CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

Historians pursuing area specific research have to unfailingly take note of its social dynamics. In India, it has become a practice in the context of micro-studies now. The district of Balasore on the northern sea-board of Orissa, with all the vicissitudes of a long and tenuous history on the backdrop, offers good possibilities for undertaking a study of this nature.

EARLY HISTORY

The Pre-colonial period

As far as the ancient history of the district is concerned, Balosore claims to have an antiquity of its own. According to a local tradition, "the name is probably derived from the temple of Mahadev Baneswar, which is still standing, and was so called after Banasura, its traditional founder". Another tradition indicates that the name is possibly derived from 'Baleswara' which means, the young lord i.e. Krishna. Whatever be the fact one finds both the Shaivite and the Vaishnavite tradition being strongly present in the District. Remuna, situated 5 miles west of Balasore town, is specially celebrated for the temple of god Kshirchora Gopinath, a form of Krishna, in honour of whom a religious
fair is held annually in February. The fair lasts for 13 days and is attended by a very large number of pilgrims. S.C. De suggests that the image of Gopinath in the Remuna temple had been installed by the Ganga King, Narasimha Deva I around 1245 A.D. This suggestion ascribes the historicity of the temple to a fairly late period, but, nevertheless, the derivation holds grammatically.

In ancient times, the District formed part of the “extensive, populous and fairly civilised kingdom” of Kalinga, which emerged to the full light of history with the invasion of Ashoka Maurya in Circa 261 B.C. Prior to that the Mahabharatha mentions of the Baitaran river, associated with Hindus mythology and in its early verses had enjoined upon the pilgrims not to visit Kalinga as the Kshatriyas there “had become out-castes. Babu Manmohan Chakravarthy, who contributed the article for the Gazetteer, is of the opinion that this was so because Orissa at the time of the Mahabharata had not yet fully come under the spell of Aryavarta being mostly peopled by primitive tribes like the Savaras, the Juangs, the Panas, the Kewats and, of course, the predominant Odras who gave their name to the land in Sanskrit works at least before the 5th Century A.D. References of the Mahabharata and subsequently of the Baudhayana Dharmasutra which required persons visiting Kalinga to “offer a sacrifice in penance” possibly pointed to the sporadic early Aryan immigrants,
who came amidst the numerous non-Aryan people of Kalinga and thereby lost their castes. The Nastans and the Saruas, who claim to be Brahmins and wear sacred thread but do not practice usual rites incumbent upon the Brahmins, were probable the descendants of these early Aryan immigrants. However, brisk maritime activities on the Kalilngan coast in course of time linked the country more thoroughly with its northern hinterland. Hence in the Mahabharata, one finds later verses declaring that there were good men in Kalinga and that Tirthas existed in that country, thus withdrawing the ban laid on traveling there.

In between 6th and 4th century B.C. when the whole of Indo-Gangetic plain was in ferment, heterodox sects like Buddhism and Jainism found easy fertile grounds in Kalinga. Buddhism specially found royal favour after Asoka’s conquest of Kalinga and its annexation with the Mauryan empire. However, when the Mauryan yoke was overthrown and Kalinga became politically independent under the Kings of the Chedi dynasty, its powerful monarch Kharavela extended patronage to Jainism. The Murundas who succeeded the Chedis, again favoured Buddhism. Later during the reign of Harshavardhana when the Chinese traveler Huien Tsang visited Orissa around 639 A.D. he found Orissa abounding with Buddhist monasteries of the
Mahayana sect "besides 50 deva temples frequented by sectaries of all sorts"\(^1\).

The Bhaumakaras who commenced their rule from 736 A.D\(^2\) continued to support the Mahayana and the Vajrayana variant of Buddhism till about 846 A.D. continued till about 846 A.D. when Tribhuvana Mahadevi the first reigning queen of the dynasty effected a turning point not only in the history of the Bhaumas but also in the socio-religious history of Orissa. According to Panigrahi "During her rule the country advanced in three branches (of administration), the foes were extirpated, the glory spread abroad and there was harmony among the people. With her head sanctified with the lotus-like feet of Hari, she enjoyed an unparalleled fortune and thought that there was no other work for her to do"\(^3\).

The Neulpur charter of Subhakaradeva I (790 A.D.) and the Terundia charter of Subhakaradeva II (809 A.D.) state that though these rulers were Buddhists, they had accepted the Brahanamical socio-religious order and had consequently put Varnas in their proper places. They had encouraged immigration of Brahmans from Madhyadesa by the offer of land grant and by facilitating the use of Sanskrit for writing both inscriptions and the Buddhist texts\(^4\). The ascendance of Hinduism was accentuated under the rule of the Somavamsi Kings between 922 and 1118 A.D.
Being protagonists of the Brahmanisation of Orissan culture, the Somavamsi kings engaged themselves in massive construction activities of temples. Mahasivagupta Yayati I (922-955 A.D.) who is credited with the extension of the Somavamsi power to the coastal strip of Orissa in 931 A.D. particularly authenticated the necessity of sacredotel sanction to his regal authority by inviting ten thousand Brahmins from Kanauj to perform the Ashwamedha sacrifice on the bank of the river Baitatani at Jaipur. In a land where Brahmanism had begun coalesing with the long favoured heterodox sects, Yayati I had the politico-religious compulsion to ascribe to a more syncretic cult. This was despite his impressive military successes. According to H.V. Stietencron, 949 A.D. was the terminus post quem for the victorious kind Yayati I to build the Temple of Purushottam at Puri. His successor, Mahasivagupta Yayati II (1025 - 1040 A.D.) who constructed the monumental Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar in the honour of Lord Shiva, helped permeate syncretic influence of the Jagannath cult. Like the Daitapatis of the Jagannath temple whose legitimate share in the worship of the Lord had been recognised since the day the temple of Puroshottam was established, Yayati II appointed Sudra priests as the custodians of the Lingaraj Temple locally known as Vadus, these Sudra priests have been described in the sixty-second chapter of the Ekamra Purana as the
descendants of a Savara mother by a Saiva saint known as Siddhabhuti. The Brahmins took a share in the worship of the Lord only much later\textsuperscript{16}. Similarly, the custom that was introduced in the Lingaraj Temple in regard to partaking of the cooked-rice offered to Lingaraj became analogous to the one prevalent in Purushottam where no caste distinction is observed while partaking of the cooked-rice offered to the Lord.

This initial efforts of the Somavamsi Kings in harnessing the potential inherent in the Jagannath cult to build up a pan-Orissan empire was epitomised in 12th century A.D. when the Eastern Ganges acquired power and its ablest King Chodagangadeva built the famous Sri Jagannatha Temple in the site of the pre-existing Purushottam Nrusimha Temple on the shores of Puri between 1134 and 1147 A.D. In the opinion of K.C. Panigrahi: “both Yayati I and Chodaganga were actuated by political motives for paying a greater attention to the shrine of Jagannath, which must have acquired a great sanctity by the time they rules in Orissa. Both these monarchs did not possess any legal claim to the throne of Orissa and, therefore, they wanted to placate the public opinion of this country by building the spectacular temple of Jagannath whose cult had a great significance in the national life of the Oriyas and who was considered to be the unquestioned supreme deity of their country.”\textsuperscript{17}
Founded upon a syncretic platform it was possible for Jagannath cult to permeate the whole of regional life in Orissa. Other than in the religio-cultural domain, the cult's integrative force is envisaged in the presence of a particular kind of Debottar tenure called Amruta monohi. These grants of land meant for keeping up the worship of Jagannath at Puri, was found in all the paraganas of Balasore district when the British came to occupy Orissa in 1803 A.D. Trustee-holders of such grants, were usually the residents of Puri or its neighborhood who collected the rents at certain intervals through agents. In early 20th century when nationalist Oriya leaders were struggling at a socio-political level to get for Orissa a distinct political identity in British India, the forerunner amongst them, Gopabandhu Das, repeatedly harked back to this once unquestioned symbol of Oriya national life in his anthology of 13 prison poems viz. Kara Kabita. The upswing in the overarching influence of the cult continued after the Angas, throughout the period of the Suryavamsi rule between 1435 and 1538 A.D. The tense political situation arising out of incessant military pressure from both the northern and southern fronts did not allow the Suryavamsi rulers any respite from either wars or worries about their personal sovereignty. The theocratic notion of kingship which had been popularised by the Ganga kings Anangabhima III
(1211-1238 AD) and Bhanudeva II (1306-1328 AD) was, therefore, more copiously followed by the Suryavamsis. Kapilendradeva (1435-1468 AD) warned his disobedient feudatories that defiance of the authority of the Gajapati amounted to sacrilegious disrespect for Lord Jagannath. Ironically it was partly due to such internal dissension that the Orissa country ultimately lost its political independence to the Afghan chief of Bengal Suleiman Karrani in 1568 AD.

Once politically subservient Orissa became a theatre of struggle among alien powers for mastery and Balasore became a "high way along which Muslim armies passed and repassed and fought their battles". Not only that the conquerors bequeathed some legacies but they also added components of population which became permanent part and parcel of social structure in Orissa. As regards the early remnants of Afghan domination over Balasore, the district preserves a number of tombs of the captains of Kala Pahara. Located at Garhpada where the Bhuinyas enjoyed a rent-free grant to preserve the tomb of Hitam Khan; at Basta; at Ramcannahandrapur south of Garhpada; at Remuna, where the Bazar of Sahaji Patna took its name from the tomb of Gulab Shah Shahid; at Kasba, a suburb of Balasore; Bhadrak; and at Dhamnagar where the descendents of early Afghan settlers are still living.

The Afghans also contributed in expanding
cultivation by granting *jagirs* to the old soldiers. It was according to Balasore District Gazetteer: "from this time too dates the rise of Balasore as a commercial town and the cloth woven there began to be famous." But the Afghans did not provide a stable administration and people suffered untold miseries because of prolonged warfare.

The Mughals who conquered Orissa in 1592 A.D. effected some changes in revenue administration. Out of the five Sarkars into which Orissa was divided, Balasore had two viz., Jaleswar and Bhadrak. Though land theoretically belonged to the state the Mughals gave the raiyat, *patta* and *Kabuliya*t for knowing the amount of rent they were to pay for their cultivated land. Whereas the Hindu Kings formerly depended upon the village headmen called *Mugaddams* for collection of land revenue, the Mughal system of *Tankha Raqmi* (revenue settlement) depended upon intermediary officials like *Chudhuries* and *Vilayati Kanungoes* / *Taluqdars* for the purpose. Besides, the Mughals also granted *jagirs* to both Muslim and non-Muslim Bengalis who along with other revenue officials and chieftains created various types of sub-tenancies in land. This to some extent had led to fragmentation of land rights in hierarchical form on the eve of the Maratha rule. In other respects, the Mughal administration instead of upholding the provincial character of Orissa reduced it to a mere appendage of the Bengal Suba.
Further to break the centrality of Jagannath from Orissa's national life, the Mughals beginning with the reign of Aurangjeb imposed Jijiya on pilgrims coming to Puri. The tax was collected from pilgrims between Rajghat and Balasore in different chowkies. Besides, Aurangjeb's policy of religious persecution coerced many to get converted into Islam. The notable Bhatta Brahmin family who had received land grants from Purushottamadeva Gajpati in 1483 A.D. in a village near Rupsa in Balasore thus had to embrace Islam. Till date his descendants are living in Garhpada village as Muslims.

However, in the realm of culture, the Mughal period left behind two important traditions. The tolerant strands among the Hindus and the Muslims were played up by the prevalent, Bhakti and Sufi movements to make Satyapir an acceptable common deity for both communities. The Sufi saints locally called Fakirs had in particular won the indulgence of faith among common folks. Fakir Mohan Senapati recalls in his auto-biography how his grand mother had promised the two Muslim saints in Balasore to make him their Fakir (slave) provided he recovers from illness. Later his grand mother had prefixed Fakir to his name to please the Muslim saints.

The Mughal Tamasha of Bhadrak is another legacy of the Mughal influence on the indigenous performing arts of Balasore district. Also called Chaiti Tamasha, since
the Tamashas are staged towards the end of the Orissan month Caitra in an open air pendant in front of a Shiva Temple, the Mughal Tamashas are essentially satirical dance-dramas on the decadent life style of the erstwhile Mirzas or Afgan Zagirdars. The Tamashas exhibit a composite influence of Persian, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and Oriya in their songs, tune and dance style. The origin of the Tamasha has, however, been attributed to the Maratha period when Bansiballabha Goswami, scion of a scholarly Brahmim family of village Saingata near Bhadrak, first authored it in the year 1728 AD.

Under the Marathas who occupied Orissa (after rule of Nawab Aliwardi Khan of Bengal) in 1755 A.D., Balasore received greater administrative attention. The town of Balasore specially benefited most by the residence of the Maratha officials. Among them Motiram is credited with the establishment of Motiganj sometime between 1785 and 1790 which became the center of the town and its principal market place. The port of Balasore also flourished and the Marathas earned considerable amount of revenue from the export of large quantity of salt to Berar and Bengal from the port. Hostilities between the English East-India Company and the Marathas over this lucrative salt trade finally led to the British conquest of Orissa in 1803 A.D.

With British conquest, Orissa entered into an entirely new phase of her history which is of immediate
concern to the present thesis. In this regard the survey of Orissa's pre-British history may seem unnecessary. But its relevance lies in the fact that the survey provides an essential background for a proper perusal of the modern Orissan society and various changes which came in it. It is also important to note that during all the centuries of her early history Orissan society gradually crystallised into a cognisable entity with a specific form and inherent functioning rationale. Under the Somavamsi and the Survyavamshi rule, Orissa acquired a definitive national character rallying round the hallowed symbol of Lord Jagannath.

Social Stratification in Medieval Orissa:

During this period of Hindu sovereignty Orissan economy was vibrant despite occasional horrors of famine. According to Gazetteer of Balasore District "Provisions were exceedingly cheap, cowrie-shells were the only medium of exchange among the people generally, and there was no demand for a gold or silver currency. The currency of coins in Orissa, however, predated the Gupta Age as has been attested by the Bhadrak inscription of Gana.

The kings who had popularised the theocratic foundation of their kingship had monopolised Jagannath in the religious and political centers of the State. Despite indulgence in enormous building activities by both the
dynasties all over Orissa, there were no Jagannath temples outside Puri and Cuttack till late 15th century\textsuperscript{29}. This policy secured for the Brahmins the position of primacy in Orissan society. The Brahmins in turn bestowed legitimacy upon both the lawful successors to the throne and the usurpers alike. Throughout the period this tacit nexus manifested itself in sovereigns and their feudatories in the names of the sovereigns granting tax-free Brahmostar land for the settlement and upkeep of the Brahmins. Among the Lakhiraj lands of all kinds, the thirty years settlement of 1837 returned Brahmostar land, “granted either to individual Brahmins or to a body of Brahmins forming a Shasan or Brahmana Village for their maintenance”, distributed very evenly over each pargana throughout Balasore district\textsuperscript{30}. The donees in these cases were enjoined upon the obligation to invoke blessings on the donor’s name three times a day. This provision was absent from other sanads, as the invocations of Brahmins and Vaishnavas alone were considered of any avail\textsuperscript{31}.

Apart from this pre-eminent position enjoyed by the Brahmins, the social structure below remained fluid because of several exigencies of the time. Firstly, due to virtual militarisation of the state by the Somavamsi and Suryavamsi kings all castes and communities, not excepting Brahmins at times, were called upon to remain ever in battle gear and render military service at the
times of emergency. Drawn mainly from among the numerous tribal communities and cultivator castes the militia-men who served the kings as regular soldiers, formed a new sub-caste called Khandayats. With land grants new titles like Senapati, Nayaka, Gadanayaka, Patra, Mahapatra, Behera, Dalabehera, Jena, Badajena, Pradhana, Samala, Rauta, Khuntia, Parichha, Parija, Padhihari, Dandapani, Dandapata etc., the neo-kshatriyas claimed intermediary social status and became a willing clientele of the Brahmins. The Brahmins in their own interest in the areas of their new settlements and in view of the royal patronage accorded to the predominantly sudra-turned-khandayats, legitimised this vertical social mobility by becoming priests for them.

Secondly, in an overtly centralised political system, the kings could rule only with the help of a regular hierarchy of civilian officers and scribes. In Orissan context, large scale recruitment of civilian officers and scribes offered scope for men of lower varnas to move up the social scale by holding these offices, which specially in village and local levels, became hereditary and crystallised according to their functional titles into many sub-castes like Srikarana, Pattanayaka, Mohanty, Kanungo etc., In the Later Ganga period these sub-castes were ascribed the local caste name of Karana.
Thirdly, the rise of Jagannath as the national deity and the spread of his syncretic cult facilitated closing of the caste ranks in medieval Orissa. Traditions were built up eulogizing Jagannath as Purushottama, Patitapavana (Liberator of the down-trodden) etc. Gradually, a pan-Orissan nationalistic myth gained currency. The Suryavamsi kings who themselves were of humble origin encouraged this myth. Its representative personality was Sarala Dasa who composed the Oriya Mahabharata, Chandi Purana and Vilanka Ramanaya in 15th century A.D. At a time when the top-most of castes were still the devotees of Sanskrit literature, Sarala Dasa, himself a Sudra cultivator and a man of no importance responded to the call of the time and brought about a revolutionary change in Oriya literature by becoming its originator and maker. After Sarala Dasa all castes shook off their prejudice against the Oriya literature and conjointly contributed to its growth. Sarala Dasa particularly lent currency to myriad folk beliefs and social practices that were approved by men of all castes and varnas.

Fourthly, the propagation and spread of reformist socio-religious movements contributed to the upward mobility of the lower varnas and even touched the lowliest to bring about a new order of social stratification in medieval Orissa. The reformist trend which Sarala Dasa
had set was carried forward by other equally respected Vaishnava saints like Achyutananda Khuntia, Balaram Mohapatra, Yoshovanta Mallick and Ananta Mohanty all belonging to non-Brahmin castes. These saints received royal patronage of Pratapprudradeva and their works reinterpreting the Sanskrit scriptures in folk language gained wide acceptance. The story of Sriya Chandaluni, depicted in Lakshmi Puana of Balarama Dasa alias Mahapatra, portrayed the myth of goddess Lakshmi coming down to accept the worship of Sriya, a Chandala woman, despite an injunction to the contrary by her husband Jagannath and his elder brother Balabhadra outside the limits of the temple city being moved by her pious life-style and devotion. The Purana narrates how the Goddess did not find any women belonging to the so-called upper varnas leading as pious a life as Sriya within the precincts of the temple city. No doubt, Lakshmi was thrown out of the temple for her deviant behaviour. But following untold misery suffered by Jagannath and Balabhadra when she was sought to be brought back by the duo, she agreed only on the condition that there would not be any distinction thereafter in partaking of food that she cooks within the Sri Mandira. Not only that the myth became a norm in the Jagannath temple but people throughout Orissa started observing the event religiously
on four Thursdays of the Oriya month of Margasira every year.

When Sri Chaitanya came to Puri in 1510 A.D., the reformist Bhakti movement became much stronger. Prof. R.D. Banerjee considers this influence of Sri Chaitanya to be greatly responsible for weakening the military spirit in Orissa. Other than Vaishnavism, Sakta-tantrik and Nath cults also contributed to the process of caste movements by assimilating lower castes into their fold. Khageswar Mahapatra has identified many of these tantrik teachers (Siddhacharyas) as belonging to untouchable castes like kewat, Mochi, Doms etc. However, the contention that the upward mobility of lower varnas and the emergence of intermediary castes who became dominant economically as well as socio-politically resulted in a “marked decline in the status of Brahmins” does not hold good on several counts.

The Gajapatis revered the Brahmins in a manner which they never did to anybody else. The induction of non-Brahmins as priests in the Jagannath Temple was a cosmetic attempt at building up the cult as universalistic. But the internal functioning of the temple and its methods of worship was always Brahmanic. The Brahmins at times took to other professions because of political and economic exigencies but that did not interfere in their caste ranking or ritual status.
Sarala Dasa himself tells ad nauseam that different rites associated with social life were conducted thoroughly in accordance with the Vedic rules. The contention that Brahmins ought only to engage themselves in worshipping and studying religious scriptures is more of a theoretical postulation having less relevance in temporal life.

1. In medieval Orissa the social order that emerged, therefore, was one in which the Brahmins occupied the top stratum.

2. In the intermediate level, the Khandayats and the Karanas contended with each other for the rank next to the Brahmins, both castes being drawn from the variegated castes and arnas.

3. Due to the increasing Sanskritization as a result of softening of the social posture by the Brahmins from the top and various reformist movements from below, Sudras acquired respectability in society.

4. As regards the overall condition of the society there was a fall in outlook. Though under the overlordship of the Bhaumas in Orissa, women enjoyed a distinctly higher status, their status declined considerably in succeeding centuries. Pre-puberty marriages became a rule. Purdah system crept into the higher classes. Many other social practices based on folk
belief such as "if a daughter attains puberty in her father's house the manes shall sink to hell" assumed characteristic acceptance to the detriment of progressive outlook. Upholding political independence at all costs and marshal machismo also took its toll on social life.

The Colonial Period, 1803-1865

Orissa came under colonial rule in 1803 and particularly Balasore on 21st September in the same year. When Captain Margan captured the Fort of Balasore after its evacuation by the Marathas. Long before it since June 1633, the colonialists as traders had associated with Balasore to use it as a spring-board in quest of their commercial and subsequently political interests in Bengal. All these years they had carried saltpeter, taffetas, raw silk, sannas, cotton yarn, turmeric, tincall, dussetees or coarse sail cloth and brought back broad cloth and lead in return. Among the merchandise taken towards the end of 18th century, it was salt, manufactured in Balasore that was commercially more lucrative. The English East-India Company used to import salt from Orissa at the average rate of 68,269 maunds per annum into Bengal where it had established a monopoly both over manufacture and sale of salt. Consequent upon the adverse effect which the smuggled and cheaper Orissa salt was giving to the company's trade in Bengal, it had
urged the Marathas to grant the Company the exclusive right to buy Orissa salt. But given that the Marathas were earning as much as rupees two lakhs per annum from the salt sold in Bengal they shunned the proposal off-hand. Thus finding the right opportunity during the second Anglo-Maratha war the East-India Company militarily seized Balasore, Cuttack and Puri and by the Treaty of Deogaon ,signed on 17th December 1803, got from Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur, Raghuji, in perpetual sovereignty “the province of Cuttack including the port and the district of Balasore”.

The Marathas despite frequent charges of rapacity had found for themselves socio-political context in Orissa. They had restored to a great extent the pre-Mughal system of revenue administration by minimising the role of intermediaries in revenue collection. In total only 32 amils or revenue commissioners were responsible for collection of revenue. From all the 150 paraganas into which the entire Mughal Bandi area had been divided. The Amils managed their job only though two sets of officials namely the Taluqdars and the Mukaddams. The Taluqdars collected the revenue from the raiyats of Pahikasth villages and the Mukaddams from the Mukaddami ones. Further the Marathas respected neither Zamindari nor Mukkaddami tenures when; it was considered suitable for them to collect direct from the cultivators of the
soil. Among other measures, the Marathas, even taking over the administration of the Jagannath Temple in Puri, did not interfere with the ritual status of the Gajapati Maharaja. The Gajapati still continued to exercise the regal privilege of conferring titles on the inhabitants of Mughalbandi and the Garhjat countries. It is clear from the records that no title granted by the Maratha Government was considered to confer any distinction in Orissa until confirmed by the Raja of Khurda. Being Hindus, the Marathas also lavishly donated to the Jagannath Temple as well as to Brahmins. In times of distress, resulting out of floods or droughts, tax remissions as well as takavi advances to the cultivators used to be given. The Marathas had also expended money in settling agriculture and in building embankments to prevent flooding. One such embankment constructed at the mouth of river Subarnarekha did immense good to the people of Balasore. In short, the Maratha administration had arrested the process of further fragmentation of the medieval Orissan society on caste and class lines.

Unlike the Marathas, however, the colonial power had no raison d'etre in seeking socio-political legitimacy, its colonial agenda being long drawn up to be effected in any newly acquired territory. Their supreme motive was to further colonial economic interests through the bait of eradicating lawlessness, relieving the
country from the misrule of native tyrants and establishing a just administration. But no sooner did the Company Government posted itself to regular administration of the country, its inner motives started ruefully manifesting.

(a) Its economic policies brought ruination to native industries and effected a shift from a state of local economic self-sufficiency to helpless dependence on metropolitan economy.

(b) While the colonial rulers remained a class apart its revenue administration created an intermediate class of landed aristocracy, which perpetuated itself by exploiting the cultivating under class with no constructive obligation in return.

(c) Under the garb of organising the administrative system outsiders mainly from Bengal were brought in great numbers. This created a pernicious cycle of sub-colonialism and demoralised the erst-while forward sections of Orissan society who could have worked as a moderating lever between the emergent colonial power and long-term native interests.

(d) Monetisation of economy and drain of wealth from the land of its production together ensured (i) economic deprivation leading to large scale migration of lower-class people to different Garhjats and to Calcutta as menial workers and servants; (ii) rise of a
class of money lenders and usurers and (iii) above all, distressing poverty.

(e) The policy of non-intervention in people’s affairs did not allow the society to prepare itself for readjusting to an emergent system. The natural advantage was, therefore, appropriated by rank outsiders who had no social recognition or commitment whatsoever.

Consequent upon these developments by the middle of the 19th century, a new social structure was evolving in place of the one that existed in medieval Orissa. This social structure tending to be more stratified on economic lines ensured weakening of social affinity between the upper and the lower strata in society. In other words, in the emergent society the earlier system of ritual-ranking was giving way to a new system where a variegated number of caste-groups were getting clustered into either a higher or lower stratum in terms of their economic status and social mobility was depending more upon who benefited most out of the government policies.

A systematic perusal of the various administrative measures and policies of the Company Government would test the above hypotheses.

Administrative Ad-Hocism

The severity of the early British rule has been attributed to the unsettled natures of the country when
"large discretion had to be allowed to the officers". But keeping in mind the paramountcy of British power then, it sounds unconvincing that the John Company took more than four decades to settle the country for imaginative administration. It is so because there was hardly any native resistance at the time of the conquest of Orissa and the British occupied the territory by trading charges of misrule against the Maratha regime. The fact that Balasore was erected into an independent district with Mr. Hendry Ricketts as its first collector on October 23, 1828, long after it was administrated as an annex of Cuttack and that even afterwards a perplexing series of transfer and retransfer of fiscal divisions continued till as late as 1868 made matters worse for the people of the district. W.W. Hunter has quoted the collector as reporting that "Constant shifting of jurisdiction has made these parganas very lawless and difficult to manage". Systemic mismanagement was not only reflected in every branch of administration but also woefully culminated in the famine of 1865-66.

**Salt Monopoly**

Balasore, endowed with a long salt tract along the coastline, had been producing the finest panga salt since the pre-British days. Soon after getting the right to occupancy over Orissa, the Company enacted a temporary regulation in May 4, 1804 reserving to itself,
“the exclusive privilege of manufacturing salt as a source of public revenue”. This responsibility was entrusted to the Salt Department with its Headquarters at Balasore.

As a result of this monopoly over the manufacturing and sale of salt, the Company Government earned a net profit of sicca rupees 43,435 and 11 annas in 1804 and rupees 1, 04,894 and 13 annas in 1805 against an advance of only Rs. 43,000 in the same year. After James King assumed charge of the Salt Department as its full-time agent in 1806, the quantity of salt manufactured in the eleven aurangs or salt enclosures along the Balasore coast increased rapidly. In 1811, he communicated to the Board of Trade that there was a prospect of realising as much as 4 lakh maunds of salt in his agency.

In an attempt to further centralise the regime of salt monopoly, the headquarters of the salt department under regulation 22 of 1814 was shifted to Cuttack and utmost emphasis was laid on optimising the output. In the season, of 1820-21 Charles Becher, the salt agent of Orissa, reported that out of a total of 9,88,300 maunds 9 seers and 9 chhataks of salt the northern Auranga produced 7,76,641 maunds 39 seers and 9 chhataks of panga salt which was much superior and favoured to the “dirty, coarse and not very strongly flavoured Karkutch salt.”
Consequent upon the formation of the district of Balasore, the Balasore Salt Agency functioned under the charge of the District Collector. In the season of 1836-37 Balasore Agency produced 3,99,436 maunds and 30 seers of salt which increased to 4,94,940 maunds on an average between 1840-41 to 1845-46. But the intervention of the cheap Liverpool salt in the Bengal market forced the Salt Agency to scale down its production in between 1846-47 and 1851-52 to an average of 3,24,910 maunds. Only when the imports of Liverpool salt increased in 1853-54, the Agency produced a maximum of 6,72,999 maunds in the season of 1853-54.

The fluctuation in salt production thereafter continued unabated not so much because of a lack of enterprise on the part of the Salt Agency but because the Central Board of Customs, Salt and Opium pursued a policy of check in tandem with the importation of salt from Liverpool. This colonial policy continued till 1863 when the British India Government finally abolished its monopoly over manufacturing and sale of salt leaving the private enterprise in the field under the excise rules of Act VII (B.C.) of 1864. But the indigenous salt could no longer compete with the imported salt of superior quality.

MALANGIS

The brunt of the colonial policy so earnestly pursued by the Government which was ever willing to sacrifice the
economic interests of the country it ruled, was born by the poor Malangis directly. The Malangis were a class of workers whom the Salt Agency employed on contract basis to manufacture salt in its Aurangs. The General Census Report of Bengal of 1872 which incorporated a general census of the district of Balsore did not return either the Chulias or Malangis as a caste group. No doubt, therefore, the numerous agricultural labourers in search of jobs at the end of every agricultural season used to from the bulk of the Malangis.

After the establishment of Government monopoly, the swelling salt industry, the economics of which remained beyond the Malangis comprehension and control, kept them saddled to the monotony of work for subsistence throughout the salt manufacturing season. Despite the fact that the production of salt boomed the Malangis continued to be engaged on the lowest possible terms. The temporary regulation of 1804 had fixed 4 annas per maund as due to the Malangis. This wage was not favourable as the Zamindars made exorbitant demand on the Malangis for leasing salt lands and fuel woods. At the instance of the Salt Agent, James King, therefore, the payment to the Malangis was raised to 5.6 annas per maund of salt. An agreement with the Zamindars was also reached to dissuade them from extorting the Malangis. By this agreement the Zamindars received 1 and 1/2 annas as lease-money per
maund on all salt manufactured within their estates. Besides, the Zamindars also received certain quantity of salt as khorakee or diet allowance for their family consumption. In the 1820s the payment to Malangis was slightly raised to 6.4 annas per maund of salt. Occasionally they also got 3 annas extra for maximising production. However, the increase meant nothing since the malangis were asked simultaneously to pay 15 maunds of extra salt towards the Zamindar’s revenue and were also made to compensate any loss of weight in salt due to evaporation by paying Suktee charges. After continuous appeals by the Malangis and pleadings of Salt Agencies on their behalf the rate was raised to 7 annas per maund in 1843 but soon enough it was reverted to 5 annas in 1845-46. The only consideration to the Malangis was the 3 annas extra per maund of salt which they produced in excess of the taidad or contract.

Scarcity and Price Hike

The miserable condition of the Malangis was matched by the unprecedented hike in the price of salt. This was clearly co-terminous with the policy of limited supply into the domestic market which created a condition of scarcity.

Whereas, Melville, one of the commissioners of Cuttack reported that the price of salt could not have exceeded 5 annas per maund during the Maratha period,
its price had been raised to Rs.2 i.e., 32 annas under the suggestion of James King in 1806. The price was further raised to Rs.3.4 annas when Charles Becher became the Salt Agent. The quantum of salt that was allowed to be sold in the domestic market during Becker’s time sustained the abnormal hike in price. In between 1811 and 1816, whereas according to a conjectural estimate of John Richardson the District of Cuttack had 14,62,500 people. The salt department released on an average only 1,51,035 maunds of salt per annum to the domestic market.

Later Walter Ewer in his report to the Government on the causes of the Paik Rebellion of 1817 un-ambiguously mentioned that the sudden rise in the cost of salt from 5 to 6 times its former rate on the passing of the Regulation XXII of 18,14 the shortfall in the supply of salt to the tune of 2 lakh maunds per annum was responsible for creating scarcity conditions clandestine rise in cost and smuggling.

The Paik Rebellion of 1817 and the consequent soul searching on the part of the Company Government had a sobering effect in the sense that throughout 1818 and 1819 salt was sold at the uniform rate of 2 and 1/2 rupees per maund in the native market and the quantity also increased to 2,16,416 maunds. In 1823, the 3 sale golas (depots) in Balasore, Soro and Bhadrak sold salt at the wholesale rate of Rs.24 per maund averaging 1,20,000 maunds per
annum. Whereas, the quantity of salt thus sold in the Balasore agency steadily increased over the years the wholesale price remained more or less same. But after 1850, at a time when the market for Orissa salt in Bengal was slackening due to importation of Liverpool salt, the Company facilitated privatization by leaving the supply of salt in the territories beyond the Aurangas to traders. Out of the 4 Government sales depots in the district of Balasore, 2 sales depots at Soro and Basta were also closed. This change in policy was tactical in finding for Liverpool salt a way into the Orissa market which ultimately finished off the native salt industry.

Exports

The economic motive of the Company from the beginning was to make maximum profit from the monopoly over Orissa salt. Out of the huge quantity of salt manufactured, about two-third was exported to the Government warehouses at Sulkia in the bank of river Hugli opposite Calcutta. In 1818-19, 6,13,763 maunds had been exported to Sulkia for public sale. From the Balasore Agency alone, in 1824, 2,54,563 maunds of salt were exported by contractors on Government Account at the rate of 16 rupees per 100 maunds to be sold at Calcutta at the rate of rupees 359, 6 annas and 8 pies per 100 maunds. In the subsequent years both the export figures and the sales price at Calcutta increased steadily while the freight charges
remained varying between a high of Rs.23.8 annas and a low of Rs.12.11 annas 10 pies only\textsuperscript{75}. Considering the net expenditure which the Salt Agency incurred in terms of payments to the Malangis, the Zamindars, its own staff and towards the freight charges, the profit that accrued to the Government account was enormous. According to Andrew Sterling, it gave to the company a net revenue "falling a little short of 18 lakhs of rupees annually\textsuperscript{76}. This initial profit had tremendously increased to fetch as much as 39 lakhs of rupees to the Company Government towards the end of its rule.

Effects of Salt Monopoly

While Government was appropriating enormous profits, the original producers of the commodity languished at the bare minimum subsistence level. Besides, more unconsoling from the point of view of the province was the fact that the huge returns from the trade at Sulkia did not find its way back to Orissa. When, finally, the Government found it expedient to close down the salt agency in February 28, 1863, not only that thousands of workers dependent on the industry lost jobs and mounted pressure on land, but the peripheral ship-building and other off-season mercantile activities which had revived in Balasore almost after a century's gap also got eclipsed.\textsuperscript{77}

Revenue Administration

The early land revenue policy of the Company Government was as much marked by inconsistencies and
ad-hocism. Though the Regulation XII of September 5, 1805 started the revenue policy with the avowed objectives of ensuring “prosperity of the country” and “happiness of the inhabitants” in an economy which gravitated mostly round the production, distribution and consumption of rice, in practice it tendered a terrible destablishing effect on the whole agrarian system of Orissa. As it became quite apparent from the series of short-term revenue settlements effected between 1804 and 1836, the two important motives of the Company Administration was only to appropriate as much revenue as it could mop up and to conciliate the hitherto land-revenue collecting class by making them proprietors of land in perpetuity. In both the motives, however, the administration failed to realise its end-goals completely.

Rajas

Regulation 12 of 1805 which included the settlement of land revenue reached by the commissioners prior to it, as in case of the Kanika estate in Balasore district, fixed the quit rents of such estates in perpetuity. “The result of such a policy was the creation at a privileged and powerful group of Zamindars in Orissa”78.

In course of time these powerful Zamindars assumed the title of “Raja” and continued to draw special attention throughout the British rule.
Zamindars

The 1805 regulation also redeemed the erstwhile Chandhuris, Kanungoes and Mukaddams who had all but eclipsed during the preceding Maratha rule as a medium between the cultivator and their sovereign for paying the rents into the treasury and conferred upon them the proprietary rights over land in keeping with the English conception of a Landed estate. It exalted the tenures of these functionaries to a footing of distinction and importance which they had never before attained in the best times of the native government. Thus, a class of landed aristocracy which was to thrive later as the single most important prop of colonial regime was "manufactured" in Orissa by the "Collectors trained in Bengal out of the material which they found most ready to hand."

Loss of Zamindari by the Oriyas

However incongruous the creation of the institution of Zamindars by the British in Orissa might be, the alienation of Zamindaris from the hands of the Oriyas due to the exacting nature of revenue demands by the Government was much more disconcerting.

While the Government increased its revenue demands over every short term settlement without first acquiring actual information about the real assets of the estates, its policies, such as (I) making it compulsory for Zamindars and other holders of lands to pay revenue by the
Calcutta Sicca rupee, (ii) abandoning the earlier Maratha practice of giving remission for the loss of crops in heavy floods or severe drought and (iii) introducing the fatal process of the sale of estates of a higher Jama of rupees 5,000 or more at Fort Williams, Calcutta, dispossessed many Oriyas of their Land and allowed Bengali speculators to buy valuable properties at very low prices. During the triennial settlement of 1805-08 the Noanand estate in Balasore was sold for rupee 5,013/- but was again sold up in 1818 only to be bought back by the Government for rupee one.

Thus, at a time when the people were disheartened at the constant alteration of revenue and many left their estates to be held Khas by the Government, the Collectors either managed them through corrupt Tahsildars or farmed them out to speculators who reck-rented the tenants. The Government kept on dodging the oft-repeated promise of a permanent settlement beginning with the Regulation XII of 1805. In a despatch of the 16th June, 1815, the Court of Directors ruled that "there cannot be in our opinion a more indefensible proceeding than finally to decide on the rights of individuals and the interests of Government in a state of declared ignorance regarding both".

It was only after the peasant militia of Khurda raised the standard of revolt in 1817 that the grievances of the Oriyas was brought home to the authorities in
Calcutta. Consequently Regulation XII of 1822 marked a change in the revenue administration. It extended for 5 years the existing settlement and set forth the intention of the Government to ascertain, settle and record the rights, interests, privileges and properties of all classes. As a result of this avocation the Siari Estate in Balasore could be settled by 1831. During this time in response to a query by the Sadar Board of Revenue, the Commissioner of Cuttack Stock well recommended for the beneficial employment of “the natives of respectability” to perform the settlement duties.

Finally, at the behest of Lord William Bentinck, the first definite rules were laid down in the Regulation of 1833 for a long term settlement in Orissa. The work beginning in 1837, was successfully completed in 1845. At the end, A.J.M. Mills, the Commissioner of Cuttack remarked “this great work was undertaken with for higher views than to improve the exchequer”. In his estimation, “operations which have conferred such permanent blessings on the people, and will be so beneficial to Government from a fiscal and judicial point of view, have not been dearly purchased.”

Effects of the 30-Years’ Settlement

(1) Perpetuation of Zamindari tenures at the expense of ordinary cultivators.
Though section IV of Regulations VII of 1822 had declared that "it was in no degree the intention of Government to compromise private rights of privileges or to rest the Sadar Malguzars with any rights not previously possessed by them", in actuality the 30 years settlement allowed all these erstwhile collectors and payers of revenue, the right of freehold proprietors under the more honorific appellation of Zamindar. There were altogether 1388 such Zamindari estates in Balasore with a maximum concentration of them in the southern part of the district. To meet the high cost of their tenures each Zamindar took recourse "to get every scrap of his land under tillage" and "rack-rent all tenants not protected by a right of occupancy". S.L. Maddox's "Final report on Survey and Settlement" quotes Mr. Kingsford as reporting that in the district of Balasore, where extra-legal collections were endemic, the Zamindars had the propensity to increase the imposition of a new cess on the peasantry which could be attended with less difficulty than the enhancement of rents. As for the regular demands, Kingsford cited the following instances: (a) Road and Public works cess; (b) Bisodhani (Payment on the receipt of a holding by a tenant), (c) Bahachina (Marriage due paid by the parents of the bride and bridegroom); (d) Suniabhetti (new year acknowledgment of the Zamindar's authority; (e) Magan (Payment towards expenses of marriage,
funeral, village fairs or erection of a shrine by the 
Zamindari); (f) Salami/ Najrana (Payment on meeting the 
Zamindar, to which mostly tenants returning from Calcutta 
were more rigorously subjected); (g) Dakhil Kharaj 
(mutation); (h) Tahasil Kharcha (maintenance of Zamindar’s 
official); (i) Piyadamani (fees for the peon on call); (j) 
Zarimana (fines for petty crimes); (k) Pathshala Kharcha 
maintenance of dancing girls at Zamindars residence); (m) 
Rahadari (cost of sending remittances to the Treasury 
under escort) and (n) Thani Kharcha (Payment by the thani 
raiyat for subscribing the services of the Gomasta and 
Amin)

As a result of these numerous abwabs the actual 
raiyats were almost always in debt with so much of their 
produce going out everytime the landlord or the village 
usurer swooped down on him at harvest time. No wonder, 
therefore, the shop-keepers were “rather better off than 
husband men who held the same position in the social 
scale”.

The 30 year’s a settlement of 1837 not only left the 
uncultivated and wastelands rent-free in the hands of the 
Zamindars but also entitled them to a high Malikana 
percentage of 35 per cent to 40 per cent on Sadar Jama if 
the revenue was collected directly from the raiyats; 15 
per cent to 20 per cent when collected through Mukaddams, 
Sarbarahtars or second class Kharidadars; 5 per cent to 10
38 per cent when collected through first class Kharidadars, and from 15 per cent to 2.5 per cent even on Lakhiraj tenures which remained vested in the Government, depending upon how many hands the collection passed through90.

Creation of Sub-Zamindari Tenures With High Stake on Land:

In the district of Balasore, other than the Zamindari tenures, there were 86 Mukaddami tenures, their area being included within the parent Zamindaris through which they paid their revenues. More incongruent were the Sarbarshkari tenures totaling 76 of the hereditary and 85 of the temporary kinds. R. Hunter, Collector of Cuttack in 1831 suggested that “the title Sarbarakhari was applied by the Zamindars to divest Mukadamms of their original status for an inferior and more vague designation”91. As regards the two classes of Kharidadars viz., (i) those who purchased their lands from Zamindars/Pargana Telukdars before 14th October 1802 and (ii) those whose who made the purchase from Village Mukaddams, the district had 990 such tenures all within the parent estates to which they were attached.

At the lower rung of the agrarian structure were the lakhiraj tenures and two kinds of Jagirs i.e. (1) Khandaiti/Paikali Jagirs, and (2) Sebait Jagirs. The Brahmins who lived in Brahmottar land forming a Shasan
were the main beneficiaries of the LaKhiraj lands. As regards the Khandaiti Jagirs in Balasore, other than the large Jagir of the Chandhali Khandait, which had been made into a separate estate with a revenue of rupees 3411 under the name of Thumura Paikali Jagir Bajyasti, the settlement of 1837 recorded 815 of them totaling 4,400 acres of land. Confirmation to the Jagirs of such a large number of Khandaits (swordsmen) Sardar Paiks" (foot soldiers) and Paiks had been given in an attempt to use them as a body of military police under the direct control of the Commissioner.

The Sabait Jagirs were mostly being held by village servants such as Chaukidars (Watchmen), Bhandari (Barber) Dhoba (washermen), Barhai (Carpenter), Kamara (Blocksmith) and Kumbhara (Potter). The land in possession of these village servants accounted for a total of 2,280 acres of land in 1837 settlement.

Apart from these jagirs, a number of miscellaneous jagirs under the patronage of the Zamindars were also being held by (1) Bethia Bauri (Labourers bound to render service when called upon), (2) Bhat (Village bards), (3) Nagarda Bajadar (drum beaters), (4) Turia Bharangiya (trumpeters), (5) Mohuria Sararchi (Flute players), (6) Mangatjan (dancing girls), (7) Dihidar and Simandar (Keeper of the marches), (8) Gaurs (Village cow hards), (9) Baishnabs (religious mendicants), (10) Adhikari (head
priests of temples), (11) Madhia Brahmins (ceremonial assistants) and (12) Baruas (a village headman found only in north Balasore).

**Cultivating Tenures**

The actual cultivating tenures which bore the weight of the entire agrarian edifice were of two principal classes i.e. the thani and the pahi.

The thani or fixed cultivator held his homestead land rent-free and paid for his arable holding a fixed rate of rent apart from carrying the burden of all extra abwa Cesses. Andrew Sterling, who was Collector of Balasore, stated in 1832 that “sometimes the Burden became so heavy, and so far outweighed the advantages of a thani raiyat’s position that many of them were driven to give up their local habitation and name and became pahi raiyats in places where the condition of life were less burdensome”. The 30 years settlement of 1837 granted patta to the thani cultivator but did not ameliorate his condition. Commissioner Mills candidly admitted in 1847 that with pressure of population steadily increasing on land, the thani patta became marketable commodity. In times of distress, the thani cultivator often resorted to sell his ‘patta’ to persons who were willing to pay a price for such right as the transfer might give them. In Balasore, out of the 836 average number of transfers per annum, 45 were bought by Mahajans (money lenders), 139 by
Zamindars, 453 by proprietary tenure holders, 136 by raiyats and 63 by others.

Pahi raiyats, originally meant non-resident peasants cultivating lands in villages other than their own. In course of time the term came to be used for all lands that were neither thani nor privileged. Henry Rickettes, the Collector of Balasore wrote in reply to the queries of the Board of Revenue in 1831 that in Balasore interchange of pattas and Kabuliyats was very rare with any class of raiyats, but in practice pahi raiyats frequently held for years at an unvarying rent, and that self-interest prevented undue exaction on the part of the land lord, though no length of possession was considered to confer any right of occupancy and when the land was wanted by a thani and Pahi tenant had to give it up.

As regards the Pahi rights, the 1837 settlement laid down that "Pattas should never be given by the assessing officer to Pahi cultivator" as "such a proceeding necessarily create a false and mischievous impression of a right of occupancy". Thus the settlement left the great mass of Pahi cultivators rightless and the whole of Pahi land virtually in charge of the Zamindars.

Act X of 1859 introduced the new method of recognising the right of Pahi raiyats who had held their lands continuously for 12 years, but as it was observed in Balasore, the raiyats were either ignorant of their
right or were not strong enough to get them enforced. The poorer Pahi raiyat, of course, was no more than a mere tenant-at-will. In Balasore, the 1837 settlement recorded the area under such holding to be 219,000 acres, which due to machinations of the Zamindars to increase their area of nichas, grew tremendously in subsequent years.

Non-Cultivating Tenures

Chandinadars belonging to the Teli, Bania and other artisan and labouring castes who had no arable land, paid rent for home-stead holdings only. The term implied inferiority, as on this class fell the obligation of supplying forced labour or postage when required by any Government official.

Marginalisation of Peasantry

On the whole, the revenue policy of the British administration ensured a miserable existence for the numerous cultivators and created a pyramidal structure of privileged categories on them who thrived and acquired higher socio-economic status at the cost of the former. The 30 years settlement helped the rapid expansion in cultivation and the consequent growth in the production of rice which found an easy way out of the district. Balasore being a maritime district possessing 7 ports which were originally constituted by a Special Act of 1858, accounted for most export of rice through the sea routes. Out of this export, Calcutta alone had a whopping
share of 98.5 per cent. On land, the export of rice from Balasore also headed towards Bengal through the Trunk road. The mart of Banghal near Contai in Midnapur was the principal emporium sought by the inland traffic. The natural beneficiaries of this burgeoning trade were the British Government in the first place and the Zamindars and traders in that order. Contrary to the claims of the District collector that the export added "to the wealth and to the general resources of the country", it pushed the economy and the people of the district unretrievably into the trap of the metro-centric colonial economy.

Neglect of the Social Sector

The colonial government while it concentrated in furthering its economic interests, thoroughly neglected the social sector. The enormous collection of revenue was not correspondingly invested in education, public work, and health care even in its fraction. Resultingly, the society remained entrenched in its medieval social psyche whereas outsiders mainly from Bengal took the advantage of the opening up of the governmental sector for jobs as amlas. Not until the all-devouring famine, the administration thought seriously about co-opting any section of the larger Oriya society.

Review of Literature

After the British conquest of Orissa the initial attempts to write her history had been undertaken by the
scholar-administrators of the East India Company. This
had partly been necessitated by the pains of governance
which the company faced in the early decades of its rule
over a comparatively "unsettled" country. The first
administrator to take up the task was Andrew Sterling. He
had associated himself in various capacities with the
early administration of Orissa and hence had evinced keen
interest in studying the complicated issues of revenue
administration in depth. His book, *An Account of Cuttack
or Orissa proper* published from London in 1841, opened up
avenues of research in geographical, historical and
statistical aspects of Orissa. John Beames' *Memoir of a
Bengal Civilian*, (London 1961), was the second work on
Orissa of this genre. But more pertinent from the point
of view of the present thesis is his note on *The history
of Orissa under the Mohammed, Marathas and English rule
which he had written as Chapter II of a Manual of the
district of Balasore where he was Collector from 1869 to
1873. But unfortunately the note ends abruptly with a
narrative upto 1828 "due to the most unfortunate loss of
the concluding pages of Beames manuscript while passing
through the press". Around the same time William Wilson
Hunter wrote comprehensively about Orissa in his *The
Annals of Rural Bengal: and published them in two volumes
from Calcutta in 1872 under the title, *Orissa or the
Vicissitudes of an Indian Province under Native and
British Rule. It was by far the most systematic work on contemporary Orissa. Coupled with his, *A Statistical Account of Bengal. The Districts of Puri, Cuttack and Balasore* W.W. Hunter's work in a sense laid the basis for future historians to further their historical investigation. In 1873 the Commissioner of Orissa of the time, George Toynbee contributed to this early endeavour by publishing *A sketch of the History of Orissa, 1803-1828* from Calcutta. It is to this work of Toynbee that subsequent researchers owe a great deal for rendering a critical appraisal of the British occupation of the province, the administration's measures to suppress the early popular uprisings and its civil and revenue administration up to 1828. Earlier, Commissioner Henry Rickette's *Report on the District of Pooree and Balasore*, also published from Calcutta in 1859, which actually formed part of the *Records of the Government of Bengal, No.XXX*, had incorporated enough information on the state of company administration in both the districts.

Barring these pioneers who had been singularly animated by a sense of purpose, a host of other Britons also, contributed to this nascent body of Historical literature on Orissa by writing their memoirs and monographs. Cap. S.C. Macpherson (1842) and Maj. John Campbell added dimensions to 19th century Orissan historiography by putting across their military exploits
in the Khond land wherein they described the social customs of the (19th century) Khonds of high land Orissa. W.F.B. Laurie, J.J. Feggs and Amos Button wrote their brand of historical treatises disparaging the indigenous socio-religious institutions of Orissa. Their works primarily focused on the spread of Christian missionary activities in the province.

So far as the characteristics of this genre is concerned, the twin objective of (i) perpetuating the myth of the benevolence and superiority of British administration over previous despotic rule of native tyrants and (ii) bequeathing a dependable chronicle of the past for future administrators to build upon it the colonial superstructure, is writ large in all these accounts. No doubt, there was an element of sheer curiosity in knowing the so-called terra incognita about a newly conquered territory and its people. But the very subjective nature of the quest put the company historians in a bind of the tinged popular traditions and anecdotes. It was obvious, therefore, for one writer to find "inaccuracies" in the "account" of another.

However, in between them these writers created an atmosphere of historical awareness where the nationalist school of historiography found its most fertile ground.

Initially there was an approach of swimming along with the current. As early as 1869 and 1870 when
Fakirmohan wrote from Balasore in Oriya *The History of India* in two volumes “it matched the broad outline of the colonialist’s perception of Indian History”\(^{106}\). But it was also the time when the emergent creative intelligentsia in Orissa was imbued with the idea of elevating the Oriyas to be worthy of a distinct political identity. This purpose was amply demonstrated in the works of Pyarimohan Acharya, Krupasindhu Mishra and Jagabandhu Singh, all of whom wrote in Oriya about the history of Orissa for School students and general public alike\(^{107}\). There was a pre-planned but admirable endeavour on the part of these early nationalist scholars to disseminate their knowledge among the people of Orissa\(^{108}\). Under such circumstances, not surprisingly, the history they wrote was also churned out of innumerable native traditions and was replete with the ideas of intense nationalism and philosophical predilections.

In the post-independence period, Orissan history found the true idiom of modern historiography. The task was greatly facilitated by the collection of various source materials by the Orissa State Museum and Archives in Bhubaneswar. Specially, during the last two decades of the present century a number of scholars like H.K. Mahatab, B.C. Ray, K.C. Jena, K.M. Patra, J.K. Samal, B.S. Das, N.K. Sahu, G.C. PattanaikJena, P. K. Mishra, P. C. Das, N. K. Jit etc., have considerably enhanced the
quality and content of 19th-20th century Orissan historiography by undertaking specialised research on the political, economic, cultural and administrative history of Orissa.

However, not much serious work has been undertaken on the social history of this period. The only scholars who can be said to have made some contribution in this area are F.G. Bailey, L.K. Mahapatra and Vidyananda Patnaik. Bailey's works include, Politics and Social change in Orissa in 1959, (Barkeley: 1963) and 'Tribe, Caste and Nation: A Study of Political Activity and Change in Highland Orissa (Manchester; 1960). In a sense, it was Bailey who set off the process of systematic discourse on Orissan society in academic parlance. Since then a good deal of studies in the form of research articles have appeared in different academic as well as non-academic journals. Scholars interspersed over a variety of disciplines have contribute in their own way to illumine the various facets of modern Orissan society. But constricted as these are in scope and area covered, the studies have not crystallised into standard works.

Research Purpose

Paucity of research on Social History of Orissa is one reason that prompted me to undertake the present work on Social Stratification and Change in Colonial and Post-Colonial Orissa: A Study with special reference to the
District of Balasore, 1865-1965. The other reason is the typical experience of Orissa borne out of experiments under local conditions by the British regime that makes the work so pertinent.

Known as the "Lower Bengal Province" under the British rule, the three coastal districts of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri, "the home of the Oriya race", formed a more or less homogeneous unit. The history of this unit was not quite far-removed from each other. Nevertheless, the district of Balasore had some added features. Since the early decade of 17th century the district had provided important opening to European trading companies into the eastern zone of the Indian sub-continent. Till the second half of the 18th century when the pre-eminence of Balasore declined due to the shifting of the English East India Company's trading concerns to Hugli and Calcutta it remained the hub of manufacturing and business activities. A port-town Balasore was, therefore, the first to experience the impact of western commercial interests on Orissa's coast. In view of its geographical location the district also witnessed substantial in and out migration of people during the colonial period. Besides, its proximity to Bengal made it the cockpit of socio-political resurgence in Orissa during the 19th and 20th centuries. Put together, these features provided for me possibilities for a study of social stratification and change of this district during the colonial period.
Periodisation

The decision of spreading the topic over a century between 1865 and 1965 has political and social significance. Although Orissa came under colonial occupation in 1803, yet 1865 marked the real turning point in her history. The change in the tact of colonial administration and the growth of a middle class intelligentsia in the aftermath of the devastating famine of 1866 which devoured almost one third of the total population of coastal Orissa, heralded a period of momentous socio-political process. That process partially culminated on 1st April 1936 when Orissa was made into a separate linguistic province in British-India. Thereafter Orissa marked the beginning of another phase of socio-political and economic transformation which only took a definitive and cognisable shape in the post-independence era. Electoral politics and state-sponsored development economics broadly characterised this phase of transformation. Qualitatively therefore, this period stood out in sharp contrast in the pre-independent colonial experience. Hence, in order to have wider perspective on both the colonial and post-colonial social structure I considered it prudent to incorporate the first two five year plan periods in my study terminating with 1965.
Scope of Study

As regards approach, the present study has the compulsion of not conforming entirely to the empirical module as is the standard norm in socio-anthropological researches. Primarily historical in its orientation, the work tries to analyse the transformation of Orissan society at large and Balasore in particular in two phases i.e. colonial and post-colonial. In other words, in the first instance my study is an exploration into the journey of Orissan society from the pre-colonial to the colonial strangle-hold which mired by the visage of an alien administrative system neither subscribed to the native ethical norms nor allowed the full-flowering of social personality of the people. Secondly, the study deals with the transformation of the colonial society into a socio-politically conscious one which was made possible on account of a fresh agglomeration of caste and class groups in response to the colonial rule on the one hand and the growth of a renaissance spirit on the other. Finally, the thesis focuses on the post-colonial independent society to take stock of the gains of the cherished goals of independence. In this work, therefore, no necessity has arisen to take a broadside against the well-accounted political history of the time. The effort rather has concentrated on the social map with its changing contours.
in clear harmony with the development of political history.

Sources

The sources for this work are ample and may be categorised as under.

(I) The published and unpublished government records, reports and monographs: Among these, the "reports of the Commission appointed to inquire into the famine of Bengal and Orissa in 1866", "annual general administration reports of the Orissa division", "reports of the Commissioner appointed to inquire into certain matters in connection with the Orissa canal" "final report on the survey and settlement on the province of Orissa, 1892 to 1900"; "annual reports on the survey, and settlement of the province of Orissa", Bihar and Orissa Government records in the form of "review of the administration and development of the province of Orissa"; "reports on the working of the municipality and other local self government"; Government of Orissa, "History of services of Gazetted and other officers", "annual and quinquennial report on the progress of education in Orissa"; and, Government of Madras "report on the manufacture of salt system and administration of salt revenue of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri districts" are important. These along with other relevant records I have
consulted at the National Archives and Library, New Delhi and the Orissa State Archives and Library, Bhubaneswar.

The Original administrative papers copies of which are in possession of the West Bengal Government Record Room pertaining to the correspondence between the local administrators and central administration at Calcutta have been widely consulted by scholars to reconstruct the administrative and economic history of colonial Orissa. I have adopted some of the conclusions arrived at by these scholars as basic accepted hypotheses to analyse for myself their social implications.

(2) Gazetteers, Census Reports; Caste and Tribe studies.

The Orissa Division Gazetteer published in the Provincial series of the Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1905; the Balasore District Gazetteers published in the Bengal District Gazetteer series of 1907 as also by the Bihar and Orissa Government in 1915 from Patna along with the decennial census reports published since 1881 and various caste and tribe studies done under the auspices of the Anthropological Survey of India as well as by the individual social anthropologists have enabled me to reconstruct the demographic profile of the district of Balasore in between 1865 and 1965. Besides, I have benefited from the archival records which have furnished
me with the details of administrative measures undertaken and official view expressed on the native society of Orissa during the high-noon of colonialism.

(3) Contemporary Publications in English and Vernacular languages:

Since the second half of the 19th century, Orissa witnessed a spurt in the publication of a large number of Journals and newspapers which relentlessly chronicled the socio-political and economic life of the people with dexterity and zeal. Among newspapers The Samaj, The Prajatantra; among periodicals, Utkala Dipika, Utkala Putra. The Mouyurbhanj Chronicle, Mukura, Bodhadayini ebam Baleshwara Sambada Bahika, Sambada Kaumudi etc., were prominent. But only some of these valuable works which are preserved in the ‘Utkala Sahitya Samaj’ at Cuttack and the Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar have enabled me to recapture the native perception of contemporary society and times. My effort has consistently been to pick on both official records and contemporary publications for a clearer understanding of the social dynamics of the period.

(4) Autobiographies, Biographies and Literary Works of Oriya creative writers:

The voluminous works of contemporary literatures provide an extension of the picture that is partially gleaned from the periodicals and newspapers. In history
there already exists a tradition of biographical approach for historical reconstruction. It has been accepted as a dependable method especially while redrawing the social portrait.

In the context of colonial Orissa the yearning of the leaders for freedom from the colonial yoke and their effort to rejuvenate the society in that process have found a palpable depiction in the creative literature of the period.

This creativity history stands testimony to the fact that when society was gasping against colonial challenges and life sulking under duress, leaders coming from a cross-section of society metamorphosed into inspired writers. There was no time nor did they have the inclination to indulge in ideological luxury. Their effort was solely focused on the alleviation of human spirit by reflecting the social pangs and aspirations of the time.

It was not an exercise in one-up-manship nor was there visible any diatribe against the colonial regime in the contemporary creative literature.

The autobiography of Fakirmohan Senapati, Godavarish Mishra, Nilakantha Das, Marekrishna Mahatab; the biographies of Madhusudan Das, Gopabandhu Chaudhury and the collected works of these leaders and several other writers provide an innate impression on their times.
(5) **Post-independent sources:**

Along with the population profile recorded in the post-independence census reports, the state and district Gazetteers, statistical reports and reviews of the Five Year Plans which have been published by the Government of Orissa as public documents, have provided me with the essential material for evaluating the post-independence social scenario.

(6) Lastly, for proper appreciation of the social dynamics I have had discussions and interviews with a cross-section of inhabitants in the district of Balasore. This exercise has enabled me to put my research in right perspective as many of the inhabitants both literate and illiterate interviewed by me are themselves the living witness to the social drama that took place in the first half of the 20th century Orissa.

**CHAPTERISATION**

This thesis is organised in six chapters.

In the **Introduction** I have made an attempt to trace the history of Balasore since ancient times till 1865 along with broad political lines. Without embroiling the narrative in any controversy I have laid emphasis on the socio-cultural aspect of historical progression which formed the basis for the consolidation of Orissan social structure during the medieval period. After 1803 an
entirely new epoch started in the history of Orissa. Here I have tried to show how the exploitative attitude inherent in the colonial system of governance brought about significant changes in the pre-colonial social structure. An accentuation of class interest was its direct consequence. Besides, I have reviewed of the 19th and 20th century historical literature pertaining to Orissa and also indicated the scope, the rationale of periodisation and the various sources of my present research.

In the second chapter, Social Stratification in Balasore in Socio-Historical Perspective, I have made an endeavour to present the geographical and the demographic profile of the district mainly on the basis of the findings of the decennial census' and various settlement reports. Here caste has been adopted as the basic component of social structure with its static and dynamic characteristics. Besides, other variables of stratification have been analysed to outline the inequities which developed between different strata in the post-famine period of Orissan society. The chapter also takes into account the basis of caste-tribe interaction in the district of Balasore which evidently formalised the process of acculturisation among some tribal groups. The coming of the British brought along missionaries and a new class of non-Oriya immigrants into Orissa. In this
context the chapter seeks to find out the placement of this new class of non-Oriya immigrants in the Orissan society, who came into the district after colonial occupation and the activities of the missionaries who exerted great influence on the native society. Finally, the chapter reviews the overall social condition of the district within the larger framework of the Orissan society.

The Third chapter, The Years of Transformation: 1865 to 1947 reviews the various exogenous forces that brought about a dynamic social change in the district of Balasore as also in the whole of Orissa. The period was particularly significant on two counts. First, because of the cumulative result of over a century’s mal-administration Orissa suffered grievously in the great famine of 1865-66. The chapter reviews the long run up to the Famine and both the British as well as the native attitude towards this great calamity in order to lend focus on the post-famine period of change. Secondly, the chapter evaluates the measures that the guilt-stricken administration took to ameliorate the situation after 1866.

From the side of the administration a number of measures like the introduction of the mass means of communication, creation of definite rights for tenants on land, initiation of the people into English education,
setting up of law courts and health service facilities, all in the aftermath of the great famine of 1866, breached the comparative isolation of the Orissan society. However, everything that the colonial administration effected was not in the best interest of the people. Measures such as the incentives given to foreign products at the cost of the domestic industry and enterprise, increasing commercialisation of local economy adversely affecting the the people, allowing the immigrant official class to create a ring of sub-colonial strangle-hold etc., thus created conditions for the Orissan society to respond in equal measure. The tremendous growth of socio-political consciousness in the Orissan society soon enough culminated in a political movement for the amalgamation of all scattered Oriya-speaking areas into a separate province. Thus the chapter along with chapter four tries to see social change through this dialectic of colonial interests versus native response.

The Fourth Chapter Literature, Socio-Political Consciousness, and Change deals with the indigenous forces of social change which Orissa witnessed during the period under review. The whole chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section deals with the early attempts of social reforms through the rise of Mahima cult and the spread of Brahmo movement in Orissa. This section also deals with the upsurge of creative intellectual
activity during the second half of the 19th century. Growing out of the Oriya language movement, this creative phenomenon not only gave birth to the native press but also produced a large body of vernacular literature which reflected copiously the contemporary social scenario as well as the emerging aspirations of the various social classes. This phase was spread out between 1965 and 1905.

The second section encompasses the phase of intense socio-political activity built over the foundations laid during the preceding decades. This phase started more accurately in 1903 with the formation of the Utkal Sammilani and continued well into the 1930s. The most significant achievement of this phase was the formation of Orissa into a separate linguistic province in 1936. Apart from this overall political achievement, the movement for integration of the scattered Oriya speaking areas into a separate administrative unit also brought to light the inherent class contradictions that had grown in the 19th-20th century Orissan society.

The third section deals with the phase which may be traced appreciably to the beginning of the 1920s. This phase saw the merger of Orissa's political activity with the mainstream of national freedom struggle in a more symbiotic manner and continued upto 1947 when the country won independence. In between, however, Orissa experienced the effects of the constructive programmes of the Gandhian
movement and the policies of the native Governments which were formed since 1937 in the separate province of Orissa under the provision of the Government of India Act, 1935. The conflicting class interest which had surfaced during the Orissa unification movement were reflected forcefully during this phase in what may be called factionalism within the congress and struggle for office between the Congress and other political formations.

The chapter tries to recapture the facts of all the three phases and analyse their impact from the point of view of stratification in the 19th and 20th century Orissan society.

The Fifth chapter, *Independence and After* endeavours to analyse the post-colonial social matrix. It has to be noted that the post-independence years were momentous for the whole of India as also for Orissa. Specially, this period marked the beginning of a new era of planned economy based on the themes of poverty alleviation and development. The system of parliamentary democracy introduced universal adult franchise and gave each Indian a sense of dignity and scope for participation in the nation building process. This initiated a process of social transformation by facilitating intra-regional
democratic politics. Under the guidance of the Directive Principles of the State Policy the Government also introduced various social legislations which contributed to the gradual transformation of the society. In this context, a closer scrutiny of the development politics makes one to ask a few questions. Did all these measures break the strangle-hold of the colonial social structure? If yes, then how and if no, then why? This chapter strives to find answers to these questions.

In the Sixth and concluding chapter, my findings regarding the impact of change on the general condition of the district in particular and the society of Orissa in general has been discussed.
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