CHAPTER VIII

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In the 19th century Orissa suffered most from the evils of natural calamities like floods, cyclones and famines. The gravity of the situation increased due to the total negligence of the official machinery or the Government or by improper decisions taken by the administrators, who lacked the knowledge about technical skills.

The following were some of the factors which were responsible for intensifying the damages caused by natural calamities.

(i) Improper maintenance of the existing systems like canals, drains, flood banks, roads etc.

(ii) Ignoring design structures to withstand heavy gales in areas which were prone to cyclone.

(iii) Not providing green belt along the sea shore to prevent the intensity of heavy gales.

(iv) Allowing people to enter and live in flood zones. The areas should be divided into zones of occasional floods and frequent floods. People should not be allowed to enter frequent flood zones. This important aspect was totally overlooked by the British authority.

(v) Lack of good network for forecasting natural calamities.

(vi) Due to littoral drift, sand bars form at the river confluence points with the sea. These prevent free flow of
river water into sea causing heavy silting. The river beds therefore rise and thus their carrying capacities are reduced. This causes great havoc.

CAUSES OF NATURAL CALAMITIES IN ORISSA

Natural Causes of Orissa Famines

The natural causes of Orissa famines included failure of the monsoon, occurrence of floods, cyclones and the most primary of the causes usually being failure of monsoon. The other factors were less important.

There had been 36 floods in all, 18 between 1803-1866 and 18 between 1867-1828 and of these 14 were floods of considerable magnitude in the rivers of Orissa followed by failure of or damage to crop over a large area of which 8 were in the first series of years and 6 in the second. Something worthy of the name of flood therefore occurred once in every 3½ years and a flood caused serious damage to crops once in every 9 years. The most disastrous type of flood was that in which after the crops had been badly damaged by immersion, the rains ceased prematurely early and drought completed their destruction over wide areas.¹ Droughts in Orissa were much more frequent and much more destructive to crops on the whole than floods. On an average it is seen that during the period under study one year in five it was a year of drought.² To eradicate such situations,

¹. Government of Bihar and Orissa, Deposit, Revenue Department File No.IVF-21/1929, March 1930.
². Ibid.
as has already been indicated above, provisions were made in the Bengal Famine Code in 1908 to relieve people in times of floods in same way as during famines.³

Animal pests such as locusts were not responsible for causing any famine in Orissa during the 19th century. But sometimes they intensified the suffering.

The cyclones did immense damage during the period under study to life and property and caused total destruction of crops over wide areas and as an effect of the salt wave for some years huge areas of land had been put out of action.⁴ But it did not lead to mass scale scarcity in the region. Famines due to above causes could be foreseen but sufficient protective measures could not be adopted to protect the people of Orissa from such perils.

Administrative Causes of Orissa Famines

The administration of British-Orissa was totally defective. There was not a go between the Government officials and the people. So it greatly affected the administration of famine relief. Besides, all the relief officers were foreigners. Most of them were ignorant of the language of the people and they had no knowledge of either the material conditions of the people.

³. Famine Proceedings No.5, September 1908, quoted in H.S.Srivastav, op.cit., p.326.
⁴. Government of Bihar and Orissa, Deposit, op.cit.
or the economic status of the province. With a few exceptions like T.E. Ravenshaw, the Commissioner and the Lt. Governor of Bengal, Sir Cecil Beadon, all were totally unable or unwilling to read the clear signs of the times and their inability or unwillingness to do so was the prime cause of the woeful mortality in Orissa famine of 1866. They looked at famine matters from the point of the administration and finance and not from the point of saving human lives. It was therefore, inevitable that suffering increased, relief measures were started late, rations lowered, and coercion was used to collect land revenue. The famine of 1865-66 greatly revealed the weakness of the administration and the neglect of officers. The same thing was also repeated in the famine of Tributary States of Orissa in 1889 and in the Ganjam famine of 1888-89. The people suffered much under the alien Government due to their apathy towards the people.

Economic Factors behind Orissan Famines

Frequent occurrence of natural calamities in Orissa left the people in impoverished conditions. Towards the end of 19th century, poverty had grown to its highest extent.

As the people very often go without savings, when crops fail within any one area, they are unable to buy food from

5. H.S. Srivastav, op.cit., p.327.
neighbouring provinces rich in harvest. Thus famines become inevitable which lead to permanent poverty of people.

In the 19th century there was enough rain and enough food in Orissa, but large exports made people go without resources and savings. Lack of purchasing power and resourcelessness of people led to poverty and thereafter to severe famines. The famine of 1865-66 bears testimony to the above statement. The severe cyclone and storm wave of 1876 in East Bengal could not bring any distress to the people. In the year of distress they bought shiploads of rice out of their own savings. There was no general famine and no large relief operations were needed. But it was reverse in Orissa during the period under study. High rent collection and increasing land revenue demanded from time to time in Orissa made the people resourceless.

Moreover frequent variations in rainfall causing natural calamities broke down the saving capacity of the people and made money-lending an integral part of the agrarian society. The British policy of exploitation of revenue aggravated the inherited bankruptcy of the peasantry. Orissa agriculture suffered from various handicaps like insufficient irrigation

7. Ibid.
facility, funds to invest in agriculture and scientific methods to check the diminishing productiveness of the soil.\(^9\)

Rapid growth of population and relative decrease in cultivable land, frequent natural calamities leading to crop failure and indebtedness, maximisation of revenue and large scale unemployment after the decline of village based industries forced the Orissa people to migrate to other places.\(^{10}\)

The tyranny and oppression of the zamindars could not be overlooked. They charged rent even during famines and imposed much upon the tenants. The Orissa famine of 1866 was aggravated to unprecedented extent due to gross negligence of the Government, selfishness of the zamindars and the greediness of mahajans. The sufferings were so great that the paiks of Khurda, after a lapse of 40 years, rose again in revolt. Since this insurrection occurred in the 9th regnal year of Divyasinghadev, the king of Puri (1866), it is termed as "Naanka Pituri."\(^{11}\)

The real causes for Orissa's poverty were alien rule, ruin of Orissan industries, imposition of excess revenue and heavy taxation and the defective administrative system which had given power to the money-lender. The agrarian economy of Orissa was

\(^9\) N.N.Banerjee, Report on the Agricultural districts of Cuttack, p.36
\(^{10}\) N.K.Jit, The Agrarian Life and Economy of Orissa, p.235.
\(^{11}\) Naank Fituri, An article by P.K.Mishra in Orissa Review, Ratha Yatra Special, June 1979, Vol.XXXV, No.11.
further exploited by the foreign rule with the introduction of salt monopoly. The native people of Orissa were not allowed to collect their own salt from her vast sea coast. 12

Due to the lack of communication facilities, Orissa suffered most in the famine of 1866, than any other province. Most of the people died due to want of food which was not supplied intime because of handicapped communication system. The Government of India improved communication facilities in Orissa only after the great famine. Roads and railways together revolutionised the methods of transport, since the famine of 1866, much had been done to prevent the recurrence of a similar calamity. Harbours, canals and regular steam communication with Calcutta had broken in upon the isolation of Orissa. 13 The system of canals in coastal Orissa was first projected in 1877 and was opened in 1886. The main argument advanced in its favour was the complete isolation of the province of Orissa, there being no communication with Calcutta either by rail or river. The trade of the province was carried out only by the sea route, attended with much difficulties and expenses. It served a useful purpose, being the only means by which grain could be brought into Orissa in time of scarcity. With the advent of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway its usefulness came to an end. 14 All these communication facilities developed as a protective measure against natural

calamities to protect the affected people only after end of 19th century which was subsequently benefited in the natural calamities of 20th century.

**Social Factors**

The most important social factors which increased and intensified the sufferings in times of famines were caste, a false sense of respectability, purda and illiteracy.\(^{15}\)

At the time of great Orissa famine (1865-66) the recipients of relied (food) were debarred from the society.\(^{16}\) The caste feeling was so strict that even some people died without seeking food at all. The higher caste people in fear of loosing caste did not attain the poor houses and free kitches. The people of Orissa suffered most from natural calamities due to their ignorance and lack of awareness among them about Government functioning.

**Famine Relief Policy of the British**

The period under study is divided into two phases, first from 1803 to 1857 and second from 1858 to 1900. In the first phase there was not any systematic policy adopted by the East

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15. H.S. Srivastav, op.cit., p.335.

India Company, but in the second, there were adopted some systematic policies like formulation of famine codes and the protective measures.

**First Phase (1803-1857)**

In the first phase near about twenty natural calamities visited Orissa. During the time of natural calamities, the East India Company marked the rejection of active intervention to alleviate the distressed condition. Being influenced by Malthas ideas the Company's Government adopted the policy of non-intervention in the first half of the 19th century in framing any policy to mitigate the sufferings of the million from natural calamities.

Under the East India Company, the Government had granted remission and suspension of revenue several times under the head of natural calamities. But it was not sufficient to mitigate the scarcity condition of the people. According to Henry Rickets there was favoured no sympathetic treatment to the zamindars in time of natural calamities from which Orissa suffered frequently. He also regretted that remissions of revenue much depended on the personal attitude of the collectors and due to the absence of any systematic enquiries the people suffered much at the time of natural calamities. At that time inundations were more common and in general more destructive than droughts but no systematic preventive measures were adopted to prevent the people from such perilous disease.
Another major obstacle for which the people of Orissa suffered most was the non-interference policy with trade and the restrictions on the food grains at the time of famine. The rice dealers also sometimes hoarded the commodity and created artificial scarcity to get more profit. The long neglect policy of the alien rule was exposed at the time of great Orissa famine of 1866 and it was supposed to be the greatest disaster that had ever visited India.

Second Phase (1858-1900)

The Government assumed full responsibility in 1860-61 to provide work to the able bodied and promised to double the private subscriptions raised in India for gratuitous relief. The establishment and organization of poor houses was the most important measure adopted during the period.¹⁷

In this regard Colonel Barid Smith's (appointed by Lord Canning to enquire into the causes and extent of the famine of 1860) suggestions were not followed by the Government, for which it failed to adopt sympathetic policies towards the famine stricken people of Orissa in 1866 and still worse, the food grains were provided to the people too late when a lot had already died out of hunger.

¹⁷ H.S. Srivastav, op.cit., p.336.
The Famine Commission presided over by Sir George Campbell to enquire into the famine of 1866 made certain recommendation regarding the measures to be adopted for prevention of famine in future. He emphasized upon the development of communication system and for construction of protective embankments and canals for irrigation. On the view of Commission's suggestion, measures were taken in Orissa for preventing the recurrence of such type of calamities. Communication systems for which Orissa lagged behind were improved, by the provision of access to see at the False Point and the Dhamra river.

The report of the Famine Commission of 1880 made it clear that in case of bad harvest caused by drought rent remission to the ryots should be granted.18 This suggestion was accepted by the Government and it was decided to classify agricultural lands and to maintain statistics of harvest periodically, and to inform the ryots about rent remissions. This was the first step to protect the ryots from illegal evictions from their holdings on the zamindars.19

18. Revenue and Agriculture Department, Revenue Branch, Proceeding No.53, Extract from the Proceeding of the Government of India, Revenue and Agriculture Department, 12 October 1882.

19. BAR, 1872-73, p.27.
The Famine Commission issued a set of rules on June 9, 1883 to administer the famine relief in India. It provided guidelines that the Government should not interfere in any individual case of distress and only keep a vigil eye on adverse conditions. It also instructed to the local officers to help the destitutes and provide works to the agricultural labourers near their village.\footnote{Resolution of the Government of India regarding Famine Code and other matters pertaining to famine administration, Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Simla, 1892, pp.2-9.}

On the 17th March 1892, the Government declared some modification in the famine policy. It divided relief works into civil agency and professional agency works. The former was placed under district authority and the latter under public works department. The workers were classified into four classes: (a) able-bodied persons accustomed to labour with skill, (b) able-bodied persons but not skilled, (c) able-bodied persons but not accustomed to hard labour, (d) persons not able-bodied but fit for light employment.\footnote{Resolution of Government of India regarding the Famine Code and other matters pertaining to the famine administration, Simla 1892, p.27.} The (a) and (b) received fullwage. But the authority would give the wage to the (c) and (d) judging the degree of calamity. Agricultural works were carried out at the time of famine. The Famine relief administration (Famine Code)
was brought to a crucial test in the famines of 1896-97. The code put emphasis on employment by engaging more people in the railway earth work, by advances of Government in accordance with the Agricultural Loans Act, 1884, through medical aid, agricultural banks and through remission of rents during the years of distress.\textsuperscript{22} In accordance with the laws many were engaged in the railway work which was in rapid progress and many were employed in the district board work.\textsuperscript{23} During the time of 1896 famine, the people suffered less due to the measures taken according to the Famine Code.

The Famine Commission of 1898 was set up after the famine of 1896-97 to bring some latest modifications. At last the Famine Commission of 1901 was set up after the famine of 1899-1900.

**Land Revenue and Natural Calamities**

According to Colonel Barid Smith an oppressive revenue demand was the direct cause of famines in India.\textsuperscript{24} Though the Indian famines were caused by failure of rain, their frequency and intensity was due to the chronic poverty of the cultivators caused by overassessment of the land revenue.\textsuperscript{25} Smith also

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{22} RIF, 1901, Pr.8, p.2.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Selection of Papers (Famine), Vol.II, p.207, Collector of Puri to Secretary Government of Bengal, D.O. letter, Nov.17, 1896.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} R.C.Dutt, \textit{op.cit.}, p.189.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} H.S.Srivastav, \textit{op.cit.}, p.352.
\end{itemize}
also recommended a permanent settlement of the land revenue as a protective measure against the worst effects of future famines which would also increase the general revenue of the country with the general prosperity of the people. 26

The East India Company promptly introduced temporary settlements from 1804 to 1837 in Orissa because land revenue was a major share of Company's total revenue in Orissa. It brought untold misery and suffering to the people because the concerned officers were interested to get more jama for the advantage of the company without the effects of short term settlements. In 1837, the first 30 years settlement became effective but failed to provide protection to poor tenants and cultivators from the oppression of the greedy zamindars. Before the expiry of the 30 years settlement in 1867 many of the land holders had allowed their cultivable lands to fall barren so that their jama would not enhance. It came out as one of the primary causes of the famine of 1866. So this settlement was extended for another 30 years by which the settlement could help the people to recover for some extent from the calamity of season.

The peasants suffered most due to the defective land revenue system. The permanently settled estates of Orissa differed from

the temporarily settled estates in many respects besides that of fixity of revenue. The landlords in permanently settled estates oppressed the peasants in various ways. In temporarily settled estates, there were revisions of settlements and the revenue demanded was often increased from time to time. The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 was introduced in Orissa to improve the condition of tenants and protect the tenants from illegal cesses by the landholders.

Communication and Natural Calamities

In the beginning of the British rule, construction of roads, canals, bridges and embankments was totally neglected, Baird Smith put emphasis on extension and completion of irrigation works and of roads and communications as remedial measures against natural calamities. In this regard orders were despatched by Lord Canning to all the Provincial Governments for their careful consideration. But they did not give much importance on it. The great Orissa famine of 1866 put emphasis on the Government not to neglect them any more but to pay greater attention to protect Orissa from such disastrous natural calamity.

27. L.S.S.O'Malley, BDG, Cuttack, p.185.
The measures to fight against natural calamities were undertaken with greater zeal in the real sense of the term only in the latter part of the 19th century.

The Orissa coast canal was opened for traffic partly in 1885 and fully in 1897, connecting the river Hoogly at Goenkhali, 45 miles from Calcutta with the Matai and Charbatia. It helped the development of trade and commerce which passed through navigable water ways. The coast canal which was meant only for navigation to help small traders and businessmen to expand their concerns came to a vain with the opening of railways.

The introduction of railways was one of the important factors for the well being of the country. The railway greatly protected the masses from the scarcity of food material at the time of famines. The Famine Commission of 1880 put emphasis "that measures may be adopted for giving India direct protection from famine arising from drought". So the railways helped a lot at the time of famine to transport commodities to the scarcity places immediately. But Orissa saw the opening of railways towards the latter part of the 19th century. The East Coast Railways to Puri was opened for traffic on 1 February 1897. The Bengal-Nagpur Railway service started in 1899. By 1904 a railway line connecting Baripada with Rupsa station of the Bengal-Nagpur railway was opened.

All these developments helped to break the geographical isolation of Orissa and opened traffic with neighbouring provinces.

Lack of good ports on the coastal belt of Orissa was one of the causes of the famine of 1866. The existing ports were out of order in the rainy season. So the steamers could not land cargoes on the surf beaten shore except in such small quantities as sea boats could carry. Due to the non-availability of good ports, in Orissa, the rice could not be imported on a large scale in order to provide relief to the famine stricken people. At the time of great famine of 1866, the ports of Orissa were hopelessly in bad condition. After the famine, they drew the attention of the Government. The horrors of the famine brought home to the authorities the necessity of improving these harbours, which were surveyed and deepended and the channels were buoyed. The work on the Kendrapara canal was undertaken to reach the tidal waters in direct communication with False Point at the shore of Bay of Bengal. Before this work, no vessel could approach the coast due to summer monsoon and after the improvements the port remained open throughout the year. The works of the ports of Balasore and Puri were also taken into hand. But the alien rule did not give adequate attention for them which they truly required. The development of roads, coast canal, ports and railways not only broke Orissa's isolation from the outside world but also facilitated trade and commerce by providing mobility of

30. U.D., 3 July 1869.
the people to different places at the time of natural calamities to get employment.

**Irrigation and Natural Calamities**

Irrigation is one of the potent factors to control floods and droughts. Colonel Baird Smith's first report put emphasis on completion of irrigation works as a protective measure against famines. The Famine Commission of 1866 put emphasis on irrigation facility to the people of Orissa. The suggestion of Famine Commission was given importance by the Bengal Government which decided to take up irrigation facility through canals to protect the people of Orissa from twin evils of drought and inundation.

The crop fields of Orissa were frequently subject to destruction due to natural calamities. At last with the advice of Arthur Cotton, the East India Company was tempted to build a canal in Orissa to deal with the flood waters of the Mahanadi and other rivers and to drive out the evils of drought. Though the project was started earlier in 1863, it failed to complete its objectives. At last the Government took over the work and completed the canal project in 1867-68. This project came out successful in providing irrigation, navigation and drainage system to protect the province from famines and floods.

The Famine Commission of 1880, also put emphasis on irrigation works to protect the country from the evils of famine arising out

of drought. The Famine Commission of 1898 also gave increased preference to irrigation works and recommended the active prosecution of new productive irrigation works, as energetically as may be consistent with true economy and ultimate efficiency even though this may involve a higher annual expenditure in the future than in the past. It put emphasis on irrigation as one of the important protective works against famine. The Irrigation Commission of 1901 also put emphasis on large irrigation projects for each province.

**Embankments and Natural Calamities**

Embankments play an important role by affording a means of protection from inundation. Embankments are built at those places where river banks are low to guard against the spilling of water during flood and to prevent oceanic water from inundating the cultivable land and to control saline water for impregnation of salt in the winter season on the khalary lands. The coastal belt of Orissa which was prone to inundation during the period under study, was watered by a large number of rivers. In the rainy season, the rivers rising with great intensity during flood caused serious loss to life, property and the crops.

Frequency of inundation forced the Muslim rulers to manage the embankments and for this they handed over the task to the

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32. IFC, 1880, Part-II, p.150.
33. Ibid., 1898, Pr.577.
landed proprietors for which remission in the revenue was allowed. Even the Maratha rulers, constructed embankments to protect crop from inundation. The zamindars lost their zeal to protect the embankments due to heavy demands of land revenue by the Maratha Government. With the advent of British in 1803, the Salt Agency was first to undertake the repair works of existing embankments and to construct new embankments and sluice gates for releasing flood waters and to prevent ocean water from causing damage to the coastal belt. Till 1827 no serious attempt was made to keep the existing embankments in good working order. The engineers like Becher, Schultz, and Pennington were appointed by the Bengal Government in the same year to repair the worn out embankments and to supervise the work of new embankments where cement mortar and steel structures were used. After the devastating gale of 1831 in Orissa coast, they gave a proposal to the Bengal Government to construct dyke on the coastal bank from Balasore to Chilka to save the region from frequent inundation. With their recommendation the responsibilities of the management of Orissa embankments were transferred to the public works department.

34. Balasore Salt Records, Mathew to Packenham, October. 1828, pp.60-62 (OSA).

35. Cuttack Salt Records, Stockwell to Hunter, 9 November 1831 (OSA).

A.J.M.Mill, the then Commissioner of Orissa appealed to the Bengal Government to grant more money to construct more embankments and sluice gates in the Mughalbandi areas for some agrarian development. But adequate attention was not paid to the maintenance of existing embankments. Due to frequency of flood and lack of maintenance the existing embankments were either abandoned or damaged.

There were embankments prior to 1867 but on the whole they were for the major portion of the period so small or insignificant that they might be said to have had little or no effect and might be considered as having been non-existent by comparison with those of the present day.37

The Bengal Government in 1867 appointed an embankment committee under the chairmanship of Ravenshaw, which submitted its report in 1868, requesting the Government of Bengal to spend huge amount for the protection of embankments in the Orissa province. By 1 April 1878, the Government was in possession of embankments affording protection against flood to 621,400 acres of cultivable land in Orissa.38 Towards the end of the 19th century there were 804½ miles of protective works either fully or partially under the Government management. But these protective works were undertaken only after the great famine of 1866. Orissa

37. Government of Bihar and Orissa, Deposit, Revenue Department, No. 9, March 1930.
38. Report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the management of irrigation work in Madras, Orissa and Midnapore, p. 32.
suffered frequently from natural calamities due to lack of protective embankments.

**Effects of the Natural Calamities**

In the 19th century the Orissan economy was totally ruined by frequent visits of natural calamities. It reflected the failure of the agrarian economy of the province. It was mainly one of the greatest obstacles in the growth of agriculture in Orissa, which basically depended upon agriculture or employment allied to agriculture.

The natural calamities like famine invariably affected our indigenous craftsmen, and especially the weavers, extremely and adversely. For example, before the English cotton piece goods came to Orissa, the weavers of Balasore were considered as affluent artisans but after 1833 they were reduced to abject poverty. The weavers like the day labourers were worst suffers with no saving and no means of livelihood of their own. Aftermath of famine was migration of weaving population towards Bengal and many of them became crippled to poor.

There is enough evidence to show that the population was badly affected by the famines which increased death by the spread of diseases in its wake. In the great Orissa famine of 1866 many people died because its intensity was aggravated by the flood of September 1866.
The migration of population increased in the 19th century because of rapid growth of population and comparatively decrease in cultivable land, frequent visits of natural calamities, frequent crop failure and indebtedness of peasants and large scale decline of indigenous industries.

Among the natural calamities the famine of 1866 (Na anka durbhikhyā) came out as a blessing in disguise. The famine became one of the prime factors to expose the defects of the administrative system of Bengal Government. After the famine, the Bengal Government followed lenient policy towards the Orissa province. The recommendations of the Famine Commission were given prime importance by the Bengal Government. Then the alien Government was forced to adopt remedial measures or protective works like construction of the Trunk Road, development of agriculture, railways, anicuts canal system and protective embankments etc. Education was also given importance. The modern system of administration was the result of this great famine. The socio-economic and political consciousness developed among the people of Orissa only after the famine. The apathy of the Government towards economic conditions of the people ceased and non-interference policy or Laissez-faire was replaced by a suitable policy decision.

The horrors of the natural calamities shocked the Orissa people and gave a chance to the movement of national awakening.
For the second time, the paiks of Khurda rose again in revolt after 40 years against evils of long neglected management, excessive taxation and unchecked oppression of the corrupt British officials, exploitation of zamindars and lack of sufficient relief measures. The long sufferings, economic exploitations and the revolutionary political movements were responsible to supply fresh strength and incentive to the Oriyas to demand for a separate province of their own.

**Achievements and Failures of the British Policy**

The important achievement of the British rule to fight against natural calamities like famines was the adoption of the famine relief policy which was codified in the famines codes. It became comprehensive after the successive famine commissions, with the introduction of communication systems like railways, ports, and roads etc., which became a major strength to help the distressed people at the time of natural calamities. It also checked the severity of famines and controlled the mortality. The recommendation of the Orissa Famine Commission of 1866 headed by George Campbell formed the foundation of definite famine policy by which Orissa was not subject to a famine of such an intensity during the period under study. The foundation of a Famine Insurance Fund and the newly created Indian People's Famine Trust also helped a lot for the relief of distressed people.
After all the British Policy cannot be congratulated in this regard. Orissa never gained anything from the provisions of the Famine Code because the code made a distinction between 'Famine' and 'Scarcity' and thus whenever there was a failure of crops compelling people to live upon wild shrubs, it had been declared by the Government as a scarcity and not a famine, for in the case of a famine elaborate relief operations had to be undertaken. In the famine of 1943 when many people were dying in the districts of Ganjam and Balasore under acute famine and many people also died in Bengal, the Famine Code was not brought into operation. To protect the people from perilous disaster of floods and cyclones, no systematic policy was adopted. As regards flood control, nothing concrete was done. Except some minor irrigation works and embankments, the major aspects of flood control were not touched upon. Similarly, as far as cyclone was concerned, the systems set up by the British were not as responsive as warranted by the prevailing situation.

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