CHAPTER I

ORISSA: A SOCIO-POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL PROFILE
CHAPTER I
ORISSA: A SOCIO-POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

Orissa consisted of three district Kingdoms such as Odra, Utkal and Kalinga in ancient times. Though the present name is Orissa, the people take pride in identifying the present day Orissa with ancient Kalinga and Utkal, the glory of which was not confined to Indian Peninsula alone, but extended to 'Suvarna Dwipa'.

Orissa's geographical position was responsible for its being the meeting ground of the North and the South. This was the reason for the synthesis of Dravidian and Aryan civilisation in Orissa from ancient times.

It was also responsible for spreading Indian Culture in Asia. Evidence shows that there had been regular voyages from Kalinga port colours to Malyasian islands consisting of Java, Bali, Sumatra, Borneo, Malaya and others between the first and second Century A.D. This maritime expansion reached its zenith when Sailendra rulers of Orissa established an empire in Malaya and ruled there for two centuries.

The recorded history of nearly 3,000 years gives the testimony of Orissa's civilization as one of the oldest in India. Until modern times its development had been largely indigenous, partly because of the nationalist and independent spirit of the Orijyas and partly because of Orissa's long experience of commercial cultural and materialist adventurism. In the words of

3. These Sailendra Rulers have been identified by Historians as Sailovovas of Kangoda.
Dr. H. K. Mahatab, the ancient history of Orissa was remarkable for its political grateness, economic prosperity, religious movement, social upliftment, architectural and artistic achievements.

Orissa has passed through the same vicissitude as many other States in the Country. For purpose of analysis its history can be divided into four distinct periods just like the history of India, viz., the Hindu period, the Muslim period, the British period and the post independence period.

Besides Kalinga, Utkal and Odra, there were also smaller geographical units known to us from the copper plate records which were apparently ruled by the feudatory Chiefs. Of them, Kongoda, Kosala and Tosali occupied the most prominent place.

The boundary of ancient Orissa changed from time to time. During the reign of Chandragupta Maurya in 322 B.C., the boundary of Kalinga extended up to the river Ganges in the north and Godavari in the South. In the East, there was the Bay of Bengal and in the West, the Vindhya mountains. This boundary has been recorded by Pliny based on the materials collected from the writings of Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador in the Court of Chandragupta Maurya.

There is no reference to 'Kalinga' in the Vedic literature. But in the Mahabharat, we get numerous references to the ancient Kingdoms of Kalinga and Odra. Earliest historical reference regarding the Kingdoms of Kalinga, its inhabitants.
and Kings, are found in the Buddhist Jatakas and Jain treatises written in the 6th and the 7th Century B.C. History is silent about the names of the Kings of Kalinga and Utkal during the period after the Mahabharata war till the conquest of Kalinga by Mahapadma Nanda of Nanda Dynasty in the 4th Century B.C. Though according to Puranas, 32 Kings ruled over the Kingdom, the invasion of Kalinga in 261 B.C. by Asok one of the most glorious Kings of the World is one of the greatest events of the World history. So ferocious was the battle and so strong was the resistance that lakhs of people died and innumerable people were mained and taken prisoner. This war brought about a dramatic change in the heart of Asok, who renounced war and accepted Buddhism as his religion. He devoted his life for propagation of Buddhist religion throughout the World. His inscriptions at Dhauli speaks eloquently about his repentance and change of heart. The next famous King of Kalinga was Kharvel, who ruled in the 2nd Century B.C. He was a famous warrior and conquered many Kingdoms. However, he was a benevolent ruler and a great patron of Jainism. Samudragupta of Gupta Dynasty conquered Kalinga in the 4th Century A.D.

Commercial adventurism of the people of Kalinga in undertaking sea Voyages to 'Suvarna Dwipa' viz., the islands of Java, Sumatra, Bali and other islands for the purpose of trade and commerce enabled them to establish colonies in these islands in 75 B.C. as is evidenced in the pages of Encyclopedia of India. In course of time, they established an empire there.

The Sailendra Kings ruled over 'Suvarna Dwipa'. According to Dr. H.K. Mahatab, the Sailendras migrated from Kalinga and built their empire in 8th Century A.D.\(^3\)

In the medieval period of Orissa's history, Odra, Utkal, Kalinga, Kongado and Kosala were integrated as one Kingdom that was ruled by the Kings of Bhauma Dynasty, Kesari Dynasty and Ganga Dynasty in succession. The Kesari and Ganga Kings were famous for construction of temples. The Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneswar and the stone embankment of river Kathjori were constructed by the Kesari Kings and temples of Lord Jagannath at Puri and the Sun temple at Konark were built by the Ganga Kings. These temples are considered architectural and scruputural marvels.

After the Ganga Dynasty which lasted till the middle of the 15th century, came the Solar Dynasty. Kapilendra Dev and Purusottam Dev were the famous Kings of this dynasty. During the reign of Prataprudra Dev, son of Purusottam Dev, Orissa suffered invasion from the Muslim rulers of Bengal in the North and Krishna Dev Ray King of Vijayanagaram in the South. During this period teaching of Chaitanya and Vaishnavism flourished in Orissa. After the Solar Dynasty, Bhoi Dynasty ruled the Kingdom. The last independent King was Mukunda Dev, who was killed in 1567 A.D. in a battle by one of his Chieftains who revolted to against him. During his period Orissa was also invaded frequently by the Muslim rulers of Bengal and ultimately occupied by the Muslim Sultan of Bengal.

---

in 1568 A.D. Orissa formed part of Mughal empire from 1592 A.D. to 1707 A.D. After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal empire became weak. The northern part of Orissa including the present Puri and Cuttack districts and part of Ganjam district was governed by the Nawab of Bengal as representatives of the Mughal emperor through his Naib-Nazims and the southern part was annexed by the Nizam of Hyderabad. In 1751 A.D., the Marhattas invaded and defeated Sultan's army. The treaty provided for a sort of dual administration. Though the Naib-Nazim was appointed by the Nawab of Bengal, he collected the revenue and sent it to Raghuji Bhonsal, the Marhatta King of Nagpur. The Marhatta soldiers were called Bargis and they looted and plundered the villages. Oppression was a regular feature. In fact, Marhatta administration in Orissa was synonymous with oppression of the people. The period of modern history shows that the East India Company invaded Orissa both from the North and the South in 1803 A.D. Although the British administration was more enlightened, this did not usher in an era of peace and prosperity. Due to a series of unpopular measures, there was revolt both in the South and the North. The land settlement policy deprived the peasants of the fruits of their toil. The local Zamindars were up-rooted and their Zamindaris were purchased by the dishonest employees of the East India Company at Calcutta. Then the district of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore were under the direct administration of the British. The hinterland of Orissa, however, abounding in forest and mineral wealth, was ruled by several Rajas or ruling Chiefs. These were

called feudatory States and were under the direct administration of the ruling Chiefs who owed allegiance to the British Crown and paid annual tributes fixed by "Sanands" to the Viceroy who was the representative of the British Crown.

The Oriya speaking areas by scattered in different adjoining provinces such as Madras in the South, Central province in the West and Bihar and Bengal in the North where the Oriyas were culturally and linguistically a minority Community. No wonder, therefore, they could not enjoy the benefits of the British administration to the extent others got it and lagged behind their brothers in other States culturally, socially and economically.  

In 1905A.D., Sambalpur district was taken away from the Central Province and merged with Orissa Division though other Oriya speaking areas continued to remain in Madhya Pradesh. It was in 1936 that Orissa became a separate province with the districts i.e. Ganjam and Koraput having been taken away from the then Madras Presidency and added to Orissa Division. The feudatory States or Gadjats, however, continued to exist under respective ruling chiefs without forming parts of the newly created Orissa Province. After India's independence in 1947 the process of integration of the Princely States of Maharajas, Nawabs, Rajas etc. With Indian Union began and in that process 24 feudatory States merged with the province of Orissa in 1948 and 1949. Thus originated the Modern Orissa which we see today as a State of the Indian Union through the chequered history extending over a period of more than a Century.

11. Sinha,B.N., Land and People of Orissa’s; Indian History Congress Souvenir, Department of History, Utkal University, Van Vihar, Bhubaneswar, 1977, p.1.

12. Ibid.
During the period of Muslim and Marhatta occupation, whose only concern was plunder and loot, the people were very much impoverished and economic condition of the common man deteriorated. During the British administration such deterioration was not arrested. On the other hand, due to faulty land tenure system, absence of irrigation facilities and many other cogent factors, agriculture could not improve to feed the growing population. In the industrial field the decline was very sharp. There was no modern industry worth the name in the province till the end of the British rule in 1947. But there were several cottage industries that existed in the pre-British period which provided the means of livelihood to a large section of the people and promoted trade and commerce. These industries, however, became almost extinct during the British administration. Production of salt in the coastal districts of Orissa was the main occupation of a vast number of people. The salt produced was being exchanged in neighbouring provinces for other articles required for consumption in the province. The British Government, banned the salt production and monopolised its production and its trade depriving the common man of their means of livelihood. The textile industry in Orissa dates back to hoary past. The artisans were highly skilled and produced very fine clothes which had great demand among the common man and the nobility alike, the policy adopted by the British Government, destroyed this industry rendering thousands of weavers jobless and helpless. Cotton cultivation in the province became extinct. Orissa was very rich

in iron ore, and manufacturers of iron was a flourishing occupation of the artisans. The skill and expertise of artisans of Orissa in manufacturing iron materials are evident from the iron beams placed in the temple of Konark, Puri and Bhubaneswar. The iron materials manufactured by the artisans could not possibly compete with materials produced in factories in England and freely imported to India. Thus the artisans lost their traditional occupation. The boat building industry dwindled due to closure of ports like Balasore, Dhamra etc. Other cottage industries like filigree works of Cuttack, horn works of Cuttack and Parlakhemundi and stone works of Puri, Nilgiri etc. lost patronage from the ruling elites. The people had no alternative means of livelihood. Recurrence of flood, cyclone and famine coupled with a very unsympathetic British administration resulted in abject poverty and misery of the people. No wonder that lakhs of people died in the famine of 1866 and subsequent calamities overtaking the people forced many to migrate to other provinces to work as coolies.14

Growth of Political Consciousness

The 19th Century, India witnessed social movements as well as the growth of national consciousness due to two factors; first the rise of middle class intelligentsia with the spread of Western education and secondly, the growth of mass media and communications like press, railways and postal services.15 In addition to this, the people of Orissa faced the disastrous famine of 1866 that aroused political consciousness among the

middle class intellectuals of Orissa. They organised themselves to agitate for the amalgamation of all outlying oriya tracts and so that food could at least move from the oriya speaking tracts to the other parts of Orissa during such calamities in future.

In the sphere of education, the condition of Orissa was lamentable. Even by 1947, the condition did not improve very much. The reports of the Inspector of Schools, South West Bengal for the 1887-88 gave the following picture. There were three Zilla Schools in the headquarters of the three districts i.e. Puri, Cuttack and Balasore. There was an Anglo-vernacular School at Bhadrak. Besides, there were only 16 Vernacular Schools in the whole province. Soon after the famine in 1866, the Government declared that the Cuttack Zilla School would be raised to the status of a High School (Intermediate College) affiliated to the Calcutta University and on 20th January 1868, the High School classes were started only with six students. In that year Mr. Madhusudan Das, the foremost leader of modern Orissa passed the faculty of Arts, and in 1870, he passed B.A. from Calcutta University. He was the first graduate of Orissa. He was also the first Oriya post-graduate (M.A.) in 1873 and the first Oriya to get B.L. degree in 1878 from Calcutta University. Though the progress of education in Orissa was slow, the educated minority formed the hard-core of the socio-political movements in Orissa during the later decades of the 19th Century.

17. Utkal Dipika(Oriya), Cuttack, Dt. 25.1.1868.
The cultural renaissance awakended love for Oriya literature that kindled the spirit of Oriya nationalism and revival of the past heritage. The replacement of Sanskrit by Oriya language in the production of books and puranas strengthened the consciousness and identity of Oriya people around the Oriya literature. Sarala Age, brought revolutionary change when Sarala Das born in a cultivator's family translated and produced Mahabharat bringing the great epic to the home of the common man. It was an encyclopaedia of Oriya culture and society. Similarly Balaram Das and other saint poets brought religious literatures within the reach of common man. Instead of Sanskrit, learned men and women made Oriya language rich and popular. The ornate poetry of Upendra Bhanja crowned the literary achievement of intelligentsia that depicted the passions of men and women in most musical and poetical style. Many other poets like Abhimanyue Samanta Sinhar, Brajanath Badjena made Oriya literature popular and nationalistic. After the famine of 1866, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Madhusudan Rao and Radhanath Ray gave a modern twist to the Oriya literature and these nationalist poet contributed to the growth of political consciousness and established the claim of Oriyas as a distinct homogenous entity within the British empire. The periodicals published by Fakir Mohan Senapati in 1868 (periodical-Sambad Bahika). In 1873 Utkal Darpana was published by Baikunthanath Dey. Samsmark Sevak was published from Cuttack in 1886. Similarly many other poets, novelists and short story writers awakended the Oriya intellectuals in Orissa. Pandit Gopabandhu Das and his Satyabadi colleagues were both poets and writers who
breathed nationalism into their robust literature. Thus the socio-cultural setting was ripe for claiming a separate province for Oriyas and amalgamation of the Oriya tracts laying in different provinces.

In this way, socio-political ferment took place in Orissa after the second half of the 19th Century. Several organisations devoted to the cause of the people were established. Those organisations succeeded in awakening the people from their long slumber and prepared the ground for bigger movements in the next century.¹⁸

**Participation In The Indian National Congress**

No delegate from Orissa attended the first session of Indian National Congress at Bombay. But attention of the people was drawn to its activities subsequently and a public meeting was held at Cuttack on 3rd March, 1886 to discuss the resolution adopted by the Congress in its first session. All leading personalities attended the meeting and took part in the deliberations.¹⁹ 'Utkal Sabha' and 'National Society' of Balasore sent four and three representatives respectively to the Second session of Indian National Congress held in the last week of December, 1886. Thereafter delegates from Orissa, nominated by the associations attended the Congress Sessions held at different places. Especially the leaders of 'Utkal Sabha' like Madhusudan Das and Karmabira Gouri Sankar Roy attended as pioneer in bringing out the message of Congress to Orissa in the last decade of the 19th Century.

¹⁸ Utakal Dipika(Oriya)Cuttack,D.t. 26.3.1886.
¹⁹ Patra, K.M., op.cit.
Agitation for the Amalgamation of Oriya Speaking Tracts

The problem which agitated the minds of enlightened Oriyas for a long time was the amalgamation of the Oriya speaking tracts into one administrative unit and then the formation of a separate province.

In November, 1888, the Utkal Sabha of Cuttack presented a memorial to Sir Stewart Colvin Barley, the Lieutenant Government of Bengal, who had come on a visit to Orissa. He was requested to give attention to the problem of uniting the Oriya speaking territories of Madras, Central Province and Bengal into one administrative unit. However, the proposal was rejected outright by Lieutenant Governor in his reply to the memorial. In 1895, the Chief Commissioner of Central Province decided to abolish Oriya language from official use in the district of Sambalpur. On 20th June, 1895, the Utkal Sabha sent a memorial to Lord Elgin, the Governor General, protesting against the unjust and arbitrary measures. There was no immediate relief and the agitation continued for sometime. The leading men of Sambalpur presented a feasible proposal to Sir Andrew Fraser, the Chief Commissioner of Central Province. The leaders explained that if it was thought impossible to have Oriya as the language of one district of Central Province, they would prefer the district to be transferred to Orissa. A deputation from Sambalpur also met the Governor General at Simla to

20. Utkal Dipika(Oriya), Cuttack, Dt. 24.11.1888.
21. Utkal Dipika(Oriya), Cuttack, Dt. 16.11.1901.
acquaint him with their proposals. It may be pointed out that their request went in vain and the Governor did not think it wise to create a Chief Commissionership for Orissa at that time.

In 1902 the Griyas of Ganjam sent a Mammoth Memorandum to Lord Curzon in which they spoke of themselves as dissociated from their Oriya brethren and of Orissa as "a limb separated from the body" and they prayed "not for a patch work redistribution but hoped that the Government of India will be graciously pleased to bring together the scattered divisions inhabited by Oriya speaking people i.e. Ganjam in Madras, Sambalpur in the Central Province and Orissa in Bengal, or under any one Government and one University".

The representatives of Oriya-speaking tracts of Ganjam, Sambalpur, Midnapur and other outlying territories met in a conference at Cuttack on 30-31 December, 1903. It was the historic gathering of 'Utkal Sammilani' or the 'Utkal Union Conference' which spear-headed the 'Oriya Movement' till the formation of a separate province in 1936. The primary purpose of the Conference was to build an organisation to fight for a separate province of Orissa.

The first resolution of the Conference welcomed the proposal of the Government of India regarding territorial adjustment outlined in the famous Risley Circular sent to the Government of Bengal on 3rd December 1903. The circular proposed to "Unite the whole of Oriya-speaking people both hill

---

23. Utkal Dipika(Oriya),Cuttack,Dt. 2.1.1904.
and plain, under one administration. The Riseley Circular was widely supported in different quarters. But the 'greatest blow' to the scheme came from Madras Government. In April 1904 Lord Curzon proceeded on long leave. During his absence Lord Ampthill, the Governor of Madras officiated as Viceroy of India. On his suggestion the Home Department turned down the proposal of transferring Ganjam area to the Orissa Division, but approved of the transfer of Sambalpur and five adjoining Oriya feudatory States such as Patna, Kalahandi, Soneput, Bamra and Rairakhol to the Orissa Division from the Central Province as also two States of Gangapur and Bonai from Chhotanagpur Division. On 16 October 1905 Sambalpur and the adjoining feudatory States were amalgamated with Orissa Division thereby fulfilling the long cherished desire of the people. In the process of the formation of a separate province for the Oriya-speaking people the amalgamation of Sambalpur with Orissa Division was a landmark - a great historic event. Thereafter, in spite of all agitations, the boundary of Orissa remained unchanged till 1st April 1936 though Orissa and Bihar became a separate province in 1912, when the partition of Bengal was annulled by Lord Hardinge. The Orissa Division included in the new province comprised the districts of Angul, Balasore, Cuttack, Puri and Sambalpur.

The Nagpur Congress and the Utkal Union Conference, December, 1920.

In last week of December 1920 in the annual session of the Congress held at Nagpur, the Congress took a decision to launch non-cooperation movement against the British Govern-

ment in India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Twenty-five delegates from Orissa including Gopabandhu Das, Niranjan Patnaik, Bhagirathi Mohapatra, Jagabandhu Singh, Mukunda Prasad Das, Jadumani Mangaraj and Harekrishna Mahatab attended the Nagpur session. Besides accepting the main resolution on non-cooperation, members from Orissa supported the formation of provincial Congress Committee, on linguistic basis.26 On their return to Orissa they set up the Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee.27

Gopabandhu Das and Jagabandhu Singh returned from Nagpur before the Congress Session was over in order to attend the Utkal Union Conference held at Chakradharpur on 30-31 December 1921 and 1st January 1922. In one resolution, the Conference accepted the Congress programmes on its objectives. In another resolution, the Conference wholeheartedly supported the decision of Indian Nation Congress to form the Provincial Congress Committees on linguistic basis. Thus the Chakradharpur Session of Utkal Union Conference changed the total perspective of the political scene in Orissa and drew its politicians back into the main stream of national politics.28

Non-Cooperation movement aroused great enthusiasm in Orissa. Many young students left their schools and colleges. Nabakrishna Choudhury, Nityananda Kanungo, Harikrishna Mahatab, Jadumani Mangaraj, Nilakantha Das, Laxminarayan Mishra, Braja Mohan Panda, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Rajakrushna Bose and many other young nationalists came forward to join the movement. Some

28. The Samaj(Oriya),Cuttack,Dt. 28.3.1921.
of them gave up their lucrative career in the Government to fight for freedom. The movement for freedom got much encouragement during Gandhiji's visit in March, 1921. A series of arrests were made; Rajkrushna Bose became the first political prisoner in Orissa. Other leaders, viz., Gopabandhu Das, Jadumani Mangaraj, Harekrushna Mahatab (and twenty-four others) were taken into custody.29

Civil Disobedience Movement In Orissa

In 1929 at its Lahore session, the Congress Party resolved to launch mass Civil disobedience. Like Dandi on the West Coast, Inchudi on the Balasore Coast was selected by the Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee for breaking the Salt laws. Popular enthusiasm was unbounded when a batch of Congress workers led by Gopabandhu Choudhury and the young Mahatab, marched on foot from Cuttack to Inchudi Salt field, a distance of 150 miles. About 5000 patriots were arrested and women led by Rama Devi, Malati Devi and Sarala Devi courted imprisonment in large numbers.

Role of Orissa In Quit India Movement

Mahatma Gandhi's second visit to Orissa in 1934 and his subsequent Padyatra created unprecedented awakening among the people. Like their brothers in other provinces the people of Orissa participated in the Quit India Movement in 1942. Many people lost their lives in the police firing, and many other died in jails. Laxman Nayak, a Congress leader of Koraput was hanged, 1970 workers were arrested and 560 were convicted for

political offences and fines totalling Rs.11,000/- were realised from Koraput district alone. 

Formation of Orissa Province

While the Civil Disobedience Movement was in progress, steps were being taken by the British authorities to constitute a separate province for Oriya-speaking tracts. The Indian Statutory Commission, which surveyed the problem, said:

"The province of Bihar and Orissa which was constituted in 1912, is the most artificial unit of all the Indian provinces. It was formed by bringing under a single administration three areas which differed markedly, not only in physical features, but in many racial, linguistic and cultural characteristics." 31

Therefore, an urgent case for consideration and treatment, the Simon Commission appointed a sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of Major Attlee to investigate the matter in detail. The Committee recommended the amalgamation of certain Oriya-speaking tracts of the Central Provinces and Madras with the Orissa Division of Bihar and Orissa. They were in favour of the creation of a separate province for Orissa. 32 The Sub-Committee also felt that the Feudatory State should be associated with the proposed province. 33

The report of Attlee Sub-Committee gave much encouragement to the people of Orissa to pursue the matter at the highest level. Such an opportunity was offered by the inclusion

32. Ibid.
of Maharaja Srikrishna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Deo, the Raja of Paralakhemundi, among the Indian delegates to the First Round Table Conference. He spoke ably on the matter in the Conference and also presented a memorandum to the British authorities for the creation of a separate Orissa Province. On 18th September, 1931 a resolution, issued from the Reforms Office of the Government of India, announced the Constitution of the Orissa Boundary Committee under the Chairmanship of Samuel O'Donnel. Its report was submitted on 19th April, 1932. The white paper, issued in March 1933, mentioned Orissa as a Governor's province along with ten other provinces of British India. But the boundary suggested for the new province was totally unacceptable and was strongly condemned by all sections of the people. It evoked so much criticism that the Secretary of State had to reopen the question in the deliberations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee. The Oriya delegates, consisting of seven members and led by the Raja of Paralakhemundi, met the Secretary on 3rd, July, 1933 to putforth their views. The Raja once again proceeded to London in 1934 and placed before the Secretary his views on the partition of his estate. Finally, the Joint Parliamentary Committee in their report on November, 1934, recommended the formation of a new province of Orissa of 32,695 square miles. His Majesty issued the order on 3rd March, 1936 which was entitled as "the Government of India(Constitution of Orissa) Order, 1936". The members of Orissa attended the Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa for the last time of 28th March 1936. The new Province of Orissa was inaugurated on 1st April 1936. On that historic occasion His Majesty the King and the

35. The Samaj(Oriya),Cuttack,Dt. 28.3.1921.
Governor General sent warm messages of greetings to the people of Orissa. Thus began a new phase of her history.

Integration of Native States

After the declaration of independence of the country in August, 1947, the Rulers of the native states were reluctant to join the Indian Union and considered themselves as independent Sovereign States. However, this was short lived. The wise statesmanship of Sardar Patel in the Centre and Dr. H. K. Mahatab in the State succeeded in prevailing upon the rulers to merge their States with Orissa. Twentyfour Princely States excluding Saraikala and Kharswan signed the Instrument of Accession on 14th December, 1947 and merged with Orissa on 1st January, 1948. Only Mayurbhanj stood aloof, but the State also merged with Orissa on 1st January 1949. The leaders of Praja Mandals of the Native States who were counterparts of the Congress joined the Congress Party. The new districts formed by the merger of the Native States are Bolangir, Phulbani, Dhenkanal, Kalahandi, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh. Thus Orissa became a State with thirteen districts.

In April 1993, Government of Orissa created fourteen new districts in order to bring people nearer to administration. Again in January 1994, the Government of Orissa created three

37. The twentyfour States which had merged with Orissa in 1948-49 are Dhenkanal, Nilgiri, Talcher, Nayagarh, Rairakhol, Athagarh, Pallahara, Gangapur, Sagar, Hindol, Barabanda, Daspalla, Sonepur, Kandapara, Athamalik, Boudh, Bonai, Bamara, Narasinghapur, Kalahandi, Tigiria, Keonjhar, Bolangir, and Mayurbhanj.
38. The Samaj (Oriya), Cuttack, Dt. 1.4.1993.
more districts in Orissa. At present Orissa has thirty districts. They are Cuttack, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Puri, Khurda, Ganjam, Gajapati, Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Sambalpur, Baragarh, Jharsugara, Balasore, Bhadrak, Kalahandi, Nuapara, Dhenkanal, Angul, Phulbani, Boudh, Bolangir, Sonepur, Nayagarh, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Deogarh. Thus, the State of Orissa has at present thirty districts covering an area of 1,55,707 square kilometres with a population of more than 26 millions.

**Socio-Economic Contours**

**Population**

The total population of Orissa stands at 31,659,736 as per 1991 Census. It includes tribal population to the extent of 7,032,211 and scheduled caste population 5,129,316. There are 82 tribals in Orissa, Savaras, Juangas, Kohlas, Kandhas, Parajas, Santals, Koyas, Gadabas, Bordas and Bhuimas are the major ones.

**Morphology that creates Problems**

Morphologically Orissa can be divided into five parts - the Coastal plains, the middle mountainous country, the rolling uplands, the river valleys and subdued plateaus. Geographically Orissa falls into two well-demarcated areas - the coastal districts and the hilly areas. By historical accident these areas are called British area and the Garjat area corresponding to British ruled Eastern districts and Western regions which were ruled by the ex-rulers of the native States.

---

39. The Prajatantra (Oriya), Cuttack, Date: 1.1.1994.
40. Dharitri (Oriya), Bhubaneswar, Date: 1.1.1994.
42. Sinha, B. N., Land and People of Orissa, Indian History, Congress Souvenir, Bhubaneswar, 1977, p.1.
The Coastal plains of Orissa stretch from Subarnarekha in the north to the Rushikulya in the middle, narrow in the Lake Chilika Coast and broad in the South. The Coastal plains are the gift of six major rivers.

The mountainous region of Orissa covers about three fourths of the area of the State. This region is a part of the Indian peninsula. Here deep and broad valleys are cut by the Baitarani, the Brahmani, the Mahanadi, the Rushikulya, the Vansadhara and the Nagavali rivers.

The rolling up lands are lower in elevation than the plateaus. They vary from 153 m. to 305 m. They are the products of continued river action, rich in soil nutrients and are situated in the Koolsankh basin of the Upper Brahmani, in the Jb, the Suktel and the Tel of the Middle Mahanadi, and the Sabari basins.

Climate

Orissa has an equable climate neither too hot nor too cold. In some places, however, extremes of climate are experienced, namely, in the Western districts like Bolangir, Sambalpur and Sundargarh. The average rainfall in the State is 1500cm. There is no desert or semi-desert area in the State.43

Forests

Forest and forest resources in Orissa greatly influence the socio-economic and environmental balance. The total area under forest in Orissa during 1991-92(Provisional) 43.

was 56,828 Sq.Kms., constituting reserved forest of 26,731 Sq.Kms., demarcated protected forest of 15868 Sq. Kms. and undemarcated protected and unclassified forest of 14229 Sq.Kms. As against this, there was 59,963 Sq.Kms. forest area in 1981. Orissa has lost about 3135 Sq.Kms. of forest area during the decade 1981-91 accounting for a decrease of about 5%.

The forests are not dense everywhere. In most places, they are mere shrubberies excellent timber like Sal, teak and rosewood are found in the forests. Kendu leaf used in making beedies is the most important profitable forest produce of Orissa. Lac, Tussar silk and Medicinal plants are other forest products. It is a source income for the State.

Agriculture

Agriculture sector contributes about 50 per cent of the State’s Domestic product and provides employment to about 75 per cent of the total working force. Hence, this primary sector is crucial to the growth of States economy. The erratic behaviour of monsoon accompanied by inadequate irrigation coverage (only 31% of the area being irrigated in the State) very often resulted in severe fluctuation in annual agricultural production in the State and slowed down its pace of growth, Creating Political and economic strain on the State.

Food grain production rose from a meagre level of 38.73 lakh tonnes in 1979-80 to a record level of 78 lakh tonnes

in 1989-90 which is on all time record. Yield of rice which stagnated around one tonne per hectare for more than twenty years showed an increasing trend and touched the level of about 1431 k.g. per hectare by 1989-90. Orissa has become self-sufficient in rice production.

Oilseeds production jumped from 2.79 lakh tonnes in 1979-80 to about eight lakh tonnes by 1989-90 registering an increase of about 325 per cent.

Industry

Economic development necessitates structural transformation so as to divert heavy dependency on agriculture and other constituents of the primary sector to a proportionate increasing contribution of industry sector to Gross Domestic Product.

Under the liberalised industrial policy, the industrial climate appears to be very much congenial to the growth of large and medium industries in the State. 231 numbers of large and medium scale industries went into production by the end of 7th Plan with cumulative investment of Rs. 1044.88 Crores and employment potential of 69,458 persons. During the Annual Plans 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93 (till September 1992) 20, 12 and 6 large and medium scale industries have entered into commercial production providing employment for 1303, 2000 and 650 persons respectively.


There has been substantial increase in number, size of investment and employment generation in the small scale industries sector. By the end of 7th Plan, 35,867 number of small scale industries units. With cumulative investment of Rs.437.26 crores and employment of 2,65,332 persons were functioning in the State. During the period 1990-91 to 1992-93(Upto September 1992) 5034 number of Small Scale Industry units were set up with total investment of Rs.126.18 crore and employment of 34,680 persons maintaining a slow but steady progress in S.S.I. sector.

**Irrigation and Power**

Irrigation is the only potent instrument for countering the vagaries of monsoon in the tradition bound agrarian system in Orissa.

It has been assessed by the Central Water Commission of Government of India that in the State of Orissa, out of the total cultivated land of 65.99 lakh hectares 59 lakh hectares can be brought under irrigation through different sources. The proportion of area under irrigation to net area sown in the State was about 31% during 1991-92. During 1991-92, out of a total irrigation potential of 20.78 lakh hectares, major and medium irrigation taken together account for 9.53 lakh hectares, which was 45.86% of the total irrigation potential. During 1991-92 an additional irrigation potential of about 15.93 thousand hectares was created through major and medium irrigation projects. By end of 1991-92, 9.53 lakh hectares of irrigation potential was created in Kharif season and 4.39 lakh hectares

Power is essential input for implementation of various development programmes in the State in absence of which substantial change in the level of socio-economic status of the people is not possible. With intensive drive for rapid industrialisation and rural electrification, the demand for supply of power has steadily increased. By the end of 7th Plan the demand for power was 1271 M.W. against the power availability of 721 M.W. and installed capacity of 1675.45 M.W. (including Central share), the deficit being 43.3% as compared to 7.9% of deficit at all-India level. At the end of 1991-92, the installed capacity increased to 1713 M.W. from all sources and availability of power was 735 M.W.  

Transport and Communication

A well developed transport system not only plays a significant role in the overall economic development of the State but also in generation of employment opportunities in both public and private sectors.

Roads, Rail, Ports, Inland water transport and Civil Aviation are the major constituents of transport system in the State.

a) Roads

In 1988-89, the length of State Highways was 2852 Km., National Highways 1,625 Km, other Public Works Department laid roads 61,330 Km. and Council Roads, 5,048 Km. There were 3,71,719

motor vehicles registered till 1988-89 and 81 Kms. Express-way connecting Daitari Mining Area with Paradeep.  

Number of buses plying in the State in different routes was 2753 as on 31.3.92. Against an all-India ratio of 32 buses for one lakh population, Orissa has 9 buses only.  

b) Railways  

Railway routes are very top sided and inadequate in Orissa. The total length of railway routes in Orissa constitutes only 3% of that of all India level. These lines which are mostly touching the geographical boundaries of the State are hardly beneficial to the people of interior regions of the State. By March, 1991, the total length of railway routes and tracks in the State was 1982.14 Kms. and 3514.16 Kms. respectively.  

c) Ports  

Paradeep, which was declared as a major port in 1966 has been developed to handle four metric tonnes of traffic. Other minor ports are at Chandbali and Gopalpur.  

d) Aviation  

There is an airport at Bhubaneswar with regular scheduled services to New Delhi, Calcutta and Hyderabad. There are 17 airstripes and 16 helipads in Orissa till the end of 1990-91. Construction of two more airstrips at Talcher and Remuna are in progress.  

---  
56. Ibid.  
e) **Inland Water Transport**

Inland Water Transport is the only mode of communication and transport for the people, leaving in areas not connected by road and rail services. Several places have been identified in the Chilika lake area like Kalijai, Krishnaprasad, Salapada and Nuapada area along with some villages near Bali-mela reservoir and Ghandhari Area.\(^58\)

**EDUCATION**

As far as education in Orissa is concerned, it is regarded as the 10th educationally backward State in India.\(^59\)

As per 1991 Census, the State has a literacy rate of 48.55% as against 52.11% at the national level. The women population constitute 49% of total population of Orissa. But women literacy has recorded a very low profile in the State constituting only 35% of the total literates.\(^60\)

There are 5 Universities. They are Utkal University (1943), Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology (1962), Berhampur University and Sambalpur University (1967) and Jagannath Sanskrit University (1983). There are three autonomous colleges, the Ravenshaw, the Khallikote and the Gangadhar Meher in Orissa. One Board of Secondary Education in Orissa which conducts High School Certificate Examination for High Schools and a Council of Higher Secondary Education in Orissa which conducts +2 Examination. At present there are 514 colleges, 4 Engineering colleges, 11 Engineering Schools/Polytechnics, 17

---

Industrial Training Institutions, three Medical Colleges, One College of Fishery Education, One College of Home Science for Women, two Agriculture Colleges and one Veterinary College.

Art, Culture and Architecture

Orissa is the land of ancient temples with their impressive architectural beauty. The Orissa takes pride in the superb artistic skills displayed in their temples, handicrafts, paintings and dance of Odissi style. Even the handloom weavers of Orissa show exquisitive craftsmanship in the screens and sarees produced by them for which these goods have large number of international customers.

Orissa inherits a rich and glorious religious heritage from ancient times. Geographical situation had been responsible for the assimilation and fusion of different races in Orissa. Having no barriers like Vindhyas, Orissa was the meeting ground of North and South and therefore, the process of fusion of Dravidian and Aryan Culture was started in ancient Orissa. Orissa was initially inhabited by the tribal Savaras who were representative of Mundarian Culture. Although Savaras were overwhelmed by Dravidians and Aryans, their culture had its impact on them. In course of time, Mundarian, Dravidian and Aryan Culture were synthesised and assimilated into one integrated culture. Sìi Jagannath, the Supreme deity of the people of Orissa is the symbol of this cultural and religious assimilation. Afterwards, Jainism, Buddhism and all other faiths of Hinduism like Saivism and Vaishnavism were assimilated into the Jagannath culture and this culture

---

ultimately emerged as the base of Hinduism and Indian culture. Sri Jagannath is, therefore, recognised as the philosophy and cult of different faiths.

At the same time, Lord Jagannath, is the centre of Orissa's socio-cultural and religious life. The offerings to the Lord called Mahaprasad, are taken by all, without any distinction of caste, creed or colour. According to one view, Lord Jagannath is believed to be the incarnation of Lord Buddha and the Car Festival is accepted as an adaptation by the Hindus of a similar festival prevalent among the Hinayan Buddhists. Puri contains Mathas or monasteries of all faiths prevalent in India. One can hear all languages spoken in India inside the temple of Lord Jagannath and the Pandas and Priests of the Lord are veritable linguistics of India.

Bhubaneswar is popularly known as the City of 'temples and tanks', and 'Cathedral City of India'. With archaeological and historical importance, Bhubaneswar is said to have contained 10,000 temples in the past. It is indeed rare to find anywhere in the country such a large number of ancient temples. The Lingaraj temple is 127 feet high from the ground level and 147 feet from the plinth level. The temple is presided over by Lord Shiva 'Lingaraj'.

Tourists are attracted to visit Mukteswar temple, Rajarani temple, Parsurameswar temple, Ananta Vasudev temple, Vital temple, Brahmeswar temple and a lot of other temples in Bhubaneswar.

The Konark temple is regarded as one of the wonders of the World. It attracts tourists from all over the globe. The temple is in ruins. The remnants have been preserved under the
Ancient Monuments preservation Act. The 700 years-old temple represents the Sun God standing in Time's winged Chariot urging in His team of seven horses with which He blazes His way through the heavens. About this temple it has been said "Konark is a living testimony to the speculative daring and the artistic sensibility of a race once knew how to live, love, worship and create in heroic proportions". Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore on seeing the temple, observed:

"The language of man is here defeated by the language of stone".

The temples of Orissa were made of gigantic pieces of stone. The use of cement was not known at that time to keep the pieces tight; this was done with copper or iron plates.

The preceding backdrop of Orissa's geography, topography, demographic components, morphology and culture is in no way exhaustive, but it is proposed through this backdrop to project a picture of Orissa which will enable the understanding of its different problems in proper perspectives. The study of emergence of Orissa in its socio-political and geographical setting is highly desirable to show the emerging associated problems of the State which are sought to be solved by the budgetary policy of Government of Orissa. In fact, the budgetary policy of a Government is conditioned by its socio-political and geographical issues. With this end in view, an humble attempt has been made in this chapter for an understanding of Orissa and its multe-dimensional problems.

63. Ibid.