to dependency, scarcity and dislocation. Development turns out to be an unquestionable central value to respond to the underdevelopment. The basic question which could be asked is, what has development industry been doing for the last three decades? What are its effects?
Kalahandi has received a disproportionate volume of aid from the Centre. Media reported that there were as many as 200 listed rural development schemes in Kalahandi. The KBK (Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput) only gets an average Rs 100 Crores every year, since 1995 under DPAP. The Purpose of this aid is supposedly to alleviate poverty, to increase economic output, and to reduce the migratory labours. Yet, all observers of Kalahandi’s development except state agents agree on one thing that, the history of development projects in Kalahandi is one of continuous failures to achieve their objectives. Development project in Kalahandi bears failure as its norms. No matter how many times this happens there is always someone ready to repeat the failure. The economic situation of Kalahandi district is far worse than others as it done not inherit anything but hunger, poverty and starvation from her previous rulers, Maratha, Mugal and the British. It was then basically a traditional subsistence peasant society. Population pressure on the land, deteriorating soil, and frequent visits of drought and famine led to a situation of poverty and scarcity. Many able-bodied men were forced to have the land in search of means to support their families in Raipur in Chhatisgarh and Hydrabad in AndhraPradesh.

The naturalistic-technocratic model introduces range of ‘drought-alleviation’ programmes which engage primarily physical and construction activities such as ecology balance, constructing road, restructuring cropping patterns, and livestock development. Undermining the social base of agricultural production, it legitimizes the state to do what it wants instead of serving the need of the people. Development industry assumes the people of Kalahandi as homogeneous group and state adopts a uniform strategy to tackle the problems of Kalahandi. ‘The people’ are not undifferentiated mass but rich and poor, workers and dependents, agriculturists and pastoralists, old and young.

The political milieu of Kalahandi does not create a real democratic space the empowerment of the weaker section and the poor. The people are too poor and severely handicapped to participate. They lack not only rights, but also the institutions to claim them.

Colonial archaic institutions along side the state administration are the political features in Kalahandi. Under the feudal system, each village falls under the jurisdiction of a village headman (Gountia), who still holds a commendable position in the rural affairs. By the time the Gountia system was abolished in 1956, they had restructured and consolidated themselves. Thus the power and positions of Gountias have remained intact. The social influences and political power of these elites were never completely eliminated in Kalahandi.

All these features together explain the scarcities and drought in the region. The structure of power and social hierarchy, coupled with the exploitative state institution, engender the ongoing agrarian crisis in Kalahandi. Deprivation, powerlessness and exclusion ultimately underlie the surface conditions of poverty, hunger and starvation. For decades governments have implemented 'ad-hoc' and 'spoon feeding,' methods to avoid the temporary crises, instead of eradicating the underlying conditions which cause them.

In the development discourse, the poor are clubbed together as an imaginary collective subject. The landless wage labour, the sick, the old, the untouchables, the tribals are an imaginary collective subject. Development institutions assume that all of them share the same interest and same circumstances as a single unit. However, this imaginary 'collective subject' is not in real-world a homogeneous group and that clearly needs to be broken up. The suffering inhabitants of Kalahandi do not all share the same interests or the same circumstances, and there are different level of suffering, participation and deprivation. Hence, there is neither a collective will nor a collective subject or a standard policy capable of serving it.

Any attempt to eradicate the ongoing crisis of Kalahandi, needs in-depth understanding of the intricacies of such socio-economic and political system. Successful

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planning and implementation rest on clarity and appropriate method to achieving the goal.

Problems of Kalahandi are multi-faceted that need holistic approach to understand and develop mechanism to address the diverse issues. At various points, the discussion needs problem specific, localized understanding. All these diverse categories of people who craft their everyday tactics of coping with the crisis may need to be understood carefully. Any generalization may mislead to address the complex state of affairs of rural Kalahandi. Homogenization of suffering mass has failed to address the diversity. Clearly it needs a specific and contextualized understanding of the complex agrarian crisis.

Since the 1980s Kalahandi has been receiving numerous grants, assistance from different organisations. A huge amount of money has been pumped into the villages for development. To curb migration and for employment generation in the village, state has initiated numerous programmes. Very few projects in Kalahandi reached to the expectations levels and most have failed to achieve any objectives. The intention behind rural development was to generate rural wage employment; however growth dynamic in the rural economy failed to provide sustainability and meet requirements of food security. Consequently, the locals believe that there is corruption, mismanage and lack of commitment in implementation of the programmes, or else where has the money gone.

The new agricultural policy 1996 recommended market oriented agriculture with emphasis on the cultivation of commercial crops such as cotton and oil seeds, besides livestock farming and diary development. The policy encouraged the participation of agro-business corporations through the application of modern biotechnology of green revolution generation.

The department of agriculture has become leading branch to modernise agriculture as well as the practitioners. Changes have been appearing in the district. However, the benefits of changes have not been distributed equally. The overall economy is undergoing changes. In the following pages, these issues will be addressed.