CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

Orissan society stood on the crucible of change at the dawn of the 19th century. The occupation of Orissa by the British in 1803 heralded this process of change. It was perhaps a fait accompli for the state to be so occupied after going through a series of shifting subjugations by the Afghans. But never before the colonial occupation had the native society experienced such substantive change as it did under the British.

On their parts the Afghans, the Mughals and the Marathas had ruled largely within the frame work earlier set by the Somavamsi and the Suryavamsi kings between 10th and 16th centuries A.D. There was always a felt necessity for these rulers to maintain a direct link with the ruled. At times such links had to be culturally packaged to enjoy unflinching loyalty of all social classes. For the Gangas and then the Suryavamsi kings with such an attempt had made Lord Jagannath the abiding symbol of politico-cultural integrity of Orissa. The syncretic ethos of the Jagannath cult not only permeated the entire society but also enabled these kings to manage without creating a hegemonistic intermediary social class. The
officers dealt with the subjects only with as much authority as had been vested in them by the king. The kings directly patronised all arts and crafts and for all purposes land, the primary source of economy, belonged to the state. For the protection and further acquisition of this resource the kings needed support and what is more, the sustenance of their armies from all sections of the society. Thus the triune necessities, i.e. political, cultural and economic, formed the basis of the pre-colonial social structure in Orissa.

It were also these necessities which produced the huge social class of peasant militia called Khandayats in the state. The intra-class differentiation among the Khandayats was more in terms of the rank which each section held in the king’s army then on the basis of birth. The Suryavamshi kings themselves rose from the ranks of this proliferating social class. The people who on the other hand entered in to the jobs of keeping administrative and land records took the necessary professional name of Karan. There was nothing save their profession at this stage to socially differentiate them from the numerous Khandayats. Like the Karanas, Other professionals such as the painters, the sculptors, the architects and the smiths were all held in high social esteem for the invaluable contribution they made to the prestige and prosperity of the state. As the sole exception to this social milieu, the Brahmins were
brought from Kanauj by the kings and were settled in Shasans in and around the temple city.

The importation of the Brahmins into Orissa at first to conduct temple rituals and then to provide sacerdotal sanction to the regal authority of the kings introduced the element of Brahmanical concept of pollution and purity into the Orissan social structure. Brahmins as legitimisers of social action ascribed differing status to different social groups apparently on the basis of their vocations from a pre-conceived scriptural point of view. The kings also gradually began taking pride in reorganising the society in accordance with the Varna Dharma. But as long as the political-economy of the state remained on place, the infusion of Brahmanical nuances did not disturb the pre-colonial social structure much.

Under the Mughals for some time the methods of feudalising the agrarian social-economy had been adopted. This had partly been necessitated by the distance that laid between the subjugated province and the imperial seat of power. But the Marathas undid that process by re-establishing that direct link between the ruler and the ruled which existed during the Hindu period. The primacy of the Lord Jagannath in the religio-cultural domain of the state's affair was also restored by them. The social
structure which had earlier been shaped thus survived without much structural upheaval though the state suffered economically due to the depredatory rule of the Marathas.

The English East India Company had already fine-tuned its colonial policy by the time it occupied Orissa. In the agrarian field the Company created a vested-interest intermediary class by largely vesting in the ex-revenue officials of the Mughals and the Marathas the proprietary rights on land. The feeling of being alien in the country which cherished autonomy also made the Company introduce a series of short-term revenue settlements creating space thereby for the replacement of a large number of Oriya proprietors by Bengali speculators. These absentee landlords along with the Bengali clerks who came with the Company officials acted in unison to give effect to the Company’s policy of recasting the agrarian structure of Orissa. The principle which worked at the core of such a policy was maximum aggrandisement of revenue and further consolidation of the colonial hold on the occupied province. For the purpose, the rules for replacement of cowri currency by the Calcutta sicca rupee and auctioning of the Zamindaris at Fort Williams in Calcutta were promulgated while continuing with the short-term settlements. At first the native disquiet to these policies manifested in
the Paik rebellion of 1817 but afterwards acquiesced in a bid to readjust the native society according to colonial priorities.

Around this time Balasore re-emerged into prominence in the colonial scheme of things as an important centre of salt production. It was ironical for the district which had provided a crucial commercial opening to the Company in the first half of the 17th century to become subjected to the colonial exploitation by the same Company after a lapse of hundred and fifty years. The establishment of monopoly over manufacturing and sale of salt immediately following the occupation of Orissa to make maximum profit out of this trade and abandon it to make way for large-scale importation of the cheaper and finer Liverpool salt shattered the local economy of this district. Ship-building, weaving and many other indigenous industries also declined in view of greater imports of foreign products. The mass of the working classes previously depending on these industries had to shift on to agriculture as landless labourers in consequence.

With agriculture emerging as the sole means of livelihood and the string of control over this system lying in the firm grip of the colonial government a new social structure was formed in the state. At the top of
this structure presided the single most important prop of the colonial state, i.e. the Zamindars. The enormous power which the Company government rested in them made the Zamindars the arbiters of the peasants’ destiny. while this class along with the various sub-proprietary tenure holders regaled in a life full of pomp and opportunities, the peasant cultivators below them bore the weight of the entire agrarian structure. In terms of the durability of their holding these peasants were divided into classes viz. Thani and Pahi. The Chandandars who held small plot of the land as homesteads primarily occupied themselves with the trade of grains i.e., rice and other articles of daily consumption. At the lowest level came the sprawling mass of landless agricultural labourers, at once differentiated according to the terms of their employment.

Curiously the reordering of the social structure under the colonial pressure also brought in a new mechanism of social mobility. Since the state disengaged itself from the cultural moorings of the society the determinant of an individual or a group’s upward mobility became overtly economic. Everything, from Zamindari to a business permit was available on sale. But mass of the native Oriyas were economically too impoverished to buy social mobility at this point of
time. The catastrophic famine of 1865-66 only showed up the extent of their impoverishment.

The famine was also an eye-opener to the colonial regime. Partly guilt-ridden and partly due to the dawn of a newer vision of governance after the transfer of power from the Company to the Crown, the British-India Government introduced a number of administrative measures after the famine in Orissa. The government’s realization that the marginalisation of the native Oriyas in almost every aspect of their governance was primarily responsible for the catastrophe led it to re-orient its policies to cater to the Oriya interests. Consequently the government initiated constructive measures in the field of education, communication, irrigation, public health etc. Simultaneously a series of measures was also introduced to create definitive rights of tenants on land. These measures taken together opened up the dormant aspirations of the Oriyas. In the immediate context, the policies helped giving rise to a small class of educated middle class who became the forebears of a post-dated resurgent movement.

Initially the forces of social change found expression in vastly isolated instances of socio-cultural reformation movements. At the base of these movements laid the aspirations of creating a caste/class-less
society. Also was aspired by these movements an attempt to turn away the society from the cynical attitude which it had come to imbibe under the new circumstances. But these movements failed to motivate the people on a large scale. The source of social prevarication apparently was not in the society’s hand. Therefore, only an issue that could touch the common chord had to be taken up.

The Oriya language controversy was the first such issue which infused a sense of commonality among the Oriyas in the last quarter of the 19th century. The successes of the movement prepared the stage for a further concerted movement for bringing about the unification of all the scattered Oriya-speaking areas. Associations were formed, literatures were produced and a whole host of programmes for participation of people in the movement were launched. Ultimately the objective was attained in 1936.

But despite going through this tumultuous process, the colonial social structure did not show signs of withering. The beneficiaries of the constructive programmes of the government who incidentally belonged to ritually higher castes like the Brahmins and the karanas almost gained the upper hand on other social classes in their new-found leadership roles. Members from these castes also filled the services under the government. The other castes who could gather enough resources bought for
themselves Zamindaries and also took to education. The Khusbas raiyats belonging to the higher and intermediate castes mainly gained from the land reforms policies of the government. These raiyats could withstand the fluctuations of the grain market with the increasing resources at their command. But other social groups who largely depended on wage labour continued to languish in abject poverty. The swelling ranks of migrant labourers who went out of the state regularly to Calcutta and to Assam and even to Burma in extreme cases, came from these social groups. Thus while at the top a fresh agglomeration of the caste groups took place at the bottom end the low and the depressed castes remained unaffected by the process of change.

The emergent middle-class by virtue of its being composite was not free from internal schisms. These schisms surfaced more openly after Orissa was formed into a separate linguistic province and the responsibility of administration fell largely on this class. The virus of factionalism within the Congress which continued well after the country won independence was a pernicious effect of this pre-independence caste rivalry.

The main objective of independence to usher in an era of equitable social existence by securing rapid economy development could not be materialised because of
this sheer lack of unity among the political leaders at the gross social level. From the political point of view, the Khandayats only gained some prominence due to their numerical strength. The introduction of the universal adult franchise after the country won independence thankfully corrected the status of insignificance with which this numerous caste group in Orissa had been held during the colonial heydays. Similarly because of constitutional provisions the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes found political representation in the legislative bodies which until then had been denied to them in an overtly Brahmanical society. But this political representation did not raise the social status of these communities as a whole. Rather a slim elitist strata emerged setting off a new process of differentiation within these communities. On the whole political as well as economic avenues which opened up in the wake of the country’s independence did not cover the wide spectrum of the society. In consequence, therefore, the dominance pattern of colonial society persisted with its tangled web.
GLOSSARY

Abadhans - Village pandits or teachers.
Abwab - Illegal cess.
Achhara - The light and worthless refuse of grain.
Ada - (Zingiber officinale) - Ginger.
Adhajama or nisfi bazyafteri - The tenures held rent and revenue free before the last settlement (1837) and resumed and assessed at half-rates at the last settlement.
Adkikari - Head-priests of temples.
Ail - The raised boundary of a field.
Aima - Learned or religious men. Used to denote grants made to religious and other Mahomedans.
Akhu - (Saccharum officinarum) - Sugarcane.
Akhubadali - The temporary exchange of a field not suitable for sugarcane for one that is suitable.
Amli - Is the era according to lunar months current in Orissa, but is liable to considerable variation and is regulated by the solar Vilayati year, which commences on the 1st Assin. The lunar Amli year commences in Orissa on the 12th day of the second-half of the lunar month Bhdra (vide page 374 of the Appendix).
Anabadi - Uncultivated and unoccupied land.
Arhar - (Cajanus indicus) - A kind of pulse.
Arua - (See Atap)
Assamis - During the Mahratta rule farming leases of estates were put up to auction in Nagpur and were bought sometimes by two or three persons, who came to Orissa and tried to levy what they could, and were responsible for the collections of revenue. They were known as Assamis.
Asu or Beali - (Oryza sativa) - Rice grown on high lands.
Atapoor Arua - (Rice) prepared from paddy by drying it in the sun, and then crushing it in the dhenki.
Awal - First class (land).
Badar fard - Mistake list.
Badshahi - Royal.
Bahal - Stands for Lakiraj-bahal, i.e. revenue-free lands confirmed as such at the last settlement.

Baigun or Brinjal - (Solamum melonga) - A vegetable.

Baishnabs - Religious mendicants. There is also a caste of that name.

Balia or Baliara - Very loose sandy soil which grows poor specimens of the rabi crop.

Balia matal - A loam, with a large admixture of earth; a rich sandy loam, the most common of soils and varying much in composition and fertility.

Balichar - Pure sand unfit for cultivation.

Banghi - A bamboo stick with strings from each end used across the shoulder for carrying loads.

Saradaran Jagir - Jagir assigned to brothers and other near relatives for their support.

Baraj - The pan garden.

Barhai - Carpenter.

Bari - Homestead land.

Barkandaz - A guard.

Barua - A village headman (found only in North Balasore).

Bati - 20 mans - Equivalent to from 8 to 20 acres varying with the local standards of measurement.

Batwara - Partition.

Bazefasal - Miscellaneous crops.

Bazyfti Tenures - Tenures held rent and revenue-free before the last settlement (1837) and resumed and assessed at the last settlement.

Bazyftidars - Holders of resumed tenures.

Bazyfti Kamil or pura jama - Tenures held rent and revenue-free before the last settlement (1837) and resumed and assessed at full rates at the last settlement.

Beachapari - Literally "without roof". The word is issued to designate uninhabited villates.

Bena - (Androdagon miliaeus) - Thatching grass.

Benapat - Waste covered with thatching grass.
Bethia - One who labours without hire. ‘Bethi’ is labour which is not paid for.
Bethia Bauri - Labourers of the Bauri caste (holding Jagirs) bound to render service when called upon to do so.

Bhadai (Oriza sativa) - Autumn crop.
Bhadra lok - Respectable persons.
Bhag or Dhulibhag - Means literally a ‘sharing’ of the dust. A rent in kind equal to half the produce, including bye-products.
Bhagbandhak or Phalbandhak - Is a common form of usufructuary mortates.
Bhagchas - Land cultivated by a raiyat for his landlord on condition that he would pay a certain share of the produce, generally half-share.
Bhaiya - Relations.
Bhandari or Napit - A barber.
Bhat - Village bard.
Bhaurias - Field books of Khasras.
Bhians - Rent rolls.
Bhot or Kothkoiran or Baithkaran or Sethi-Village Accountant.
Bhoimul or Biso - Divisional (bisi or Khand) head.
Bhupati - Lord of the soil.
Biali - (Oriza sativa) - Autumn rice sown in May-June and harvested in August and September.
Bibaha - Margan - Subscriptions raised for meeting the expenses of the Samindars for marriage in his family.
Bigha - A local land measure which is equal to one-third of a man.
Birhi - (Phaseohis radiatus) - A kind of pulse.
Bisa - Weighs 120 tolas or one-and-a-half standard seers and is divided into 20 to 30 pais=1/80 chhala.
Bisa kati - A steel yard used for weighing vegetables, fish and utensils and c.
Bisi or Khand - Villages grouped into large divisions often to fifty square miles.
Biswa -1/6th of a gunth or 1/400th of a man (See Man).
Bramhottar - Grants of lands assigned for the support of Brahmins.

Chaharam - (Lands) - Fourth class soils.
Chakbandi (sheet) - A uetailed rent roll showing the area and class and rate of rent for every plot in each holding.

Chahi or Janta - Flour Mill.
Chakran Tanki (lands) - Service lands held on a quit rent.
Chakria - An unskilled labourer who is engaged by the year.
Chana - (Lathyrus sativus) - Gram.
Chandina - Homestead lands of shopkeepers artizans, and those of the labouring classes, who, having no arable land in the village, pay rent for homestead lands only.
Chandinadar or Chandina Raiyat - Holders of Chandina tenures.
Chandinadar-ko-delu-patta- A Chandinadar to whom a lease for cultivated lands, similar to a thani lease, was given at the last settlement, fixing his rent for that settlement.
Chati (land) - Land occupied by lodging-houses on the Trunk Road.
Chaukidar or Choukia - Village watchman.
Chaulia matal - Brownish soil, very friable, commom and fairly fertile.
Chaupani - A tax levied by the Killajat chiefs for military service.
Chauria - A hard clay which is very liable to cake on being exposed to the sun when ploughed.
Chela - Disciple.
Chhar - A small remission or rent.
Chhala - (Measure) - 80 bisas (see Bisa).
Chhatia - Watchmen, landords' peons, Chaukidars are called Chhatias in the Puri District.
China (Paricummila ceum) - A kind of millet.
Chouth - Tribute levied by the Maharattas.
Chula - Hearth.
Dabir Jai or Dabijhya (land) - Is the dower given by the father on the occasion of daughter's marriage.

Dakdehati - Zamindari dak cess.
Dakhal bandhak - Loans on a usufructuary mortages. No interest in charged, by the Mahajan obtains possession until such time as the debt is repaid or for a certain period, at the expiration of which the Mahajan returns the lands to the mortgagor, the enjoyment of the lands for that period being considered equivalent to principal and interest.

Dakhilkharij - Process of registering mutations.
Dal - A general term for pulses.
Dalua - (Oryza sativa) - Spring rice sown in November-December and harvested in March.

Dan or Dutia - It is a gift, and is used of grants, to persons other than Brahmans, especially for services. Some times also used of grants to Brahmans.

Dandidar - Weigher appointed to supervise a market.
Dangar or Thenga or Thangi - High lands that suffer from want of silt and water.
Dao - A small toothed sickle for reaping. A large knife with straight and heavier blade for cutting jungle wood and fodder is also called a Dao.

Daroghas - Sub-Inspectors (Police).
Dastak - Warrant.
Dasti - (measure) Four half inches or the width of a man's fist across the knuckles.

Debottar - (Bestowed on the Gods) - Lands assigned for the worship of an idol.

Dhaincha - (Sesbania aculeata)-A crop cultivated for fibre.
Dhangira - Sugarcane cuttings.
Dhania (Coriandrum sativum) - Coriander seed.
Dhaulia matal-A greyish white soil which is usually fertile.

Dhenki - The grain-husker.
Dhipa - High arable lands.

Dhoba - Washerman.
Dhoti - Cloth for wearing.
Dhuan patra - (Bicotina rabacum) - Tobacco plant or 'smoke leaf'.
Diha - Homestead land (including the garden as well as the house site).
Doem or Dayam - Second class lands.
Dofasali - (land) - Double-cropped area.
Doli - Bamboo baskets plastered over with mud and cow-dung for storing paddy.

Dorasra - A mixture of clay and sand in nearly equal parts.
Dudhia matal - A white soil, very friable and fairly fertile; grows fine paddy.

Ekapadiya- Zamindar's ent roll.
Fasal-bandni-An assessment made on the basis of cropped area.
Gamcha- A towel-like piece of cloth generally used for bathing.
Gours or Gonds-Village cowherds.
Gharbari-Homestead lands including bari.
Goimasta-A servant of Zamindar or the Ijaradar who collects rent from tenants.
Gram-devati-village deities.
Gunth-(Land measure) One twenty-fifth of the man.
Hasitabud-The area in which the Zamindar collects direct from his tenants.
Hazur tahsil-Direct collections.
Istimarai patta-A permanent lease.
Jalakarmahals-Estates consisting of rights of fishery.
Jagir-Service lan.
Jama-Revenue of rent.
Jamanbandi misl-The collection of papers rating to the proceedings for the settlement of the rents.
Jarimana-A fine.
Kabala-Deed of sale.
Kadami-Resident and hereditary cultivators having a customary right of occupancy.
Kamar-Blacksmith.
Kanungo-A subordinate revenue official.
Kela—A class of wandering beggars.
Kharcha—Miscellaneous collections.
Kharida—Land sold rent-free or at a quit rent by the Proprietors during the Hindu, Mughal of Maratha rule.
Kharidadars—Purchasers or kharida land.
Lakhiraj—Revenue free land.
Lakhiraj bahaldars—Revenue free properties, holding their lands free of revenue in perpetuity.
Magan—Subscription or cesses levied by the Zamindar for special purpose.
Mali—Gardener.
Marfatdar—Agent, trustee.
Maund—Fourty seers.
Muharrir—Subordinate vernacular clerk.
Mugadam or Mukadam—A class of proprietary tenure-holders.
Pahi—Raiyats whose rents were not fixed for the term of settlement; non-resident raiyats as distinguished from thani or resident raiyats.
Pahikasht—Land cultivated by pahi raiyats.
Paiks—Hereditary landed militia.
Parcha—Abstract of the draft khatian given to the tenant some times known as jamanbandi slip.
Pargana—Name of the fiscal division of the Mughal period.
Patsala Kharcha—A fee to defray the cost of maintenance of a school at the zaminda’s residence generally three pies per head.
Patta Slami—A fee for the grant of a new lease of land.
Sadar—An Abstract.
sasan—A Brahmin settlement.
seer—Weight of 8 tolas.
Sunia, alami or Bethi—A form of awab.
taluk—An Arabic word that may be translated “sphere of influence.
Thani—Raiyats resident in a village whose rents were fixed for the term of the last settlement.
Zamindars or Maiguzars—Proprietors directly responsible to the State for the revenue of the land they won.