CONCLUSION

The present study entitled 'Peasant resistance movements in Orissa in Nineteenth Century' starts with a note of interrogation on the conclusions drawn by the historians studying the nineteenth century India and particularly of Orissa. The main conclusions under interrogation are that the British Raj restored law and order in the country through reforms and regeneration in terms of administrative, economic and cultural modernisation. To these changes response came from both the tribal and traditional peasant societies through resistance movements. Inadequacy of financial investment for agricultural and industrial developments of Orissa commensurate with her need led to the economic underdevelopment of the country. There was consequently stunted growth of the middle class leadership while old traditional aristocracy failed to respond to the challenging situation arising out of modernisation measures adopted by the Raj. Equipped with the archival sources tapped both in the National Archives and state archives in Calcutta and Bhubaneswar, so far unutilized by the historians, collecting historical data from the literary and contemporary newspaper sources as well as social-anthropological data through fields studies strewn over different parts of Orissa, the present scholar formulates a set of hypotheses which existing historical studies have not probed.
The first of these contentions is that the main theme of the nineteenth century economic history of Orissa was the crisis in the agrarian economy, a consequence of the corrosive effects of decline in socio-economic institutions starting since the sixteenth century with the Muslim annexation of Orissa (1568). The vagaries of nature owing to other peculiar geographical situation together with the extension of British paramountcy in Orissa (1803) drained away the saving capacity of the province. Moreover, the works of Public utility undertaken by the British Raj could not stem the tide of this decline but acted as a catalyst in the emergence of an elitist middle class. Consequently, the very underdeveloped nature of the economy in the nineteenth century Orissa led to economic misery and erosion of social value system and class hierarchy. The economy was underdeveloped owing to restrictions in supply and demand constraints coupled with the imbalance between the agricultural and industrial sectors which was conditioned by inadequacy of supply of agriculture raw materials to the industrial sector and stagnant demand of finished products in the rural sector for the capital goods. It led to the paucity of capital formation and this in turn led to crisis in leadership formation in the urban middle class. Thus the British rule had both injurious and beneficial aspects. It was injurious in so far as the colonial economy led to creeping decline in the agrarian economy and precipitated a crisis in the
traditional leadership for a possible regeneration. It was beneficial because economic measures adopted to stem the tide of the overall decline led to the emergence of a middle class which accelerated the process of modernisation of her life and political institutions, and ushered in a new age which, under constraints, may be termed as Renaissance or the phase of regeneration in the nineteenth century.

The hypotheses discussed above have been tested in the dissertation starting with the nature and achievements of the British rule in Orissa. The failure of the beneficial measures gave rise to the analysis of the answer to the question, why there could not be a sustained economic growth in the nineteenth century. The problems connected with the process of pauperisation of the cultivators though not of depeasantisation of the peasantised tribals prompted the present scholar to analyse the peasant resistance movements, their nature and impact on the economy.

The thirtees of the nineteenth century formed a watershed in the history of British administration in Orissa. Since the conquest of Orissa in 1803, the Company's government endeavoured to work out the paying capacity of the province and they calculated that Orissa under good government could yield about fourteen lakhs of rupees under the then money value while land revenue constituted two-thirds of the total receipts to the exchequer. In order to ensure
stability, conditioned precedent to good government, they restored law and order system, organised the faujdari administration by restructuring the police system and the judiciary. They brought new regulations for imposing customs and excise duties for import of consumer goods and export of salt, rice, opium and other forest products of Orissa, introduced management in Jagannath Temple following strictly the policy of non-interference due to clamour of christian missionaries. Thus the Company ungrudgingly gave up claims over a sure source of revenue. Naturally, the Company's emphasis was laid on rearranging land revenue system as the main source of income for the government. But the successive land revenue settlements to find out the exact yielding capacity of the land proved disastraous to the economy. Many a traditional landed proprietors were thrown to the winds when their estates were sold out to the new entrants and speculative Bengalee revenue farmers and this chaotic condition reached its climax when the popular discontent manifested itself in a massive protest movement of paiks led by Jagabandhu Vidyadhar, known as the Khurda revolt. This Khurda revolt fondly described by the modern historians as the first spark of national liberation movement, was in reality a protest against the Company's resumption of paikan lands and maximisation of revenue of the province. But the Company's monopoly over the salt and textile
trade was resented by free merchants in England and the year 1833 marks the end of John Company's trade monopoly in Orissa.

The charter Act of 1833 brought two important decisions for the Company's government in Orissa: First, the permanent settlement of land revenue system was to be made for ensuring sure income from the land they ruled which was the main source of income after the abolition of trade monopoly in Orissa. Second, to enhance the revenue paying capacity of the province, improvement in agricultural production was a necessary condition. Orissa inherited an exploitative tax machinery and is cursed with an inclement weather. Her geographical location made her a prey to the vagaries of nature like drought and flood. Her political inheritance impoverished her so extremely that she had very little surplus national income for input in the agricultural sector to ward off deficiencies in agricultural production caused by nature's whims. To ensure the maximisation of revenue by enhancing agricultural resources the Company's government undertook works of public utility such as input of new capital which alone could sustain the industrial output of the imperial metropolis in England. The historians may, however, debate on whether the works of irrigation, embankments, developing means of transport and communication, educational developments and measures of health and sanitation were undertaken being guided by the
Benthamite principle of utilitarianism alone or were the manifestations of exploitative measures of the Raj. But there is no denying the fact that the shrewed imperial motive of calculating the debit and credit sides of an investment system prompted the Company's government to undertake the works of public utility since the thirties of the century. Since there was no infrastructure for an industrial break through while labour and raw resources were available of the province land in abundance alone could ensure a stable income. Hence, these modernisation measures and their impact on the economy could be discussed to explain why no perceptible economic growth in the economy could take place.

Even the agrarian history of Orissa since 1833 presents a picture of creeping degeneration of her economy on the one hand and attempts of the rulers to revive the economy by adopting administrative and economic measures on the other. The famine of 1866 marks a turning point in Orissa. Between the period 1833 to 1866 a continuous process of developmental activities in the agrarian and urban sectors could be noticed. But 1866 catastrophe proved the futility and inadequacy of these measures. This deepened the crisis in the agrarian economy and set in motion a slow but steady process of economic decline leading to the immiserisation of the primary producers. The decline was
in the village level industries, salt, textile, as well as in the output of agricultural products despite attempts of the Raj to ameliorate the condition of the producers. It was partly due to the Government policy of free flow of resources out of the province without any impediment with a view to allowing an individual to buy and sell freely and partly due to minimum interference with allocative mechanism through fiscal measures and inability of the existing entrepreneurial class to undertake the initiative for an economic regeneration of the country.

The end of salt monopoly spelt economic ruin in the countryside and the collapse of the textile industry in Orissa once again proved glaringly the disastrous effects of the economic exploitation of the country by the alien governments starting from the sixteenth century. Strenuous efforts to plunder surplus products in the form of cash and produce from the village discouraged the enhancement of cash crop production necessary for the regeneration of the industrial base of the economy which could neither avert natural calamities like flood and drought such as the 1866 famine, nor could prevent the ruin of the buying capacity of the people when price rise had a cumulative upward trend. The historians fondly attributed the main cause to be the exploitative nature of the colonial rule which perpetuated the underdevelopment in the economies of the colonies as buffer satellites to maintain the tempo of development of imperial metropolis.
in England by fiscal exploitation and trade discrimination.

But the present scholar sought to turn up the other side of the coin hitherto kept under darkness. These were the corrosive effects of the successive dominations by rulers coming from outside resulting in the imbalance between agricultural and industrial sectors and nature's vagaries which could not be averted by the people due to restrictions in supply position of commodities and constraints of demand due to diminishing purchasing power of the buyers which originated in the previous centuries from an exploitative state machinery. The main result was the pauperisation of the primary producers which gave rise to poverty of the masses of the people and the under-developed economy in the twentieth century, the century which witnessed industrialisation in other parts of India. This led to the peasant resistance movements under the traditional leaders but they failed to face the superior military might of the British Raj.

Nevertheless, the British rule ushered in a new phase of modernisation and regeneration in Orissa which may be termed as Renaissance. There was a spectacular growth of literature in the wake of spread of new learning side by side with the development of traditional oriental learning. The tempo thus generated was reflected in the Brahmo movement and the reforming zeal of the Christian missionaries. However, all these were on the socio-political level and lacked the
inner economic strength in the absence of a definite economic programme to bring out regeneration of her economy. The force of nationalism under the leadership of the middle class consequently failed to answer the economic crisis of Orissa in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

It is an old fashioned theory to blame the British rule for the agrarian crisis. Though the colonial interests of the Raj created a vicious cycle of misery, nonetheless, the vagaries of nature and continuous degeneration of the socio-economic institutions since the Muslim rule in the sixteenth century had their contributory shares. Despite the crisis in the agrarian sector, the rule of the Company's government and then of the crown after 1857 had a positive aspect in the regeneration of Orissa, which may be termed as Renaissance.

The peasant movements brought about far reaching consequences on the Raj. It exposed the evils of the alien system in a lurid light and encouraged the British Raj for administrative modernisation. The European Officials in different districts of Orissa were given more power to deal with the local problem. In the tributary states it helped for absenteeism of the revenue farmers and enhancement of the privilege of loyal Garjat chiefs. The new capitalist development encouraged the kings to frequently raise rent on land in order to answer frequent enhancement of revenue of the
For smooth collection of rent and to suppress agitation of the peasantry, the kings had to maintain large peace-keeping personnel. Many kings drained their surplus income in unproductive expenditure which they could have spent for the improvement of agriculture in the state. In those states where the peasant agitation continued the British Raj interfered in their administration of the native Rajahs by sending political agents to accelerate the process of modernism. The Raj awarded title and honour to the kings who implemented modernisation measures successfully. It also explained the power position and status of the kings by awarding them sunnuds.

The process of depeasantisation and pauperisation continued unchecked. The affluent farmers remained disinterested for capital farming. They spent their surplus income for purchasing more landed estates on Patani tenure but not improving them. They also invested agrarian capital in usury, sometimes purchasing grains during the harvest time and showed no initiative for agricultural improvement. Under the colonial context the Raj was responsible for providing incentive to the middle class but not for developing urban centres. The different categories of share croppers remained under duress. Unable to keep body and soul together to meet the exorbitant demands of the usurers they had to borrow constantly from the money lenders who never hesitated to escheat the major portion of their produce. The extension of the net work of rural credit relation put the middle stratum
of the peasantry and merchants to control the commodity market and dictated unequal price to the peasants who had no market choice of their own. The wage earner day labourers remaining in the lower grade were left to their fate. The seasonal labourers, relatively small land holders overthrown from their village homes, had to migrate to towns within and outsider Orissa to earn a livelihood causing serious dislocation in the manpower position of the region.

The peasant revolts had its impact on the urban middle class. Due to lack of conceptual harmony among them they developed a split personality and failed to chalk out a programme for an agricultural regeneration of Orissa. They developed to be liberal and nationalist in their political behaviour but traditionalist in the emotional plane. This hesitancy precluded them from taking up leadership in the peasant economy but when the existence of Oriya language was threatened in the Oriya speaking tracts, they came forward to fight for its survival and for their amalgamation of Orissa irrendenta only to revive a consolidated market economy in terms of economic nationalism. They were successful in reviving national solidarity for spreading western education and participated in the administration of the British Raj and the native kings to exploit the rural folk. Behind the back drop of crisis in the agrarian economy, no rapid urbanisation could take place in Orissa. The paucity of capital formation for a possible industrial regeneration had further
aggravated the crisis in the agrarian economy. As a solution to these chronic problems, the nationalist leaders at the beginning of the twentieth century put forward a programme for the improvement of the cattle power for large land holdings with improved means of cultivation for the eradication of social evils, expansion of market for indigenous agrarian products by uniting Oriya speaking tracts and at last for the spread of education for more jobs for the children of native elites in the government offices, but nothing for the multitude people.

These demands had exerted little impact on the Raj to change her policy of deindustrialisation to lessen the magnitude of the suffering of uprooted depeasantised paupers of the villages constantly trodding towards metropolis for job and sustenance. The absentee landlordism in Orissa mainly developed after the famine of 1866, when villages became depopulated due to tropical diseases, led to withdrawal of surplus produce from villages to the town market and from Orissa to outside the province, particularly in the first decades of the twentieth century. The capital investment in Orissa remained nil while entrepreneurship of the Parsis, Gujrati, Marwaris and for fear of virulent tropical diseases, absence of infrastructure for distribution of commodities, lack of improved means communication shrank with horror to invest money in Orissa.

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