A detailed study of the peasant movements enables the scholars to analyse a series of peasant revolts that took place in the nineteenth century Orissa. It is not enough to study the specific historical causes, potentiality or otherwise of the leadership formation, organisational set up of the rebels and specific historical purpose these nineteenth century peasant unrests in Orissa had served. The peasant movements were always started in the transitional periods of development. They were led by agriculturists, sometimes joined by urban labourers to establish agricultural heaven land.

1. Nature of the peasant resistance movements

The study should be carried under the following four categories. First, the Biblical inspiration guided the scholars to show the reasons of tribal unrests as unchanged pastoral folk demanding the revival of a golden past while they were food gathers not knowing cultivation. By the influence of priests and tribal chiefs they resisted the outcome of the foreign rule to intervene in their religious rites and politico-economic organisation. So the movements of the Kols, Santhals and Bhuyans came under this line who resisted changes of their socio-economic frame work for generations together. Second, some historians refused to
accept these revolts under different historical settings
as slave revolts of Spartacus and the plebeian revolts in
Rome, quite different from the serf revolts in England and
that under John Huss of Bohemia. It may be accepted that
each revolt acted under certain purpose to clear the way
for next historical development. Third, the political cha-
acters of these revolts blind the eyes of scholars to under-
stand the social context of these revolts. The historians
attribute some non-existent phenomenon as they dissected from
specific social complex. Thus in pre-capitalist colonial
economy communist or trade union movements were unthinkable
which the scholars are tempted to attribute in course of
their analysis of a particular revolt on the backdrop of the
capitalist economy. In Pabna revolt of the nineteenth century
Bengal, utopian socialism has been attempted to be discovered.
Each peasant movements in the nineteenth century Orissa in
the context of the present study is the outcome of changes and
continuity in socio-economic institutions like (i) Non-revenue paying land systems, (ii) Meriah sacrifice (iii) Tri-
bal marriage system giving rise to internecine warfare among
the tribal peasantry (iv) Each peasant revolt contains spe-
cific potentiality of leadership and has organisational set
up in the community, caste, class and accumulated resentment
against their socio-economic interests. Fourthly, each pea-
sant revolt serves specific historical development in the
traditional era as such one resistance movement can be
differentiated from the other even though two parallel revolts
may take place under a particular setting. One revolt can inspire the peasants of the other area to revolt and the leaders may help the other revolt to mature for an outburst but the character and the specific results of each peasant movement may remain invariably distinct and different.

Therefore, the peasant movements of all times broke out when the economic interest of the peasant was threatened, they were expropriated by a ruling community by taking away the surplus value of the land. Thus in the case study of the nineteenth century Orissa the tribal peasantry in the Garjat areas were forced to pay feudal dues, land rents, extra imposts which were often resented by them. But in a changing agrarian economy which witnessed first rise in prices, changing mode of money circulation, now economic activities of the Raj associated with modernisation of administrative machinery and undertaking of works of public utility and attempts of the feudal rulers to enhance absolute volume of rent both in cash and kind together with an attempt to revive the feudal dues in service would be automatically resented. The extreme poverty was not the cause of the revolts. Being inspired by the utopian ideas of a possible revival of a golden past where no tax machinery would threaten their existence unattainable the peasant tribals revolted for the utopia which can be discovered in the context of analysis of each revolt.
It is easy to analyse the contradictions in the nature of the peasant revolts occurred in nineteenth century Orissa. The peasants wanted to revive the past glory which accelerated the process of emerging economic system, marked the end of feudal system of land tenure and heralded the dawn of a capitalist system in the agrarian sector with the emerging feudal elements in the society. All these things were stipulated by the colonial character of the Raj. Thus the revolts occurred in the nineteenth century in Orissa, followed a different course of development than what could be found in the case of Japan and the United States of America.

It is futile to believe that the later revolts had drawn sustenance from the earlier revolts or revolts caused outside like those of the Kol peers or of the chuars and Santhals of Bengal and Bihar. The common factor for a successful revolt is the ability of the traditional leaders to lead the followers, when the socio-economic interests of the peasants were threatened. The success of revolts also depended upon the organisational set up through village community.

It is to be presumed that the common features of the peasant revolts in the nineteenth century India remained buried in the colonial context. There were frequent changes of revenue policy leading to the enhancement of rent of peasants, who had actually no fixity of tenure. The British Raj in order to run the administration fully depended upon ...
The enhancement of rent also was associated with the formation of usury capital. So the poor peasants easily fell into the alluring trap of the rural money lenders and in the long process were unable to repay their debt accelerating the process of pauperisation. And those indebted farmers found it difficult to obtain seed, money for effecting improvement in agriculture. The orthodox historians had contended that the pauperisation of peasants could have been checked by providing employment through accelerating the process of industrialisation. But it could not be accomplished because of the restriction and demand constraints and due to an imbalance between the agricultural raw materials and the revenue extortion by the alien administrative machinery.

The financial and social privileges of the class of traditional leaders like the Naiks or the Paik community had been threatened with the resumption of their non-revenue paying Paikana and Ghatwali lands. The old Zamindaries failed to cope with capitalist interest of the Raj, as a result of which they departed from their estates when they became defaulters. The new class of Zamindars, believed in high land lordism because of increased expenditure in tax collection which enhanced the volume of revenue and lavishly spent in socio-religious rites. Sometimes the Zamindars fell in arrear due to their frugal habit and their estates were auctioned for default of revenue payment.
The contradiction between development and destitution in the colonial economy erupted peasants unrest changing the life style of rural eastern India and the Garjat areas of Orissa could not escape from being influenced by the general trend of the historical forces developing in eastern India.

2. Historical significance of the movements

The historians have tried to explain the rebellion of the paiks directed against the maladministration of the British Officials and native subordinates. They rose as a body against the British. They had suffered the most on account of the short-sighted policy of the government. Since 1817 in Orissa a series of peasant resistance movements took place. There were the revolts of the paiks in Khurda in 1817.

All these resistance movements were undertaken by the old Zamindari militia of the paiks because the British revenue experiments led to resumption of their paikan lands resulting in their loss of prestige and financial privileges in the agrarian society. The revolts were, no doubt, popular as the general population lent support to these resistance movements. It would be tempting to aggregate these movements with the Sepoy Mutiny of 1856-57 or to analyse the nature of these revolts as the first spark of national liberation movement of India. Like the Sepoy rebels the Khurda paiks
urged the reluctant Khurda Raja to lend his support to the movement. Like Surendra Sai of Sambalpur its leader Jagabandhu Vidyadhar, who in 1803 supported the British annexation of Orissa to legalise his landed possessions forcibly occupied during the Maratha regime, only turned a national leader of the rebels when his possessions were sold out callously by the Bengali speculator.

They resisted the British policy of resumption of Paikan lands and committed atrocities over tax collectors and newly settled landholders. Expansion of the tribal settlements consequent to the population growth led to the intensification of exploitation of the State machinery over the tribal communities since the Mughal period. Introduction of money economy, development of trade and village industries consequent to the Mughal revenue settlements led to the immigration of an urbanised non-agricultural population of Bengal and Orissa into these tribal societies. They introduced land revenue system of Bengal, new currency, weights and measures and money-lending business into their villages which unsettled their consolidated but dynamic tribal social organisation in the region. The resistance against the invading system of exploitation of this urbanised entrepreneur mahajan class found articulate expression when the British rule was extended to these regions during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Of course, some of them were Hindu Bengalees. But it would be a simpli-
fication of a complex situation to call the resistance movements as tribal protests against the Hinduisation policy of the Hindu Bengalee invaders to their society.

It had been seen that the people of Orissa resented the harsh treatment of the darogahs, unauthorised pecuniary extortions by the petty officials of the Company, restrictions imposed by the Government on salt, textile and other internal trade and commercial activities of the tribal communities which led to the flourishing condition of smuggling, eventual suppression of internal trade on the plea to suppress smuggling which dealt a death blow to the indigenous textile, salt, sugar and oil manufactures. The protest of the tribal people of Orissa, was a blow to the fast developing money lending business conducted by the Mahajans and other alien officials connected with the British bureaucracy.

The Kol Sardars, the Khond tribal leaders and the rulers of Bamanghatti, Kol peers supplied leadership to the rebels. No doubt, like Jagabandhu Bidyadhar of Khurda or Surendra Sai of Sambalpur these sardars and naeks had their personal pecuniary interests. They wanted to revive the feudal privileges, very nearing the condition of feudal anarchy which they had been enjoying during the declining days of the Mughal rule. With the powerful support of the militia cultivators they were expanding their taxable capacity by encroaching upon the neighbouring revenue paying
lands and conniving at converting the revenue paying settled lands into non-revenue paying ghatwali lands. Members of the tribal communities like the Larka Kols and Bhumij peoples remained subordinate to these rebel Bhuniyas, Sardars of Mundas because they could receive easy settlement on the cultivated and cleared lands after each internecine warfare was over. The British Raj aimed at restoring law and order among the tribal communities only to intensify exploitation over them by suppressing their last limit of power of resistance against the superimposed state machinery.

In the ultimate analysis the colonial system bore harshly on the tribal communities who—with a sensitivity born out of isolation and with a relatively intact social mechanism of control revolted more often with outrageous violence than any other peasant community in the eighteenth century agrarian India. The official records scattered over a vast spectrum, refer to acts of depredations and so-called outbreaks of violence or uprising the character of which has yet to be analysed. The scholar would have to keep in mind the time frame of these tribal unrests and peasant resistance movements because there is a tendency not only to regard all tribal movements as a piece but also to see the shadow of a movement behind every sporadic acts of violence. As the structure of the tribal society responded to the changing administration so, too, had the character of the regional
revolts had metamorphosised. But these unrests, coincided with the rise, expansion and the consolidation of the British Raj in Orissa, assumed the garb of resistance movements. Resistance is inherent in all responses to the challenge of the invading systems and production relations but during this phase of the British rule it was spontaneous, widespread and sporadic. The peasantised tribals, no doubt, played a dominant role, by no means, an exclusive role in it; there were large sections of the non-tribals who also joined hands, lending the movements the character of a regional upsurge. The movements were led by the traditional landed and military aristocracy who had been dispossessed of their property and were thrown out of this occupation by the new land revenue system, evangelisation of lergies and humanitarian measures adopted by the new landlords and government officials and land-grabbers and exploiters through money-lending and trades, all of whom were to be thrown out in a violent upsurge. This formulation was applied to all the resistance movements of nineteenth century Orissa.

It is equally tempting to equate these peasant uprisings with the peasant wars in Germany of 1525 in order to emphasise the revolutionary significance of the movements following similar studies of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Marx described the German uprising as the most radical fact of German history. But the Jacquerie in France (1357), the peasant revolt in England (1381) the Hussite movement in
Bohemia (1419-37) and the peasant wars in Germany (1525) took place in different socio-economic and historical settings. These risings synchronised with the decline of feudalism in Europe and signalled the rise of a capitalist bourgeoisie society. Lenin also brought out the revolutionary significance of the peasant uprisings in Russia. The uprisings of Stephan Razin (1667-71) and those led by Pugachev (1773-75) were directed against the effete survival of feudalism and oppressive serfdom. In Orissa the socio-economic conditions were different and corresponded to a different stage of social development. As in China like the Taiping Rebellion of 1850-65 these uprisings took place on conditions of colonial domination. They were directed against the feudal anarchy of the period which tied up with the colonialism of the British Raj. These movements proved popular and radical to the extent that the revolts represented the anti-colonial and anti-feudal contents.

The British revenue experiments resulting in the farming system and the permanent settlement provoked not only popular discontent but also attracted sharp criticism from the British philanthropists. As an instance, Alexander Dow and Henry Pettullo criticised the agrarian policy of the Company's Government and traced the decline of Orissa from the beginning of the British rule which was equated with the Roman rule of Europe. Opponents of Warren Hastings like Philip Francis, advocated of Laissezfaire economics like
Adam Smith and liberal historians like James Stuart Mill vehemently criticised the revenue experiments of the Company as tyranny and misgovernment. But these philanthropists did not want termination of British colonialism in Orissa. It had been pointed out by the Marxist writers that they wanted to put an end to colonialism based on merchant capitalism. To them short-term farming settlements were the manifestation of merchant capitalism while permanent settlement was the victory of industrial capitalism in Great Britain which brought termination of the trade monopoly of East India Company in India in 1833. Under the permanent settlement, Marx observed, "the condition of the ryots were humbled and oppressed still more and the whole series of local risings of ryots were marked against the land-lords". Following Marx the Indian Marxist historians analysed the peasant revolts in Rangpur (1833) and Pabna (1873) as the resistance movements of the peasants against the new landlords who "belonged to a section nouveaux riches", grown rich by taking advantage of trends which were accelerated by the early British occupation of Bengal.

To them in the period of dominance of individual capitalism, the peasant was invariably the worst victim of the colonial oppressions. The resistance of the peasants, however, took varied forms ranging from mass desertion, pertaking of the character of passive resistance and rising upto vident revolts. Analysing in this light, it would appear that the Paik and Chuar revolts were the peasant resistance movements
against new landlordism. This was the creation of the colonial rule of Great Britain dictated by the industrial capitalism which spread its wings all the world over. Thus the paik rebellion was the part of the long series of revolts which took place all over the world against British capitalism.

But still the question remains, was the Khurda revolt of 1817 a conscious attempt of the disgruntled paiks to terminate the colonial rule in Orissa? Analysing the event it would appear that there was no unionism like the Pabna league of Bengal in 1873. Like the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, it was essentially a feudal reaction of some disgruntled anarchical elements in the society who had no idea of ushering in a new industrial phase in the economic history of Orissa. The movements were neither democratic nor widely popular and this explains the easy suppression of the movements on the point of the British bayonets. But like all other peasant movements of the period, the suppression of the revolts, terminated the feudal phase of the economy and laid the foundation, however, indirectly of a capitalist phase in the region. The permanent settlement in 1793 and the Mahalwari settlement of 1837 may be described as the capitalist device of a colonial ruling machinery to introduce the norms of capitalism and British finance capital in the agrarian sector of Orissa. This is proposition which demands adequate studies.
3. **Some aspects of the peasantised tribal movements**

It is generally accepted that change in a social formation comes through change in tools and technique of production where primary producers play a dominant role. Agriculture being the main means of livelihood, peasantised tribals through ages played a vital role in changing the production relation in class alliance with the artisans and petty commodity manufacturers. But in a revolutionary situation the peasantised tribals are often relegated to the background by a small segment of the population who control land, often tools of production like cattle power, ploughs, fertilisers and other inputs together with the socio-political institutions in order to control labour power and the output from agriculture, village crafts in the shape of petty commodity productions.

Before the advent of the capitalist system of production in the world, in India to be specific, in Garhjat Orissa in particular, this community of controllers of land, labour and output either emerged from within the social formation as the by-product of the production relation or invaded from outside reinforced by army and an ideology to conquer. This is manifested in the invasions of the imperial Gangas, Gajapatis and since the sixteenth century by the Mughals, the Bhonsle Marathas from Nagpur and lastly the Garhjat Orissa with her peasantised tribals were overrun by the Company's government in collaboration with the Oriya-Bengali elite groups from coastal Orissa. Since man's
instinct prompts him to defend his very existence, he as a community resists the insider controller or outsider aggressor attempting to control land, labour and means of cultivation to appropriate his output of labour. The peasantised tribals thus hated the insider as well as outsider Dikus.

Some social scientists opine that peasantry constituting the bulk of the population had revolutionary potential which may manifest itself through the structure of power alignments and class alliances in a given society at a particular period of time. But the cultivators themselves may not take leadership at the phase of a revolutionary leap for changing the social formation when situation ripens for a change in tools of production leading to changing production relation which determines position of each labourer in a particular social stratification.

Some contemporary Marxist social scientists have debated on the question of revolutionary potential of the peasantry particularly coming out of the womb of tribalism when the dynamic forces of social change occurs. The suggestions of Paul Sweezy and Theodore Shanin that historical forces compel the segment of peasantry to assume social leadership for change, throw many relevant questions on the peasant leadership who constituted the majority in the population and on their participation in a period of social change. What kind of social structure and historical background
are conducive to peasant resistance movements against the controllers from within or peasant freedom struggle against aggressor from outside? Why the peasant mobilizations at one time and place leads to peaceful constitutional agitation while at other period and places the movement assumes militant dimensions. The questions become relevant in order to investigate the nature and extent of peasant discontents, resistance and militancy in the nineteenth century Garhjat Orissa at the crucial phase of transition from feudalism to a staunted growth of capitalist land relations. It may be assumed that right for land and bread had been converged within the broad spectrum of freedom struggle, may be localised and parochial in nature, against colonial exploitation of the British Raj.

The genesis of tribal unrests lay in the historical transformation of the tribals into the peaceful cultivators till they felt their position threatened consequent to the crisis engulfing the agrarian economy in the nineteenth century Orissa. The tribal transformation had three stages of development: till the tenth century Orissa witnessed the process of integration of tribal inhabitants within the large Hindu Community, generally termed as 'Sanskritisation'. The second phase marked the peasantisation of the tribals with the expansion of rice cultivation, bamboo based crafts and forest products, of feudal market forces and the consequent process of Oriyanisation as cementing force within the multiplicity of ethnic groups. Since the sixteenth century
the tribal khatriyas championed the myth of 'Sakala kalinga' as a slogan against the Mughal taxation extortion, coloured by religious fanaticism and maximisation of revenue and in defence, the peasantised tribals strove to protect the tribal exclusiveness with emphasis on the Oriya identity against the Maratha fiscal oppression of eighteenth century. Lastly, with the advent of the Company's rule in the early nineteenth century the private property concept knocked down the remnants of communal mode of production as shifting (toila) cultivation, denuding forest uplands were forbidden under the stress of capitalist property relations expressed through revenue settlements. The increased export of agrarian and forest products demanded by the larger capitalist market forces started the process of pauperisation, though not that of depeasantisation of the tribal peasantry because of the availability of vast arable virgin land and vehement demand for enhancing land-rent in cash and produce. The present study of peasant tribal revolts in Garhjat Orissa in the nineteenth century reveals that the unrest of the peasantised tribals were, in fact, resistance against the colonial market economy for regaining their unhistorical and unattainable golden past where no taxation of oppressive state machinery was existent or cultivation process started. This idea developed a detestation against the dikus as organic agents for change in their imperceptible social dynamics. The Millenial dream for the revival of the rural heaven land was, however, common in every peasant society
during the transition from feudalism to capitalism. But these movements in Garhjat Orissa in the nineteenth century were not in any way directed against the traditional landed gentry who exploited the surplus labour of the community to further their individual profit motive collaborating with the emerging but constrained capitalist market forces at a time when the survival of feudal mode of exploitation of unpaid labour was fast decaying. On the other hand, initially they were not opposed to the British Raj not because of their military superiority but because they were alien God-sent white men to protect them from the exploitation of the natives but alien dikus, the Oriya and Bengali middle class from the coastal Orissa.

The assumption underlying the question of peasant tribal unrests is that each movement for land and bread has an epicentre in social stratification. Thus the tribal unrests within the orbit of peasant resistance movements might have appealed only to a segment of the population within the changing agrarian society in the then eastern India, Garhjat Orissa in particular. Such social formation and class structure of the peasant movement in the feudatory states of Orissa under the colonial backdrop may be analysed by using some workable hypotheses on dynamics of changes in the agrarian society in the then Orissa. It would then be possible to assess the role of different agrarian strata in the context of the tribal unrests in the nineteenth
The role of the peasantry, bulk of the population, in the context of each revolutionary leap forward. One such precondition was class alliance. Both Lenin and Mao-Tse-Tung emphasised this precondition of class alliances to succeed in changing the production relation and for capturing political power.

Barrington Moore does not dispute the thesis of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry and argues that the concrete manifestations of this revolutionary potential hinge largely on the structure of power alignments and class alliances in a given society at a particular phase of historical development. Thus in England the peasants proved themselves to be non-revolutionary and were wiped out by rapidly growing rural and industrial capitalism. But in France the peasants aligned themselves with the urban middle class which guaranteed private property, a consideration which was a question of land, bread and livelihood to any peasant and therefore, could make a substantial contribution to the French Revolution.

Generally speaking, in his revolutionary model, Lenin put a special emphasis on the alliance of the peasantry with the urban working force because there was neither a strong middle class nor industrial bourgeoisie in the then Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution.
But this class alliance, however, comes from economic inter-dependence and common ideological perception backed up by changes in production relation. The alliance between the Junker aristocrats of Prussia and the rising bourgeoisie in the Rhenish territories made rapid industrialisation in Germany possible, throwing out the possibility of a working class movement and paved way for a totalitarian political organisation whereas in China the economic dependence between the poor peasantry in the villages with the artisans and working population in the towns who were thrown out from the rural background and had family ties with the villages made the class alignment imperative for the decolonisation resistance movements under the common ideological perception of nationalisation of land and other tools of production. In his Hunan Report Mao wanted to establish the thesis that the agrarian revolution as constituting the main content of the Chinese bourgeoisie democratic revolution was the product of class alliances where peasantry played the role of active force of the revolution.

The other pre-condition, besides class alignments on common economic interdependence reinforced by common ideological perception was the leadership potentiality of some persons or a particular segment of the community under the denomination of a social class with its distinct interest and pressure group. On the eve of the Pakistan movement east Bengal peasantry mostly Muslims, could rise against
the Jotedars or substantial cultivators and landlords who invariably belonged to the Hindu Bhadraloks. Absentee landlords were clearly in a different social category with having alternative means of livelihood in urban centres. The resistance movements of the poor Muslim peasantry against the Hindu Bhadraliks often took the communal colour against the Hindu religious rituals and festivals as the symbol of feudal power and wealth. Invariably the riots in the east and north Bengal countryside since the nineteenth century reaching crisis points in the twentieth century demonstrate that the religious ideology ventillated by the ulemas and Maulavis shaped and gave a meaning to the collective unrests of the peasantry against the symbols of feudal authority by breaking idols in temples and landlord’s houses.

The Chinese revolution and the peasant leadership bring in another pre-condition for making resistance movements a success. This was the total incapacity of the ruling class to tame the changing environment forcing changes in tools of production and production all round demonstrating the military machine to contain that societal change. This was true in the context of colonial transformation both in India and China and particularly in the Garhjat Orissa in the eighteenth century. The challenge of a capitalist transformation in Europe brought in societal changes in Asia forcing colonial subjugation in India and China leading to the sporadic peasant resistance movements led by the feudal elements. Thus class alliance, revolutionary potentiality
of peasantry and utter incapacity of the ruling machinery to tame the forces of change bring in the question of leadership potentiality of a particular segment of the peasantry in term of the category of middle peasantry within the framework of changing power structure and class alliances of the nineteenth century peasantised tribals.

Within the orbit of the role and political operations of different agrarian class 'the middle peasant thesis' has become fairly controversial among the contemporary social scientists. Lenin possibly for the first time defined the concept of middle peasantry in contradistinction to poor peasant and the well-to-do peasant bourgeoisie. Introduction of capitalist farming, development of commercial agriculture in lieu of subsistence peasant farming made the class differentiation imperative. This changing material condition was true not only in Russia but also in Asia particularly in the then Orissa under the colonial framework. The process of pauperisation but not of depeasantisation, resulting from the capitalist development reinforces the extreme ones, namely the peasant bourgeoisie and the rural working groups.

In Lenin's view, although in their social relations the middle peasants keep oscillating between the two extremes, only a small minority of them succeeds in entering the top group by the whole course of social evolution. Lenin thus sketched the middle peasants as more akin to the poor peasants particularly in terms of their placement in the socio-
economic hierarchy, but not in terms of their political orientation.

But Theodore Shanin neither glorifies nor undermines the revolutionary potential of the peasantry but contends that a leadership thrown from the urban intelligentsia, mainly of rural origin and with powerful middle range cadre had directed the rank and file in China. Hamza Alavi's concept of middle peasant revolutionary potential differ from both Lenin and Shanin. The Alavi middle peasant belong to that sector of the rural economy which consists of independent small holders which differs qualitatively from both the landlord and tenant sector, and from the sector of capitalist farmers and rich peasants. To Alavi Lenin overestimates the role of the rural bourgeoisie and completely overlooked the revolutionary potential of middle peasantry in the revolutionary struggle between 1905 and 1917. Eric Woolf contended that because the poor peasants and the rural proletariat have no tactical power they are unlikely to pursue a revolutionary step unless they have an alternative external power to rely on.

Thus it is the middle peasant who is most likely and capable to pursue a revolutionary course of action. This both Alavi and Woolf portray the middle peasant as akin to the rich peasant, whereas Lenin and Mao's middle peasantry are closed to the poor peasantry for taking the leadership in a revolutionary upsurge. The study of the role of the middle
peasant leadership behind the backdrop of the emerging colonial economy in the then Garhjat Orissa assumes significance since 'middle peasant syndrome' colours the present day studies of the social scientists.

Barrington Moore found the Indian peasants for less revolutionary than the Chinese peasants and attributed the phenomenon partly to the particular character of the nationalist leadership in India. Moore who does not dispute the thesis of revolutionary potential of the middle peasant leadership, argues that the concrete manifestation of this revolutionary potential hinge largely on this structure of power alignments and class alliances and contends that tension of the kind which could build up a revolutionary upsurge in a rural society in the then India was largely non-existent.

A study of the structure of power alignments and class alliances in the agrarian economy of eastern India, namely, Garhjat Orissa under the historical setting of the nineteenth century assumes added dimension since it would lead to the reassessment of the leadership potential of the middle peasantry under the context of the participation of the overall rural-urban segments of the population in their fight for land and bread in terms of anti-colonial peasant unrests.

As is well known, the legal form of land relations in the then Bengal Presidency which included Orissa had been
shaped by the Permanent Settlement of 1773 and Mahalwari settlement in 1837 and subsequent modifications made in Rent Act of 1859, Bengal Tenancy Act of 1886. These legal provisions gave rise to two sets of rights over land—one, a right of proprietorship enjoyed, and two a right of occupation held by those among the peasantry who had legally recognised rights of cultivating a plot of land as occupant. It is also known that the entire structure of Rajaship, zamindari and tenure-holding property, subjected to a continuous process of fragmentation since the early nineteenth century, was by the 1897 Settlement operation in Orissa on the edge of a crisis of massive proportions.

Secondly, with the emergence of rice, in absence of a large scale commercialisation of agriculture, as commercial crop the dominant tendency in the sphere of agricultural wealth-making was in the direction of extensive rent exploitation (in most cases on the basis of rights of occupation rather than of proprietorship) and of usury coupled with the trade in rice in absence or development of commercial agriculture like jute, tea and other forms of plantation economy, prevalent in Bengal.

Thirdly, there was a strong tendency towards increased differentiation within the peasantry, with the emergence of a significant stratum on substantial peasantry at the top and the immiserisation of a poor peasantry of the pauperised
tribals who lost their rights of ownership over the lands which they cultivated. There was, in fact, an increase in de jure and effective transfers of land from the small poor to the comparatively affluent migrant entitled 'Kultas' up country peasantry (or to tenure-holders with large holdings in direct possession), with indebtedness the usual mechanism for erecting such transfers. However, these did not, in most cases, lead to absolute eviction. Rather, the dispossessed peasant continued to cultivate the same plot of land, but with inferior rights and higher effective both produce and cash rents. This process manifested itself in particular in the increase in tenancies paying rent in the form of a share of the produce. There was also a strengthening rather than a weakening, of various forms of 'unfree' labour, which reflected a declining bargaining position of the working peasantry, i.e. the small and landless peasants, vis-a-vis the landlords, whether proprietors, tenure-holders, or superior ryots (tenants).

In Orissa uncongenial geographical location, virginiy in soil condition and climatic variants made agriculture a symbol of subsistence economy. With the introduction of Mahalwari Settlement in 1837 land revenue was enhanced, where cowrie currency replaced by the new currency system had major role to play leading to resumption of non-revenue paying holdings and cumulative upward trend of rent extortion over settled tenure-holders. It spelt economic ruin not only to the rent-receiver landed proprietors and their armed retainers
enjoying non-revenue paying *malgozary, paikan* and *ghatwall* tenures. It also affected the cultivators who actually cultivated their land for a share of the produce. Thus share-cropping was inherent in the economy of Garhjat Orissa and South West Bengal but barga system, a peculiar product of squeezing rent in produce from the under-ryots was prevalent in east Bengal in the last half of the nineteenth century.

With the enhancement of revenue structure rent structure was reorganised which benefited two segments of the agrarian economy. One, the new rich, kulta from outside Garhjat Orissa particularly coming from the coastal Orissa endowed with superior cultivation skill, sometimes absorbed in government offices now entered the agrarian social stratification of rent-receivers. This gave rise to the role conflict between the old guards, the Rajas and the new rich and elite segment from the coastal Orissa assume socio-economic leadership on the broad platform of Oriya nationalism. Second, the under-ryots, temporary settled tenure-holders with stock and implements of cultivation now resumed non-revenue paying lands, belonging mainly to the Khonds and Gonds communities, ceased the opportunity of western education, land improvements through public works like water management through irrigation canals, road construction, optimum utilisation of improved seeds and fertilizers for a cash crop cultivation and strengthened the position of the middle peasantry.
With the upward mobility of the undertenants and occupancy pahikasht ryots to the position of permanent tenure-holders in the class of thai middle peasantry the other classes of privileged tenure-holders with land but no stock and under-ryots without stock or land of their own sank into the position of paupers. The factors like gradual rise in price of daily necessities of life, such as rice and salt, deflationary tendency with paucity of currency in circulation and relatively little scope of marketability of the ryots produce indirectly played a considerable part of the tragic drama of pauperisation. The increasing burdens arising out of conversion of produce rent into fixed money rent encouraged the tendency of migratory movement towards the uncultivable forest lands of the north as well as coastal plain of the south east. In the decline of the independent peasantry the role of usurious advance to have the anticipated produce of the land, an inevitable device to revive produce rent, added a significant dimension to the revival of 'bhag chas' though not 'barga' system of east Bengal.

Lack of saving capacity, fast rate of fragmentation of land holdings with the breaking down of joint-family system under the stress of capitalist land-tenure system, of upward trend of money-rent and population growth, rapid decline in village crafts and petty commodity production, greater dependence on monoculture of rice in absence of
alternative means of production made the system of money-lending and eventual mortgage of holdings by conditional sale indispensable in the under-ryots life. The revenue records are full illustrations how usurious money-lending gave rise to control over labour power taking away their bargaining position in consonance with control over their land and produce leading inevitably to conflict between the new rich rent receivers coming from outside as absentee landlords and the under-ryots who are coming mainly from the disbanded non-revenue paying land-holders and village artisans under the leadership of indigenous middle peasantry like Chakra Besoi and Dora Besoi. Sharp decline in the position of the dependent peasantry can be found out, if the wage structure is studied.

This was the background against which the agrarian resistance movements in eastern India of the period may be studied. The Chuar revolt of jungle mahals in 1799, paik upsurge of Orissa in 1818, Bhumij revolt of Midnapore and Bankura in 1838 were partly a protest against the stringent sale laws by which the defaulting land-holder rent-receivers were ejected and new rich absentee landlords got control over land-labour and produce. Throughout the nineteenth and first two decades of the twentieth centuries the middle peasantry with the upward mobility from the rank of under-ryots endeavoured to oust this new rich rent-receivers and money lenders in class alliance with the pauperised though not depeasantised under-ryots and landless
The middle peasantry not only conflicted with the new rent-receivers as symbol of the Raj but also captained for opening up new horizons of cultivation and protecting the interest of share-croppers in the Bengal Tenancy Act amendment bills of 1928 and 1938 from being ejected from the newly acquired holdings. The class alliance between the middle peasantry and the temporary lease-hold tenure holder under-ryots and landless labourer was possible for the economically stable position of the middle peasantry with alternative sources of income derived from the blessings of the Raj which gave them advantageous position to take risk against eviction, distraint regulations and natural calamities and protect the labour force by opening up new cultivation areas, protecting the marketability of the produce and from any emergency of natural calamities. It was this social status, placement in a caste hierarchy and economic interdependence that gave middle peasantry the leadership potential for resistance seeking class alliance with the emergent urban middle class and poor peasantised tribal folk to take the lead in the freedom struggle as against the Raj and collaborators of the legal system of the Raj.

The question of seeking class alliance by the middle peasantry with the emergent town-based middle class automatically raises a problem of strength and quantification of the then middle class. And the question is whether the two segments of the population over lapped with one another
or sometimes the urban middle class in touch with purely
the rural relatively affluent middle peasantry acted in
contradictory fashion to the class interest of the middle
peasantry, the segment from which the middle class emer­
ged in the then Orissa. The end product of this fusion is
that the peasantised tribal movements died down and the
collapse can be explained in terms of role conflict bet­
ween these two segments of the social leadership. It would
be worthwhile to study the strength, nature and quantifi­
cation of the middle class leadership vis-a-vis the role
of the middle peasantry.

From the above propositions it may be argued that
the emergence of the middle class acted as a catalyst for
the modernization in education and social values in Orissa
in contradiction to the peasant movements. But due to
paucity of data it is indeed impossible to quantify the
size of this class, their class interest, income group to
which they belonged, and their percentage in the total
population. Here a methodology may be adopted from con­
temporary Oriya literature to ascertain their type of
ancestry, concentration of habitation, caste, annual income
brackets to which they belonged, their educational attain­
ments, profession and their ideas for socio-political and
economic regeneration of the province. The data collected
from contemporary literature, newspapers, and archival
records have been systematically analysed keeping the total
size of the population between 1871 and 1901 in view. An estimate of college graduates, made by Utkal Dipika in different issues, show that the Oriya intelligentsia constituted a microscopic minority of the population during the nineteenth century. An estimate of educated elites in Orissa gives the following position:

TABLE 42
An estimate of educated elites in the nineteenth century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pleaders</td>
<td>14 (non B.Ls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Deputy Collectors</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Clericals</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Munshiff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Inspector of Schools</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sub-Inspector of Schools</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Not traceable</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dead</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>No. of B.Ls.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage

1. Lawyers 37
2. Government service holders 27
3. Teachers and education Officers 26
4. Dead and not traceable 10

Source: Utkal Dipika, 24 August 1901 and many other issues.
The percentage of caste group, locality of birth, educational qualifications and income group by a process of random sampling of one hundred literary persons in the nineteenth century Orissa reveal the following facts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Caste Group</th>
<th>B. Locality</th>
<th>C. Academic attainments</th>
<th>D. Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Brahmin</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>4. Garjat</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kayastha and Karana</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2. Matric-non B.A.</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lower Castes</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3. B.A. and above</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bio-data of 100 literary persons from different printed books selected at random on the basis of availability.

From the statements it would be found that these selected litterateurs with their social activities served within the categories of teachers, lawyers, government assistants, magazine editors and dawans in the native states. Most of them came out either from the traditional elite class (Brahmans) or feudal landed magnats (Khatriyas, Paiks, and Karanas). These two classes in the colonial rule were compelled by socio-economic changes to adjust themselves to the emerging middle class but they failed to shed...
their old social heritage and traditional backward looking pull. Thus the middle class in Orissa belonging to the upper caste could not but suffer from inherent contradictions. They wanted to modernize their socio-political institutions to collaborate with the British Raj for the efficient administration of Orissa but they could never forget their past heritage. Their value system centred round the idea of reviving the glory of village economy and petty commodity manufacture in villages. Thus through reform movements they longed to discover the golden past, a never attainable utopia, a village Raj without any process of modernization and industrial infrastructure. This inner contradiction of the middle class for their anxiety to identify their class interest with the heaven land at Europe, which they could not reach, and the utopia of the past generations, which they could not attain, ultimately failed to elicit from them any pragmatic economic programme for the economic prosperity and regeneration of Orissa despite exploitation of the British Raj.

The middle class fought for the survival of the Oriya speaking tracts of the neighbouring provinces for a consolidated market economy and demanded socio-economic developments for the regeneration of their agricultural sector. Their double personality and social position forced them to live in the urban areas while they themselves without any rural base, invested their surplus income for
purchasing land in the villages. Consequently, the middle peasants in their resistance movements to revive their feudal privileges could not enlist their support and leadership as the middle class turned capitalist landlords in the villages by purchasing landed estates in auction sales.

The middle class even denounced the peasant revolts as sinister feudal uprisings of some misguided elements against the Raj. This middle class also suffers from the inner conflict among themselves as Brahman, Keralas, and Kayastha Samitis were formed to implement various socio-economic programmes in their respective communities. As leaders of their own communities they gave priority for implementing welfare measures for their own community. The English educated lawyers had economic interests and mutual interdependence with the landed gentry and defended their landed interests in the courts of law prejudicial to the interest of the poor peasantry.

These prominent Victorians failed to achieve mass education and failed to set up even a few industries for their caste rigidity, parochial outlook, lack of capital formation and because of organic disunity in their own ranks. The first venture 'Utkal Tannery' of Madhusudan Das, "the grand old man" of Orissa, failed partly for financial stringency and partly due to the unwillingness of the fellow members of his class to invest capital and service in it. The population of Orissa rose from 36,03,156 to 49,81,842 between 1871 and 1901, the middle class still remaining
confined to a microscopic minority and this vocal microscopic minority refused to side with the middle peasantry against the Raj. This explains the collapse of the peasantised tribal movements in the nineteenth century Garhjat Orissa.

The present scholar made all attempts to make this work self-contained and adequate. But due to certain constraints and problems certain deficiencies have remained beyond his ability to cover. One such is the analytical framework which has been adopted to explain the growth of middle class potentiality as against the quantification and differentiation with the middle peasantry from which the urban middle class emerged. It is inadequate and incomplete and as such demands further attention of the scholars of the future generation. The collection of oral history was inadequate because of non-cooperation of ignorant population to participate with the scholar to collect socio-anthropological data.

Nonetheless, the present scholar sincerely believes that the limitations mentioned here can be overcome by future scholars. He will think the present work worthwhile if it opens a new avenue of research on the socio-economic life of Orissa in the twentieth century.
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