CHAPTER THREE
THE METHOD AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE STUDY

The political economy of Ganjam and the peasant out-migration in colonial period and independent India has been succinctly covered in the previous chapter. The scope of remaining chapters, however, will be devoted to the discussion on the findings of empirical investigation carried out in the district. It is hoped that, the findings would focus on the understanding of prevailing agrarian structure and the continued process of peasant out-migration from the district. Thus the analysis on Ganjam district, is considered here as a case study, but however, the findings would help us to generalise in a broader context.

In Sociological/Anthropological investigations, explicitly or implicitly, it is a standard practice to make a few remarks on the methodology, its use and importance adopted by the individual researcher befitting their research problems. Thus it is required to highlight procedure on the selection of the universe, the field, the selection of sample, the tools and techniques, the methods of data collection, the quality and quantity of data, and incorporate certain crucial remarks on field problems, data analysis, findings and broad generalization to go along with it.
This study, however, makes a little departure from the conventional approach. It intends to analyse the theoretical and conceptual issues, corroborated with substantial historical evidences, before entering into lucid discussion on methodology. The exercise was deliberately taken care of here, as the nature of study demanded. Unless and until, the prevailing structural conditions have not been thoroughly analysed in the historical context, the scope of the present study will be limited; ahistorical and at times may fail to reflect the trend. Similar issue has been emphasised by Samuel Eldersveld, who observed: "Unfortunately most of our research on developing societies is not 'developmental.' That is if there is empirical research at all, it consists primarily research at one particular of time. What is needed is sound 'historical' or 'Longitudinal' analysis which permits generalisation about the society at various stages of its development and which is able to determine the extent to which the society is moving towards political or social or economic goal."¹ Necessarily, the context of the present study dragged me indulge into the field of historians and archaeologists, of which very few sociologists have in fact shown little articulation. Thus keeping this in view here I have taken the help of 'deductive' and 'inductive' inferences² for better synthesis and understanding the present reality.

The Units

As already, touched upon in the previous chapter, the universe of our study is Ganjam — one of the coastal districts
of Orissa - a part of the developing India. The selection of Ganjam district was not merely dictated by the fact that the researcher hail, from the same state² (of course from a different district) but because of the distinctive historical possesses - political economy - coupled with the exodus peasant out-migration (commonly known as slave trade) during the colonial period, and on-going present-day peasant out-migration. The recent figures on migration alone from the district stand at sixty thousand, covering 40 per cent of the total migration, which is the highest in the state. Thus, it may not be merely an exaggeration here, once again, to emphasise the tradition of migration with the process of the present-day migration. Secondly, various recent studies taken together on the development of capitalism in the agriculture, i.e., the Punjab, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Western Uttar Pradesh etc., advocates more or less on the manifold increase of labour intake which has caused the exodus - both inter-state and intra-state Migration of Labour.⁴ Conversely, however, I had a pertinent hunch and eventually tried to observe and analyse as to how far, Ganjam district, which has marked advancement in agriculture, where capitalism has made inroads albeit slowly, has been able to expel such large number of peasants and agricultural labourers from its vortex. Thus, in order to understand the phenomena, it necessitated the considerable emotional involvement undertaking the present study.
Keeping this in view, an attempt has been made to select two villages one each from Aska and Parlakhimendi taluka, the former falling under ryotwari tract and the latter under zamindari tract during the colonial period. The ryotwari tract is better irrigated, highly exposed to cash crop production, marked with emergence of free labour and followed with the exodus of peasant out-migration. In contrast, the zamindari taluka is less irrigated seems not well developed marked by less exposed to cash crop production followed with low velocity of the peasant out-migration. Thus, the imbalance in the economic development of both the talukas is quite distinct. With this brief characterisation of the areas, I shall move on to the selection of the villages, which will be considered here as a unit of observation for empirical testing.

Selection of The Village(s)

The last choice fell on Mangalpur and Kaithada village of Aska and Parlakhimendi taluka respectively. These two village have been considered here as 'representative' or 'typical' and rather determined broadly by the purpose of the study. On the strength of the information gathered from the District Census Handbook, it can be seen at first sight that a large number of villages seemed suitable. But a visit to some of the selected villages impressed me that they could hardly fulfil the major criteria: (a) Peasant out-migration; (b) intensive agriculture (cash crop production);
(c) inequality of land control and (d) representation of major castes, while making the selection for the present study. The last resort left before the researcher was the local level officers like Tahsildar, Block Development Officer and their subordinates who had first-hand knowledge of the villages. As a result of continued consultation, these officials suggested the names of three villages from each taluka on the above-said parameters. All the villages were located within a 12 kilometre radius of the taluka, well connected to transport network and having market facilities. Subsequently, the researcher paid a visit to each of the villages and finally made the choice with some additional important considerations. The fact that some people in these villages were known to the researcher, who assured helping him in acquiring a house for stay and help for an easy entry into the villages.

Indicators

In the light of the major theoretical discussion on migration and agrarian structure in the first chapter, the pertinent questions and hypothesis, this research seeks to answer and test are: (a) who are the rural migrants; (b) what is their socio-economic class background; (c) what are the structural conditions developed in the agriculture that have played vital role for such an exodus in the migration process; and (d) How far has the shift in employment brought a change in their socio-economic condition and
consciousness in the life. Besides, it is intended here to test the following workable hypothesis: (i) The higher the participation of females in the production process, particularly among landless, small and middle peasant families, the higher would be the migration of males; and (ii) The greater the pauperisation of peasantry in the agriculture, the higher would be the out-migration.

Thus the crux of the problem revolves round the class analysis in the agrarian societies, and thereby helps in locating the class background of the migrants.

Our immediate concern, therefore, is how to proceed and analyse the classes in an agrarian society.

Though Marx used the term 'class' extensively but unfortunately he left the concept undefined till to his last breath. But the way he had used the concept in the context of industrial and capitalist societies clearly points out the class, whose conflicting interest arose on the ownership of means of production. But later, Mao and Lenin, on several studies pertaining to agrarian question used the concept class, incorporating much of the ideas of Marx. Lenin defined the classes as, "Large group of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their ... relation to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and consequently
by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it ... (and as) ... groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owning to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy. But unfortunately several agrarian studies on Marxian framework, by and large are descriptive in nature and hardly reflect any analytical sharpness. And moreover, nowhere the value of labour, which generate surplus value and help in division as well as consolidation of an individual in the class hierarchies, given any priority in those studies.

Only recently, a few pioneering studies of Roemer Bardhan and Pathy, distinctly marked complete departure from the old conventionally dominant theoretical positions. They viewed that the class position of an individual became more shapened as a result of the accumulation of labour Power which generates surplus value and helps in sorting themselves out in the class hierarchies. That means class emerges, where the owners of means of production hire labour power of workers and appropriate surplus value generated by these hired labourers. Roemer highlights the issue as to how with objective of minimizing the labour time spent to produce given subsistence requirements, individuals with different endowments of means of production will sort themselves out in equillibrium into five classes—
characterised by:

(A) \( SE = 0; \ Hi > 0; \ Ho = 0 \)
(B) \( SE > 0; \ Hi > 0; \ Ho = 0 \)
(C) \( SE > 0; \ Hi = 0; \ Ho = 0 \)
(D) \( SE > 0; \ Hi = 0; \ Ho > 0 \)
(E) \( SE = 0; \ Hi = 0; \ Ho > 0 \)

Where \( SE \) Represents Self employment
\( HI \) Hiring Others Labour Power
\( HO \) Hiring Oneself Out.

Thus his five classes are:

A = Capitalist Landlord
B = Rich Farmer
C = Family Farmer
D = Poor Peasant
E = Land Less Labourer.

Closely following Roemer's Model, of course in a different fashion, Pathy has experimented his own formula to distinguish the emerging classes among the tribal peasantry of Gujarat.

His formula follows:

\[ R = \frac{a - b}{c + b} \]

Let \( R \) is rate of exploitation of Labour
Let \( a \) be the Labour days hired in
Let \( b \) be the labour days hired out
Let \( c \) be the household labour days in own farm.
His five broad classes are:
R = 0, it would tend to mean the household a middle peasant.
R = + high, would tend to mean the landlord
R = + Low, would tend to mean the Rich Peasant
R = - high, would tend to mean the Agricultural Labour
R = - Low, would tend to mean the Small Peasant

Moving a step ahead of this, Pathy argues that it is difficult to locate the exact position of the peasants within the model, being shaped by the peculiar nature of the cropping system. Thus a slight adjustment is quite possible.

Again, he argues that "the Rate of exploitation of labour seems to be the singlemost accurate index of agrarian class position. For all practical purposes, land and income get reflected and subsumed in this index."

In the light of these theoretical discussions, I have applied here the Model of Pathy with due consideration that the formula will be easily applicable and can be handled peregrally with the present data. And from the practical point of view, due to similar difficulties, in certain cases it was required to make small adjustments here and there, to determine the close position to a specific class categories.

The Methods And Field Work

Village(s) as a unit of study, at Macro or Micro level for determining the social structure (Mode of production),
Suggestions for action programme has made a compulsory direct interaction with the informants, as a principal source of data, which has been widely acclaimed by a horde of Sociologists and Social Anthropologists. They use more scientific methods such as participation observation (whose concentration varies of course with the nature of problem), which help to get more in-depth, the first-hand information about the village communities. Thus, the participant observation method, in its traditional sense known as intensive fieldwork, implies that the fieldwork should deliberately participate in the village activity in order to observe from within and comprehend the social reality. Beteille and Madan emphasised on fieldwork "as an amalgam of methodological rigour and the unpredictable consequences of the personality of the observer." Indeed, each field situation requires independent handling, whereby the researcher has to arrive at his own equation with his object.

Besides, the participant observation, the bulk of statistical information comes from household survey, which was collected by pretested interview schedule. This covered information on family background, age, sex, education, landholding, income, agriculture, migration etc. This information collected from the households provided the main quantitative data. Qualitative information on village history, socio-economic transformation over given periods, pattern of migration, network of communication, market, education and other facilities were gathered by another interview guide.
canvassed to a selective few knowledgable persons in the village.

In addition to the quantitative and qualitative data gathered in the field, any use of documentary/archieval materials, particularly in social science has been treated as secondary one. With the broader context of the study, I have used here archieval/published and unpublished material (emphasis already made in the context), which required an historical approach. This exercise has been done deliberately to bring the relationship between the past and the present. To be more precise and clear, unless we analyse the past, the comprehension on present reality would be illogical and misleading.

Data Collection

It was planned to conduct field work in the month of May 1983. But due to sudden unexpected engagement at Delhi,¹² the whole plan got postponed. However, the researcher could pay a short visit to both the villages for the preliminary arrangements of final field work, on the way while proceeding to Delhi.

The final field work in both the villages was conducted at Mangalpur in Sept.-Jan. 1983-84, and Kaithada in Feb.-April 1984 respectively. The discrepancy on the length of field work was largely determined by the size of the villages.
Here, it is needless to describe the wide spectrum of problems a researcher encounters while pursuing the field work in villages of India. I shall turn to this aspect later on.

On the first entry into the village, I spent more than a week visiting different settlements meeting as many people as possible covering people right from the rank of leaders to commoners either in their veranda, village tea corners, paddy fields or public places. On certain occasions, small group discussions were arranged. The intention behind such an activity was confined to make them aware of the contours of the enquiry, elicit necessary information and co-operation, which is expected from them. No sooner did I gather some confidence, than I shifted from house to house for a sociological census to collect correct information on the size of the village and complete enumeration on the out-migrant families.

The first phase of data covered the village history, caste composition, settlement pattern, leadership and political structure, social intercourse, market, transport and other networks, rituals and ceremonial activities in the village. On agriculture, the data covered land structure, soil fertility, source of irrigation, cropping pattern and production of different crops, employment and specifically participation of female labour, wages with respect to sex, the method of payment, function of credit society, agricultural tools and role of V.I.W. On migration, it covered caste
background, year, direction of migration, source of information, nature of work, change in economic condition and outlook etc. The information collected here are rather qualitative, and supportive of the main thrust of the argument.

The second phase of data collection was followed by a detailed pretested interview schedule. It was administered to all the household in the village. This provided main chunk of statistical information (quantitative). The information broadly included family composition, land ownership and transfer, production, tools for cultivation, inputs, labour days, wages, market relations, indebtedness, house type, domesticated animals, movable/immovable property, annual income inclusive of all sources and political participation. The reference year for all the informations except land transfer were confined to the year 1982-83. Besides, it also included information on identification of migrant, age, education, occupation, occupational mobility, primordial relationship, working place, various connections to natal habitat (financial, Letter and Physical visits). Moreover, some qualitative information collected through an opinion poll. It covered crucial areas like status of women, impact of industrial working class, consciousness on rural peasantry, source of information on employment avenues, knowledge on rural development and functioning of cooperatives.
Last but not the least, the head of the household either male or female (whose male is an out-migrant) was personally interviewed at their doors. In many cases, the interview took two to three sittings to complete the interview due to frequent intervention by the people in the neighbourhood. Some expressed complete anguish and awkwardness to express secrecy in the presence of others. Much of the erroneous/unreliable and doubtful information on crucial areas like land, income, and credit etc., were corrected to a possible extent through cross examinations. Calculative information on labour days, amount of fertiliser used, total production of crops etc., speaks of things on an approximate estimation rather than an accurate one. Even then, some discrepancy obviously remained on which it was neither possible to rework nor was there any confidence that second and third round recheck will help us to weed out the flaws. Thus all information supplied by informants should be considered here to be approximate not accurate.

Field experience Refreshed

I shall restrict myself here to a few specific issues reflecting on perception and understanding of the villagers on social science Research.

Much emphasis on participation observation method and establishment of rapport with the villagers is not, however, without its assumed interludes. Thus, in no case
an urban socialised, highly educated researcher, whatever sharp technique he may employ, be easily trusted and given a role to play in the village social structure. Truly speaking I was not an exception. Initially the researcher was looked upon as and commonly believed to be a 'government officer' and later on a 'spy', whose visit to the village was directly linked with taxing the people. Hence, the researcher's movements in the village and outside were kept under strict surveillance.

"The other day I was busy in collecting secondary information at the taluk level offices. The free and frank chit-chat with the officers, easy access to official records and occasional offer of tea, cigarettes by the Tahasildar, B.D.O. and other sub-ordinate officers, was thoroughly watched by the village Brahmin Palmist. He narrated my behaviour as a 'spy' to the villagers before I went back to village in the evening."

Further, the mounting distrust was more sharpened by the year of regional hostility between the Cuttack district to which I belong and Ganjam district to which they belonged. It added much fuel to fire.

Both the villages exhibit the strong practice of caste norms and traditional culture without much change. The migrants have no influence on the village culture. On their occasional visits, they behave in the same manner.
counterpart to the family members does. The strong belief in caste system, commensality, purity and pollution go together hand in hand. An untouchable is denied accession to the public bathing ghat. He is denied the use of the public well for fetching drinking water. He is not allowed to use the same container meant for caste members in the village tea-stall. He also maintains distance in public dealings. Even though they have given right to speak in public, their bark goes mostly unnoticed. A mere touch from a harijan would defile a high caste Hindu and this can be restored only big an immediate purificatory bath.

In such a caste ridden society, it is but natural, the growing anxiety of the people was to know my caste background. Thanks to my caste, which helped me acquiring a room and allowed me free movement and interaction with the people cross cutting the caste and settlement boundaries. The researcher felt very much awkward often and while in-front of these rigid caste norms. He was served meals by a brahmin household as a paying guest. All the time meals were served not in any utensils but in plantain leaves which were to be thrown out at a distance of the house each time. Besides, the ground required purification by sprinkling cow-dung water immediately. The difficulty of adjustment with the caste and village culture did not end here. The most pitiful and unbearable practice rigidly preserved and maintained by the villagers without any change is that after
every visit for the call of nature followed immediate purificatory headbath. However, nobody would feel it in summer, but I felt it severely as if I was regaining life soon after each head bath (minimum 4 to 5 times in a day due to frequent stomach disorder) in the icy winter winds.

My peasant background, and the agricultural skill which I acquired during the student career (partly by family compulsion) considerably helped me to mix freely with the villagers. On one occasion, a landless share-cropper, a close confidante of mine -- a respondent raised doubts about my background (it is a strong belief that the Cuttackis are very shrewed and do not mind to employ every possible trick and technique to get the things done) and asked me to demonstrate ploughing in the presence of others. With no hesitation, I responded to his call affirmatively and demonstrated almost neatly. The villagers were not only abacked but were also convinced of my peasant background. Since, the day onwards, my house turned into a sort of an expert's office where people gathered for consultation and discussion. The field work in both the villages provided me an excellent opportunity (after eight years) for personal and academic socialization. I could add a lot of knowledge to my world of ignorance.

In general, my interaction with the villagers by and large remained cordial and favourable throughout. But
it was altogether different and beyond hope of satisfaction with the landlords. They were very much sceptical about me and the areas of information covered. The researchers continued trial for an appointment was often shrewdly dealt with. It was a hell of time for me to have an interview with them. Even then it was also equally difficult to extract and believe the information supplied on land, income and nature of employment about number of servants.

"In the village Kaithada, the landlord being the most powerful man having wide political network, abused the researcher using un-parliamentary language, merely for his several attempts of having a meeting with him. He avoided me deliberately and could not give his interview till the last departure."

The peasants overall extended full co-operation and supplied information free and frankly of course with little exaggeration. Even the females (whose male is a migrant) spoke freely to the researcher in spite of the cultural taboo. All spoke, irrespective of having little land or no land about the low income and abysmal poverty conditions, under the impression that such information would help them in seeking some relief from the government or benefit from the programmes of rural development and poverty alleviation launched by the government.

Conversely, some of the middle and lower-middle class peasants who have some family savings were reluctant
to reveal the amount out of fear. A number of doubtful cases were corrected as far as possible through cross examination. A case needs illustration here.

'A middle aged Belama woman mother of four, whose husband is a colliary worker at Bengal showed her family saving as Rs. 6,000/- only. Being intrued by her father-in-law who lives separately, that the amount will be taken possession of by the government. She hurriedly approached the researcher at the rest house and tried to convince that the amount was actually borrowed by her husband for the construction of an additional room.'

Some educated persons expressed serious concern about the relevance and applicability of social science research per se. A Brahmin with a B.Com. degree having full of frustration in life remarked:

"It is sheer wastage of time, money and energy. To him neither the politician nor the government whosoever come into power hardly bother about your policy prescription on the development of villages. Instead, they will be more concerned with hunting votes, positions and power, improving their's lot at the cost of the masses in the name of acting for the masses."
Last but not the least, I received a mixture of reactions from the varieties of people composed of different strata of society in the village. Overall, all extended support and co-operation. Till the last day of my departure, I could forget or get over the impression they created on me. To the loving memories of my respondent I remained not as a 'researcher' - a doctorate student - but a government 'officer' for ever. Thus several of them persistently requested me to write a strong forwarding note to the government of Orissa, for establishing a few textile industries in their close vicinity. It would help them in getting employment at door steps so that they would not involve in undertaking long distance migration being deprived of love and affection of their sweethearts and kids, the worst kind of intolerable in human suffering.
REFERENCES


2. Pathy's major argument is that a scientific study requires to combine the deductive and inductive processes together as far as possible. The dialectics between the two unravel the law of existence and change. Again, he is very critical on conventional, empiricist dominant approach and the deliberate emphasis on open mind research. To them, the theory will emerge only from the collection of facts which has been strongly ruled out by Pathy. For details see, Pathy, J.N. 1983. Tribal Peasantry: Dynamics and Development, New Delhi, Inter India Publications, p. 72.

In a similar way, Prof. Joshi argues, "Fact-finding without theory has no direction and theory without fact-finding has no solidarity," see his, 1979, "Field work Experience: Relieved and Reconsidered," in M.N. Srinivas et al. (eds) The Field Worker and the Field, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, p. 7.
3. Prof. I. Karve emphasised that one should start with studies in one's own region where field work did not offer problems of language, social access and finance. See Unni, K. Raman, 1979, "On Tracks and Tracts in my Field work in Rural Kerala," in M.N. Srinivas et al. (eds) ibid, p. 58.

Breman, J.. 1978, "Seasonal Migration and Co-operative Capitalism: Crushing of Cane and Labour by Sugar Factories of Bardoli," Economic and Political Weekly, XII (31, 32, 33);


7. Here the main concern is to examine peasant out-migration on parameters of agricultural development between two talukas. Thus the zamindari taluk never manifest all the characteristics poignantly.


12. I had to attend three week Methodology course on Survey Research organised by Council of Social Development, New Delhi, with an aim to clarify certain doubts and acquire more knowledge on methodology.


14. In the Orissa village, newly married and middle aged women are generally not allowed to talk to the foreigners freely. In case of unavoidable circumstance, they talk after observing certain norms. They talk from inside under the full protection of purdhah assisted by champeron.