INTRODUCTION
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Historical Background

On the 14th of October 1803 Orissa came under the British control and since then it remained under the control of Bengal Presidency, governed by a Commissioner. The then Orissa consisted of three coastal districts of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore known as mughalbandi and seventeen tributary states each ruled by its own raja under the general supervision of the Commissioner, who was also entitled Superintendent of the tributary states and comprised an area of 24,307 sq.miles, having a population of 4 millions. Orissa which came under the British control stretched between Medinapur to Ganjam and Sambalpur to Bay of Bengal. The geographical tract stretching along the sea-board over a surface of 8,000 sq. miles was called mughalbandi and the hill regions stretching towards Central India formed the tributary mahals having a population of about 3,37,500 covering an area of 16,307 miles. District of Sambalpur which was added to British Orissa in 1905 was within central provinces up to this year, Angul and Khondmals were added earlier to Orissa in 1891 and 1901. Orissa included these five districts with tributary states and the most important tributary states were Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Boudh and Nayagarh. In 1912 Bihar-Orissa province was created and Orissa had 24 tributary states. In 1936 Orissa became a separate province under British India and included 6 districts and 24 tributary states. After Independence and merger, Orissa had 13 districts with an area of 60,017 sq.miles.
After the conquest of Orissa, the Company maintained the traditional policy of keeping mughalbandi separate from the garjats. George Harcourt and John Melville were appointed as Commissioners for settling the affairs of Cuttack. Regulation IV of 1804 which promulgated for the administration of criminal justice, formed the province into a zilla with two divisions and a magistrate in each and extended the criminal regulations of Bengal to Orissa. In 1805, Bengal laws and regulations were introduced in the province of Cuttack. Puri was the capital of Orissa till 1816 when it was transferred to Cuttack. In 1814, the Commissioner of Orissa was appointed as the Superintendent of tributary mahals. In 1829 Orissa was divided into three districts known as Cuttack, Puri and Balasore and it was also remained under the regulation of Bengal Presidency up to 1912.

**Perspective**

Orissa is endowed with abundant natural resources. It has rich mineral, forest and marine resources. Yet the irony of fate is that it is one of the poorest states of India with more than half of its population living below the poverty line. The ambitious plans and programmes of the State Government for ameliorating the poor economic condition of the people of Orissa have failed to achieve the desired objective. The nature has become the potent enemy in the economic development of the state. The geographic peculiarities of Orissa has made her a continuous victim of natural calamities. The flood, famine and cyclone are
the recurring features in the history of Orissa. There is hardly a year which is not affected by a natural calamity.

Every year the vast stretches of land in deltaic and fertile area of coastal districts of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore and Ganjam is severely affected either by flood, cyclone or famine with colossal loss of life and property. Agriculture, the economic backbone of the state is heavily affected by the devastating flood. The figures of loss and damage are staggering to be believed. Hence, a substantial part of the Government revenue are spent on the physical and economic rehabilitation of the people worst hit by the natural calamities. Since Independence, a major portion of time, efforts and money has been devoted towards meeting scarcity caused by natural calamities leaving scanty resources for the economic development of the state. In view of the high frequency of occurrence and magnitude of loss, the Government has directed its efforts to find a solution to the problem.

Against this backdrop, there is a high correlation between the frequency and magnitude of natural calamities and the economic progress of the state. A historical inquiry into the occurrence of major natural calamities will, no doubt, provide an insight into the impact of various natural hazards on the economic development of the state. Besides, a historical study of the Government policies will highlight major policy lapses in confronting
these natural challenges. In fact, it is the faulty measures of the Government which create an environment in which the effective implementation of future economic policies is weakened. It creates a vicious circle in which further economic progress becomes regressive rather than progressive.

Review of Literature

Though much of the research endeavour has been directed towards the socio-political and religious history of Orissa during 19th century, a little or no attempt has so far been made by the scholars to study the intensity of natural calamities and its impact on the economic condition of the people of Orissa. Hence an attempt has been made in this dissertation to provide an indepth study of various aspects of natural calamities in the State of Orissa during 19th century.

The British historians were the first to write the history of Orissa. Andrew Stirling, an administrator, was the first to make an attempt in this direction. His work, "An account (geographical, Statistical and Historical) of Orissa proper or Cuttack" published in 1825, gives a brief general outline of Orissa from ancient times to modern period. But it contains scanty information on natural calamities in Orissa.

Sir William Wilson Hunter was the first person who made a systematic effort to write the "History of Orissa" in two volumes
published in 1872. His book provides an extensive coverage about natural calamities like flood, famine and the consequent socio-economic problems. In his view, improved irrigation and drainage system, developed road and railway network could protect to some extent, the life and property of the people.

Similarly George Toynbee's book on "A Sketch of History of Orissa", published in 1873, highlights the administrative aspects of British East India Company in Orissa from 1803 to 1828. He has described in brief the scarcity of food grains during the period 1806 to 1809.

N.N. Banerjee's, "Report on the Agriculture of the districts of Cuttack" (1893), provides some insight into the history of natural calamities in the Cuttack district. However, two other coastal districts namely Balasore and Puri identified as most cyclone prone zones have been ignored. Hence, the study is considered to be partial in its approach.

S.L. Maddox's, "The Final Report on the Survey and Settlements of the Province of Orissa, 1890-1900", (1900) provides a brief outline of natural calamities in Orissa. But the major concern of the study is the problem of settlement and not the recurrent natural calamities.

The autobiography of "Fakir Mohan Senapati" (1917) in Oriya gives a vivid picture of 1866 famine in Orissa. He was an eyewitness of the terrible famine of 1866. He has not however,
touched the other famines, floods and cyclones during 19th century.

R.D. Banerjee's "History of Orissa" Vol.II (1930) has made a brief mention of the various natural calamities in Orissa in different years. But he has not dealt with the intensity of the natural calamities and their impact on the society. Similarly nothing has been said about the then British policies.

H.K. Mahtab in his "History of Orissa" Vol.II (1960) has analysed causes and consequence of the great famine of 1866, besides highlighting the failure of famine code (1883) in Orissa.

B.M. Bhatia's, "Famines in India" (1963) has mainly dealt with great famines of the country as a whole and the famine policy of British Government. However, its implication to Orissa has been ignored by the author.

P. Mukherjee's, "History of Orissa" Vol.VI (1964) has provided an outline on natural calamities in Orissa and the great famine of 1866.

H.S. Srivastav's "The History of Indian Famines" (1968) has highlighted the major famines in India and the British policies. But if we consider the study from a regional perspective it fails to provide a complete picture of the incidence of famine in Orissa.
B.S. Das's, "Studies in Economic History of Orissa from Ancient Times to 1833" (1970) has described cyclone as the main hindrance to economic progress of Orissa. However, the study has cast more light on the socio-economic aspects than on the incidence of natural calamities.

J.K. Samal in his, "Orissa under the British Crown" (1978) has emphasized the causes and consequence of the great famine of Orissa in 1866. However, many important aspects of the famine have not been given due weightage in this study.

G.C. Patnaik's, "The Famine and Some Aspects of the British Economic Policy in Orissa 1866-1905" (1980) has reviewed the socio-economic condition of Orissa before and after the great famine of Orissa (1866). He has also studied the remedial measures undertaken by the British Government for rehabilitating the people affected by the great famine. But the study excludes all other famines which occurred in the latter part of 19th century.

P.C. Das's, "Economic History of Orissa in the 19th Century" (1989) has highlighted natural calamities as major hindrances to the economic development of the state. However, the study seems to be inadequate if the whole of the 19th century is taken into consideration.

From the review of above works of scholars, it is clear that no single study has dealt with all the aspects of natural
calamities. Even though they are not comprehensive, both in terms of time and coverage, they provide some insight for making further intensive studies on the topic. The present study includes within its ambit many new areas not explored previously by scholars.

Objectives

The primary objectives of the study is to assess the various dimensions of natural calamities in Orissa and the consequent British policies towards this in the 19th century. More specifically the study has the following objectives:

(i) To examine how recurrent natural calamities and consequent decline of living condition of the people led to the growth of poverty and how far the British policy was successful to protect the people from the perilous impact of natural calamities.

(ii) To study the causes and economic effects of recurring natural calamities.

(iii) To examine how the people of Orissa responded to the remedial policy measures pursued by the British administration consequent upon natural calamities.
Significance of the Study

Occurrence of flood, famine and cyclone is common on the soil of Orissa. The economic condition of Orissa is purely dependent on the vagaries of monsoon and the devastating affect of natural calamities. The vast coastal belt of the state has made her prone to the different calamities like flood, famine and cyclone. The socio-economic condition of the people of Orissa is significantly guided by the interplay of various natural forces. There is a high degree of correlation between the economic progress of the state and the natural calamities.

All the factors contributing to the economic progress of the state such as agriculture, manufacturing, trade, mining and other allied activities are completely dependent on the mercy of the nature. That is why a study dealing mainly with the major natural hazards of the state is considered to be significant. No doubt the past has significant bearing on the future. It is necessary to relate the current economic condition of the state to the foul play of natural forces in the past. Besides, the future economic policy of the state can be formulated, keeping in eye the occurrence of the various natural calamities in the past. The trend of natural calamities in the past will, no doubt, act as a sign of caution in future.

The present work will be an important contribution towards economic history not only of Orissa but also of India and also
for regional development and economic growth of the region. Studies made so far provide a limited knowledge on the topic. The present study is considered to be an intensive one both in dimension and coverage. It will significantly add to the existing store of knowledge and the future research on the topic.

Research Methodology

The methodological framework of the study is primarily based on the following:

(i) A detailed survey of contemporary literary works on the economic history of Orissa and the natural calamities.

(ii) Collection of archival materials such as manuscripts, printed Government reports, Census reports, Gazetteers, Vernacular journals and newspapers. The archival sources have been collected from (a) State Archives of Orissa, Bhubaneswar, (b) Board of Revenue, Orissa, Cuttack, (c) Kanika Library, Cuttack, (d) State Library, Orissa, Bhubaneswar (e) West Bengal State Archives, Calcutta, (f) National Library, Calcutta, (g) National Archives of India, New Delhi.

(iii) Collection of non-archival materials such as contemporary Vernacular newspapers and periodicals like "Utkal Dipika", "Sambalpur Hitaisini" and "Utkal Putra" and "Balasore Sambada Bahika", etc.
(iv) The collected materials have been analysed with the help of suitable statistical tables, charts, graphs and maps.

(v) Some simple techniques of comparative data analysis such as ratio, percentage, etc., have been used for the purpose of better interpretation.

**Scope of the Study**

The main aim of the work is to study the various aspects of natural calamities in Orissa in the 19th century and the consequent British policies towards that. But the task is so broad that it is not possible to cover every minute detail of the topic. Besides, there is constraint on the availability of related materials and records. Hence, the scope of the study has been made limited to certain major aspects of natural calamities such as flood, cyclone and famine.

Broadly the "Natural Calamities", in the study covers the floods and cyclones in the 19th century, the famines in the first half of the 19th century, the great famine of 1866 and other famines during the 2nd half of the century and their causes, courses and consequences.

The period of the study is 1803 A.D. to 1900 A.D., i.e., the whole of the 19th century. Even though the study is on the whole of Orissa province, the area of the study is limited to
the so called British Orissa covering Cuttack, Puri and Balasore districts and some parts of the tributary states. It also attempts to cover the Ganjam district which was under the jurisdiction of the then Madras Presidency.

Limitations of the Study

The present study is constrained by a number of limited factors. Though attempts have been made to overcome some of the minor limitations, the major constraints affecting findings of the study have been brought to light. The major limitations of the study are as follows:

1) The concept of "Natural Calamities" is so broad that it includes within its ambit the interplay of a number of natural forces. Since it is not possible to give a detailed description of all such forces because of paucity of materials, only three natural hazards namely flood, cyclone and famine have constituted the main theme of the topic.

2) The period of the study is limited to nineteenth century only i.e., from 1803 to 1900. This period has been selected keeping in view the main objectives of the study.

3) The probability of occurrence of floods, cyclones and famines in Orissa is so uncertain that it is not possible to fix a deadline or demarcate a period after which the intensity
of natural calamities has been increased or decreased.

4) The study covers only those areas and districts which constituted the so-called British Orissa. Besides, those areas where the intensity of natural calamities was not significant, have been ignored for the sake of convenience.

5) It was not possible to provide a quantitative approach to the impact of natural calamities on the socio-economic condition of the people and remedial policy measures of the British Government. So the study has been made descriptive.

**Thesis Organization**

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the thesis is organized in a manner to focus on major aspects of natural calamities in Orissa and the contemporary British policies. The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Each chapter is divided into suitable sections and subsections so as to study the minute details about the main topic.

Chapter I, highlights the occurrence of "Floods and inundations in the 19th Century". It studies the basic causes of flood in the reported period and the consequent losses to the people and economy of Orissa. It also examines various aspects of the remedial measures pursued by the British Government to withstand the devastating effect of flood.
Chapter II, deals with the "Cyclones in the 19th Century" in a similar fashion as in the Chapter I.

Chapter III on "British Policy towards Floods and Cyclones" examines the specific control measures adopted by the British Government in tackling the problem. It evaluates the effectiveness of such measures with due consideration of the requirement of the people.

Chapter IV yields a vivid picture of "Famines in Orissa from 1803 to 1964". It highlights the various causes and consequences of the major famines. It also studies the extent to which the developmental activities were undertaken by the British Government to mitigate the economic loss caused to the people and also analyses other causes which were responsible for the economic hardship of the people.

"The Great Orissa Famine of 1866" is contained in Chapter V. It studies the various dimensions of the devastating famine, such as causes, courses and consequences. It also examines response of the British Government in terms of extent, adequacy and effectiveness of the British relief measures.

Chapter VI on "Famines and Scarcities after 1866" describes the frequency of occurrence of famines after the Great Famine of Orissa in 1866 and the consequent economic scarcities. It brings to light certain measures undertaken by the British Government to check the devastating effects of famines.
Chapter VII yields an overall analysis of the "British Policy towards Famines and Scarcities" in the 19th century. It analyses the major findings and recommendations of the Famine Commission set up for the purpose.

Chapter VIII, is the final chapter dealing with conclusions. It summarises the major aspects of the study followed by major findings.