CHANGING AGRARIAN STRUCTURE AND LABOUR MIGRATION: A STUDY OF ORISSA

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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30th July 2007

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**CHANGING AGRARIAN STRUCTURE AND LABOUR MIGRATION: A STUDY OF ORISSA**", submitted by **Pramod Kumar Rout** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of **Jawaharlal Nehru University** has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree of this or any other university and is his original work.

Pramod Kumar Rout

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Dedicated
to
my parents
(Bapa & Bau)

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Pramod Kumar Rout

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AIKS:	All India Kisan Sabha.
CDP:	Community Development Programme.
ERRP:	Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor.
FWP:	Food for Work Programme.
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product.
GNP:	Gross National Product.
HYV:	High Yielding Variety.
IAAP:	Intensive Agricultural Areas Programme.
IADP:	Intensive Agricultural Development programme.
INC:	Indian National Congress.
IRDP:	Integrated Rural Development Programme.
JRY:	Jawahar Rozgar Yozana.
LEC:	Labour Enquiry Commission.
NCRL:	National Commission on Rural Labour.
NGO:	Non Governmental Organisation.
NPP:	Net Per capita Product.
NREGA:	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.
NREP:	National Rural Employment Programme.
NSDP:	Net State Domestic Product.
NSS:	National Sample Survey.
PURA:	Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Area.
RCL:	Royal Commission on Labour.
RLE:	Rural Labour Enquiry.
RLEGP:	Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme.
RMP:	Rural Manpower Programme.
SHG:	Self Help Group.


INDIA
States and Union Territories
N
TAJIKISTAN
AFGHANISTAN
PAKISTAN
CHINA
TIBET
NEPAL
BHUTAN
SIKKIM
BANGLADESH
MYANMAR
SRI LANKA
Srinagar
JAMMU & KASHMIR
HIMACHAL PRADESH
Shimla
Chandigarh
PUNJAB
Dehradun
UTTARAKHAND
HARYANA
DELHI
Jaipur
RAJASTHAN
UTTAR PRADESH
Lucknow
Gangtok
Itanagar
ARUNACHAL PRADESH
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ASSAM
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NAGALAND
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Kavaratti
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ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS (INDIA)
Port Blair
Thiruvananthapuram
INDIAN OCEAN
LEGEND
International Boundary
State Boundary
National Capital
State & U.T. Capital
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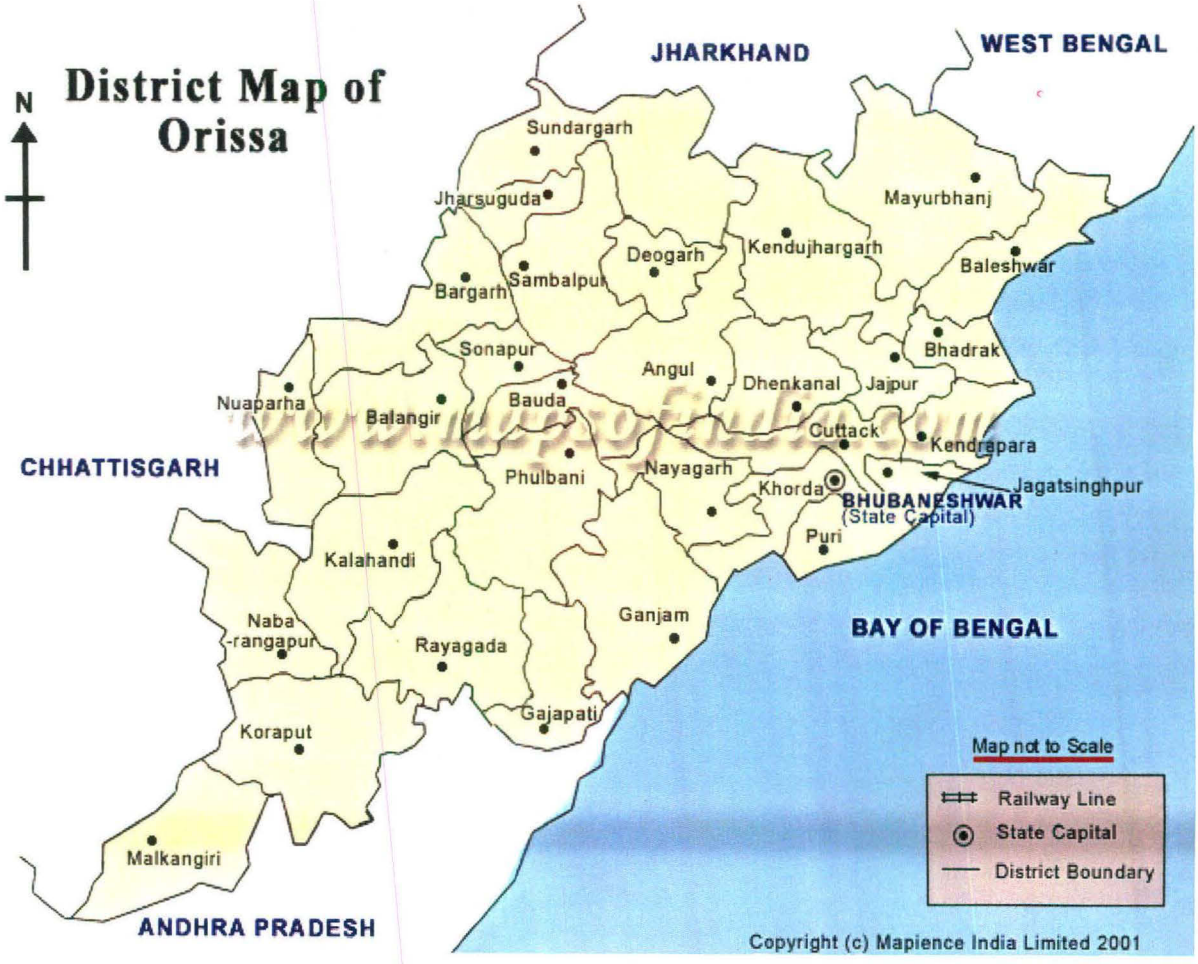
District Map of Orissa
N
JHARKHAND
WEST BENGAL
Sundargarh
Jharsuguda
Mayurbhanj
Deogarh
Kendujhargarh
Baleshwar
Bargarh
Sambalpur
Sonapur
Bhadrak
Angul
Dhenkanal
Jajpur
Nuaparha
Balangir
Bauda
Cuttack
Kendrapara
CHHATTISGARH
Phulbani
Nayagarh
Khorda
Jagatsinghpur
BHUBANESHWAR
(State Capital)
Puri
Kalahandi
Ganjam
Naba
-rangapur
Rayagada
BAY OF BENGAL
Gajapati
Koraput
Map not to Scale
Railway Line
State Capital
District Boundary
Malkangiri
ANDHRA PRADESH
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CHAPTER: I
INTRODUCTION

1.0 The Problem

Agriculture is the source of perpetual creation on which civilisation depends. It is critically important to life and human development. It has a major role in the Indian economy contributing half of the national income and by employing seventy per cent of the working population in India. Apart from the material condition it serves, it is a way of life, unique and irreplaceable human value. Economic organisations, broadly in Asia and more particularly in India, with less degree of autonomy can not be adequately understood in isolation from the social frame-work. It is closely intermeshed with variety of social institutions whose functions are economic and non-economic[1]. Hence agricultural activity being a part of economic activity is in operation with a social frame-work and socially organised in different ways. For instance, a land owner can have his land cultivated by hired labourers under personal supervision, or he can lease out his land and claim a share of produce as rent. Furthermore, the social organisation of agriculture is related to other aspects of the social system like kinship, caste, locality and community life, etc[2].

Since a long period, agrarian activity, its structure and transformation has not been the matter of concern for sociologists and social anthropologists. Agrarian structure has not been the major concern of western sociologists, due to their perpetual obsession with urban industrial society, since the days of classical tradition of sociology. As Shanin rightly points out, in its most fundamental self image, the western capitalist world defined itself as 'world without peasants'. The peasant societies are somewhere missed in the evolutionist schema of social theory through a macro division of society into 'modern' and 'backward' one[3].

The emergence of the 'new states' following decolonisation during post-World War-II period played an important role in changing the research agenda of the social

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[1] Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Enquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, Harmandsworth: Penguin, 1968, Vol.1, p. 9.
[2] Andre Beteille, *Studies in Agrarian Social Structure*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1974, pp. 7-34.
[3] Theodor Shanin (ed.), *Peasant and Peasant Societies*, London: Blackwell, 1987, p.468.

sciences. In peripheral eastern and central Europe, the 'agrarian question' became important in the political and intellectual agenda. Since a large majority of the population in the third world societies were directly dependent on agriculture, understanding the prevailing agrarian relation and revealing out the ways and means of transforming them emerged as important priorities within development studies. A large number of funding was made in favour of the study of peasant economy and societies to serve the western political interest in the rural inhabitants of the third world and the growing influence of modernisation process[4]. It was at this time that the concept peasantry found currency in the discipline of social Anthropology. The famous debate between populist thinker led by the Russian economist A.V. Chayanov (1987) on the one side, and the Marxist class analysis of Russian countryside by Lenin (1899, 1908) along with Kautsky's work on the 'agrarian question' (Banaji 1976) on the other, laid the foundation of what later came to known as 'agrarian studies'.

'Agrarian life' or 'peasant society' has been the scope of various disciplines or sub-disciplines like 'Rural sociology', 'peasant studies' and 'sociology of agriculture'. However, their interpretations, methods, approaches to agrarian life vary with diverse connotation. Understanding and diagnosing of the social and economic problems of farmers is the focus point of Rural sociology. An undue emphasis was placed on issues on internal structure of 'community life' and the changing composition of rural population (Schwarzweller 1984: 11) at the cost of their relationship with land or the social aspects of agricultural production. Excessive obsession with 'rural-urban' dichotomy and insignificance of 'rural society' has laid the suspicion to the relevance of rural sociology in western society. In response to Rural Sociology, the sub-discipline of 'sociology of agriculture' operates within a functional paradigm. Sociology of agriculture focused its attention on understanding and analysing social frame-work of agricultural production and the structure of relations centred on land[5]. The sociology of agriculture also distinguished itself from peasant studies on the ground that its focus was on capitalist

[4]S. Silverman, 'The Concept of Peasant and the Concept of Culture' in J. Mencher (ed.), *Social Anthropology of Peasantry*, Bombay: Somaiya Publication, 1987, p.11.
[5]W.H. Friedland, 'Commodity Systems Analysis: An Approach to the Sociology of Agriculture', in H.K. Schwarzweller (ed.), *Research in Rural Sociology and Development*, Greenwich: Jai Press, 1984, Vol. 1, pp. 221-35.

farming, where the production was primarily for the market, not on peasant producing for their own consumption by using family labour. Thus it claimed more kinship with tradition of the 'political economy' of agriculture or 'agrarian studies'[6].

The agrarian life of India occupies special status, both in social scientific literature on India and on the literature of agrarian studies in general. But it needs to be emphasised that the field of agrarian relation has been neglected by sociology and social anthropology during the critical phase of the development of these twin disciplines in India. Of course the proportion of attention is more in recent decades of India. It is not that there were no attempts by sociologists and the social anthropologists to study problems in the past. Nevertheless, the work done by Rahda Kamal Mukherji (1933) and Rama Krishna Mukherji (1957) in the period before independence failed to generate a sustained interest in the subject. Indian sociology, being of relatively recent origin, had not developed a tradition of its own. The kind pf concerns which the Indian sociologists brought to their study were largely reflections of the concerns of sociologists and social anthropologists from the more advanced western countries (Beteille 1974: 7). And it was in a way natural that they on their part should seek to understand Indian society in terms of institution which they considered to be unique to it.

Institution like caste, kinship, marriage, village community, unlike agrarian life, occupied a central position in Indian sociology. Caste hierarchy and kinship structure came to be defined in terms of ritual and social interactions over institutions of commensality and marriage. Excessive engrossment with functionalism among the social anthropologists of the 1950s made them to over emphasise the need to understand 'what preoccupied social order'. Though the evidence of transforming nature of village and caste is revealed, it is not reflected in their overall studies[7].

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[6] S. S. Jodhka, 'Agrarian Structure and Their Transformation' in Veena Das (ed.), *Oxford Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 1213-42.

[7] S. S. Jodhka, 'Book View to Field View: Social Anthropological Construction of the Indian Village', *Oxford Development Studies*, 1998, Vol. 26 (3), pp.311-31.

The study of agrarian structures and relations has of course been a major interest among the practitioners of disciplines other than sociology and social anthropology. It has been for some time a major concern of economic historians and also we have a fair amount of historical literature in agrarian structure in India during the Muslim period and the British period. Agricultural economists have also put a short glance on the problem. Paradoxically the prior entry of economic historians and agricultural economists into the field, instead of stimulating sociologists to take up the subject, has on the whole made them fight shy of it (Beteille 1974).

Village studies with the publication of 'Village India', edited by McKim Marriot (1955) provided an impetus for the emergence of peasant studies in India. However, with the publication of Andre Beteille's 'Studies in Agrarian Social Structure' in 1974, agrarian sociology gained momentum of professional respectability within two (Sociology and Social anthropology) disciplines. Superficial construction of Indian village as a 'little republic'[8] (Cohn 1987:212), static, unchanging reality with internally undifferentiated and stable structures were incorrect and got refuted through the vast body of literature developed later on. Later historical literature has revealed the existence of land as a private institution along with revenue bureaucracy, sizable population of agriculture labour and perpetual existence of conflict and tension with regard to agrarian relation.

> Economic differentiation had progressed considerably among the peasantry. There were large cultivators, using hired labour, and raising crops for the market, and there were small peasants who could barely produce food grains for their own subsistence. Beyond this differentiation among the peasantry, there was still sharper between the caste peasantry and the 'menial' population (Habib 1982:247).

Hence, there is perpetual inequality and continuity in the agrarian structure and relation being nurtured and nourished by the inherent social differentiation of caste and

[8]Initially, the British ethnographers considered the village community as a 'little republic'. Charles Metcalfe used the term 'little republic' in the sense that villages were economically self-sufficient, relatively undifferentiated, maintaining its isolation from the external influences. It is glorified as static and dynamic less one. Metcalfe in a celebrated remark stated that: 'the village communities are little Republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution; Hindu, Pathan Mughal, Mahratta, Sikh English are masters in turn; but the village community remained the same (quoted in Cohn 1987: 213). However, this superficial construction of the village community has been vehemently criticized by the historians and other scholars like Habib, Dharma Kumar etc. It is well explained in the theoretical part of next chapter.

kinship structure. However, these were furthered by the colonial policies. Each historical phase is characterised by a unique mode or relations of production[9] thereby encouraging the unique agrarian relationship.

As society is a system of interrelated parts[10], the change in one part also affects the change in other parts. Agrarian relation is an integrated part of social life. It is in a constant flux whether it may be in evolutionary manner or a radical one. However, the study of 'changing agrarian structure' requires a keen interest on the corollaries of it on the other related social elements. In a broadest sense agrarian relation involves the man-soil relationship. Hence, the discussion of changing agrarian structure would be incomplete without a debate on changing land right pattern, tenancy system, labour mobility and changing labour force. Absence of agricultural labour force in the ancient India is a false construction of agrarian reality. Dharma Kumar (1992) also argues that there was a sizable population of those who primarily acts as agricultural labourers in the pre-colonial India and generally belonged to some specific castes.

History says that there has been a large group of landless labourers throughout the nineteenth century and that they were mainly from the weaker, depressed and

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[9] 'Mode of production' was conventionally defined in terms of the interaction of the 'relations and forces of production'; that is the system of ownership of the means of production, and the level of development of the latter. For Marx, this formed the foundation or base of all social systems, and from it, other social, economic, ideological, and political relations were derived. Within Marxist theory this is the constitutive characteristics of a society or social formation, based on the socio-economic system of predominant within it – for instance feudalism, capitalism and socialism. Marx coined the term 'relations of production' to refer to the social relations specific to particular mode of production. For Marx, the major contradictions in society are between the forces and relation of production. The forces of production include land, raw materials, tools and machinery, the technical and scientific knowledge used in the production, the technical organization of the production process and the labour power of the workers. The relations of production are the social relationship which man enters into produce goods. It involves the relationship of social groups to the forces of production. Marxism also analyzed societies in which more than one mode of production was present because of its transitional phase or in the process of articulation of mode of production.

[10] This is the basic tenet of functionalism which argues that society is a system of interrelated parts where the change in one parts the whole or other parts of the same organization. This sprang particularly from the works of B. Mallinowski, who was instrumental in establishing an approach which emphasized the importance of analyzing primitive societies as socio-cultural whole, accounting for institutions in terms of their relations to other institutions in the same society, and their significance in satisfying the basic needs of individual members. Functionalism consider or compares society with biological organism because of interrelatedness of various parts of body and there of society.

underprivileged section of society. From various records, it has been demonstrated that the agricultural labourers existed during the ancient and medieval period, apparently in the form of slavery and serfdom. At the dawn of independence, the Indian society was characterised by not only a high percentage of landless agricultural labourers in its rural workforce but also by sizeable class of 'dwarf holding' peasant who sold their labour power, and the incidence of underemployment was considerable for these groups. Peasant pauperisation became a common phenomenon due to abrupt restructuring of agriculture from one of subsistence to that of production for the world market, or to put it differently, the transition from a 'traditional'-'feudal' order to a 'modern'-'capitalist' one. There has been a great increase in the number and proportion of agricultural households. The percentage of agricultural households among rural households for the country as a whole increased from 22 per cent in 1964-65 to 31 per cent in 1983 and 40 per cent during 1991.

Furthermore, the commercialisation of agriculture proceeded in such a way that the producers are fettered rather than emancipated by this process. The green revolution made many of the traditional occupation redundant and the '*Jajmani* relation' disintegrated rapidly[11]. It is generally believed that the process of agricultural modernisation is accompanied by the change in the social relation of production leading to the freeing of agricultural labour from relations of patronage[12] and institutionalised dependencies. Breman (1985) observed a process of 'de-patronisation' being experienced in the farmer-labour relationship in the villages of south Gujarat. In the context of Indian society, labour process and labour exchange systems have structurally different features. Depending upon the social structure and structure of economy, the labour exchange processes and production relations vary region wise in various parts of the country.

[11] G.K. Karantha, 'New Technology and Traditional Rural Institution: The Case of Jajmani Relations', 1987, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.22 (51), pp. 2217-24.

[12] Here patronage means a pattern of relationships in which members of hierarchically arranged groups possess mutually recognized, not explicitly stipulated rights and obligations involving mutual aid and preferential treatment. The bond between patron and client is personal, and is contracted and continued by mutual agreement for an indeterminate time. Usually, it is used with special reference to *Jajmani System*.

The myth of an immobile peasantry persists, not only in anthropological literature, but just as much in common usage. Even village studies have contributed to similar reification of the past by emphasising the closed nature and continuity of the local order, and by paying little or no attention, generally speaking to out-migration which assumes the character of a displacement of labour. In many publications, peasant society is still presented as an extremely static entity. At best migration is merely mentioned and even then nearly always in connection with urbanisation. Those who migrate to the villages to work are hardly noticed, especially when their presence is only temporary. The government has paid scant attention to labour migration which explains why this phenomenon has remained outside the official statistics.

Hence, labour mobility and immobility are thus two sides of the same coin. Labour mobility and migration is a stark reality at the context of changing agrarian structure. Labour dynamism is one of the by-products of the changing agrarian relation due to technological advancement and influence of modernisation forces in the agricultural sector. Yet, by far the greater part of labour migration begins and ends with the rural milieu. Migration has acquired a special significance for the sociologists in the context of commercialisation of agriculture because of labour mobility. The most distressing fact which has often been neglected is the peasant migration due to the development of landless agricultural labourers consequent upon pauperisation and alienation on land of the poor peasantry. The poor peasants, agricultural labourers after losing their small portion of land have either migrated to urban areas or come down to the level of wage earners. Intra-rural, seasonal circulation of unskilled labour and migration within rural milieu which are some stark reality may be consequent upon the changing agrarian structure and relationships.

Orissa is one of the major states of the Indian union, with the population of 36.71 million according to the 2001 census. The population is predominantly Hindu (94.67 per cent). It has third lowest population density of 236 persons per sq k.m.in 2001 census[13]. The present Orissa extends from 17° 49' N to 22° 34' N latitude and

[13] Orissa Human Development Report, 2004.

from 81° 29' E to 87° 29' E of longitude. It is bound by the state of West Bengal on the north east, Jharkhand in the north, Chhatisgarh in the west, Andhrapradesh in the south and the Bay of Bengal in the east. The British occupied it in 1803[14]. It was a part of the Bengal Presidency in the nineteenth century and was separated from Bihar and came into existence on April 1, 1936 as a separate state. Initially, the capital was established at Cuttack, the historical city, located at the apex of Mahanadi delta and later on, it transferred to Bhubaneswar after independence in1947.

Agriculture is the single largest sector in Orissa and it is the mainstay of Orissan population[15]. Orissa economy is predominantly agricultural. According to the provisional population figure of 1991, Orissa has 315 lakh of total population and the 86.57 per cent of it constitute rural population. Agricultural sector continues to dominate the economy of the state absorbing 80 per cent of the workforce[16]. Over the period, the working popualiton in agrarian sector was 70.33 per cent in 1951, 70.83 per cent in 1961, 77.44 per cent in 1971, 74.65 per cent in 1981 and 80 per cent in 1991. This statistical data indicates the growing dependence of the more and more population in agrarian sector. The Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) is highly influenced by income generated from the agricultural sector. The contribution of agricultural sector alone to NSDP at constant prices has declined to 45 per cent from 47.5 per cent in this sector[17].

The contribution of agriculture to state income has further declined from 38.15 per cent in 1993-94 to 28.13 per cent in 2001-02[18]. Despite the fact that the share of agriculture in NSDP of orissa has considerably declined, agriculture continues to be the mainstay of state's economy contributing about 22.09 per cent of the state's income during 2002-03 (Govt. of Orissa 2004:21). Out of the total rural poor families in Orissa

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[14] G. A. Toynbee, 'Sketch of History of Orissa (1803-1828), *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. 9 (1&2), 1960, pp. 7-8.
[15] K. C. Mishra, *Land System and Land Reforms,* Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House, 1990, p.1
[16] Economic Survey: Government of Orissa, 1991-92, p.1
[17] J. K. Mohapatra and U. Das, 'Agrarian Transition and Social Development in Orissa', *The Indian Journal of Political Science,* vol.54 (2), April-June, 1993, p. 298.
[18] B. Misra, 'problems and Prospects of Revival of Orissa's Economy', *IASSI Quarterly*, Vol. 22 (1), July–Sept., 2003, pp..87-97.

87.36 per cent of rural poor families were agricultural labourers, marginal farmers and small farmers[19].

The entire episode of agrarian structure of Orissa reflects its problems and prospects since the colonial period. The economic history of Orissa was a part of the vast colonial system of the British rule. As a part of the 'divide and rule policy' of British, the state was scatterd into various provinces. Accordingly, it has three broad types of land tenure system – the Zamindary in five districts; the Ryotwari in a part of the district; and subsidiary alliances in a number of princely states covering as many as seven districts (before the formation of new districts) of Orissa[20]. Besides the occasional interference of British, the class interest of these Zamindars and Princes were protected and encouraged. This created insurmountable havocs in the lives of tenants and peasants who groaned under sever ruthless colonial exploitation.

Under the colonial land tenure system, in Orissa, the state had no direct contact with the owner; least was the contact with the producers. Capitalist relationships were slow to develop in Zamindari areas. Incentives for the agricultural labourers were marginal, wage was for minimum subsistence. The phenomenon of under development today is precisely a matter of dualistic economy. This was due to hybrid structures comprising partly of capitalist system and partly the penetrating features of the previously existing feudal system. It is dualistic in the sense of mode of production where the rich farmer of well-endowed regions flourish through modernised agriculture and the resource poor small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers continue to languish in poverty. The commercialisation under the colonial mode of production did not contribute to the improvement of living standard of the masses[21].

Hence, the continued feudal and semi-feudal relations of production, the upper caste absentee landlords enjoying absolute privileges of economic and political power and failure of land reforms measures have strengthened the hand of this feudal and

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[19] Orissa Human Development Report, Government of India, New Delhi: Planning Commission, 2002.
[20] Jagannath Pathy, 'Land Reforms and the Problems of Agricultural Development in Orissa; A Discursive Review', *Indian Journal of Regional Science,* Vol. 13 (2), 1981, pp. 140-150.
[21] G. Parthasarathi, 'Land Reforms and the Changing Agrarian Structure in India, in A. K. Gupta (ed.) *Agrarian Structure and Peasant Revolt in India*, New Delhi: Crinterion Publication, 1986, p. 23

semi-feudal class. Besides, the highly unequal distribution of means of production; land-man ratio; inadequate investment in agricultural infrastructure, low speed of agricultural modernisation followed by near stagnation of agriculture have resulted in steady economic growth, abject poverty and starvation. The capitalist relation of production could not make much penetration into the Orissan agrarian structure except for few tracts of coastal belts. Migration of labour has been found since the colonial period till date. Mostly, the coastal belts are the migration zone in Orissa because of its socio-economic set-up and several historical antecedents.

1.1 Objectives:

On the basis of above discussions, the objectives of this study are:

1) To understand the evolution of agrarian relations and the patterns of land ownership in Orissa.
2) To map regional variations in the nature of agrarian relationships and agrarian change in Orissa.
3) To examine the changing nature of traditional relationships of caste and patron-client structures of the *Jajmani* system in Orissa.
4) To understand or map the patterns of labour out-migration and its causes and consequence.

1.2 Methodology:

The research is conducted through the review of existing literature, published books and papers, scholarly articles and various government reports. Government reports like reports of ministry of rural development, various labour reports of state and central government, reports of directorate of economics and agricultural statistics are used. Census data is used to know the amount of migration, population, occupation, caste structure and so on. This research work deals with some theoretical orientation on the study of changing agrarian relation. The major theories are structural-functional and Marxian approach to scrutinise the paramount agrarian reality.

1.3 Rationale of the study:

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to studies on labour migration. The specificity of this study is to perceive labour migration at the context of changing agrarian structure. Rejecting the premises of modernization and neo-classical theorists on migration, it studies migration from a structural point of view. It argues that migration is not necessarily always guided by the personal will of the migrants, rather it is due to the structural constraints, such as regional imbalance of the given area to which migrants belong. There is a dialectical relationship between agrarian structure and labour migration. Present study offers the insight for the policy makers to study and conceive the migrant problem and plight of agricultural labourers. It also provides the framework for planners to implement 'action-oriented' programmes in the development of agriculture in rural areas. By analyzing the agrarian relationship comprehensively in a chronological manner, it draws the problems and prospects of agrarian economy of India and Orissa. Policy makers would be able to draw attention to the problem of labour out-migration in rural areas and their plight at the area of destination and would be able to formulate migration policy to tackle the new emerging situation of deprivation at the area of destination and origin.

This study would be able to encourage many others to examine more closely the incidence of migration from the agrarian structure which widely varies from region to region in the country, shaped by its historical antecedents.

1.4 Defining Peasant and Peasantry:

Conceptual and heuristic clarity is quintessential to any investigation. A consistent definition of peasantry is necessary if only for the purpose of having it rejected in the process of further analysis. Peasant, a word of French origin, came to be widely used in English from fifteenth century for one who worked on land and live in the village. It is only since the World War-II that anthropologists have finally started paying attention to the peasant societies of Asia and the Middle East. After 1950, when quite a large number of countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America became independent from colonial control, the peasantry again drew attention of scholars and policy makers. The

rise of peasantry's importance, however, according to Shanin, "coincided with new developments in Anthropology"[22].

Peasant society and culture has something generic about it. It is a kind of arrangement of humanity with some similarities all over the world[23]. It was Redfield's approach that came to dominate American anthropological understanding of peasantry for quite some time. However, Redfield's work is based on Kroeber's formulation. The dualistic approach of understanding the dynamic society held by evolutionary theorists like Durkheim, Maine, and Tonnies, etc. had a significant influence on Kroeber. However, he introduced an intermediate position between the traditional and the modern or 'organic' societies and posited that this intermediate position was held by the peasant society. He defined peasants as those who, "constituting part societies with part cultures, definitely rural, yet live in relation to a market town... (Those who) lack isolation, political autonomy and self-sufficiency of a tribal population, yet their local units maintain much of their old identity, integration and attachment to the soil"[24].

A. L. Kroeber emphasised the "fractional", "incomplete" quality peasantry and considered it as "part societies with part cultures", partly open segments in a town-centred society[25]. He looked for a symbiotic as well as the exploitative relations between the peasants and the town. Robert Redfield drew his inspiration from Kroeber and elaborately discussed the intermediary position as being "part society and part culture", having no existence before the appearance of the city[26], having no structure of its own that could be qualitatively distinguished as independent of the influences of that of primitive people or that of modern industrial society. He stressed the cultural dimension of the symbiotic relationship, conceptually distinguishing between 'Great Tradition' and

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[22]Theodor Shanin, 'Introduction', in Theodor Shanin (ed.), *Peasant and Peasant Societies,* Harmondsworth, 1971, p.12.
[23] R. Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture,* Chicago,1956, p.25
[24] Quoted by Theodor Shanin, in Theodor Shanin (ed.), *Peasant and Peasant Societies*, Harmondsworth, 1971, p. 255.
[25] T. Shanin, op.cit, 1971, p.14.
[26] According Redfield, "There is no personality before the first city" quoted in T. Shanin, op.cit. p.255.

'Little Tradition'[27]. The peasants have little tradition, which is carried forward and which develops into Great Tradition, and at the same time, the elements of Great Tradition percolate in to the villages.

Influenced by Kroeber and Redfield, Eric Wolf argues that peasants are "those large segments of mankind which stand midway between the primitive tribe and industrial society". For Wolf, a peasant was an agricultural producer, and in this definition, he specifically excluded fisherman and crafts man[28]. Further, the peasant effectively controlled the land on which he worked – thus, absentee landlords cannot be designated as peasants. Production is primarily for the household consumption, but a peasant sells his crops, the surplus, for obtaining the things which he doesn't produce and for maintaining his status. He argues that the peasant primarily aims at subsistence, when he aims at reinvestment and maximization of gain and profit; he ceases to be a peasant. He makes it clear by suggesting that, "the peasant is at once an economic agent and head of a house hold. His holding is both an economic unit and a home"[29].

Raymond Firth, in his study of Malayan fisherman, argues that peasant has different meanings in the oriental vis-à-vis the European communities[30]. He also confessed the similarities between the oriental and the European connotations of peasantry; in both cases, the peasants are community of producers on a small scale. They use simple equipments, which can be easily learnt and transmitted. Although they enter into market organisation, they often rely on what they produce for subsistence. By using economic referents he defines peasant as those, who lives primarily cultivating the soil;

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[27]The approach to analyse social change with the help of concepts of 'Little Tradition' and 'Great Tradition was used by Robert Redfield in his studies of the Mexican communities. Influenced by his model, Milton Singer and McKim Marriot have conducted some study in India by utilizing this conceptual frame-work. The basic ideas in this approach are 'civilization' and 'social organization'. The social structure of these civilizations operates at two level, first that of the folks or unlettered peasants, and second, that of elite or that of 'reflective few'. The cultural process in the former comprises the little tradition and those in the latter constitute the great tradition. There is, however, constant interaction between the two levels of traditions. The direction of change presumably is from folk or peasant towards urban cultural structure and social organization. Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol.52, pp.292-308.

[28] Eric R. Wolf, 'Type of Latin American Peasantry: A Preliminary Definition', *American Anthropology*, Vol.57, p.452-71.

[29] Quoted by Eric R. Wolf, op.cit., pp.14-5.

[30] Raymond Firth, *Malayan Fisherman: Their Peasant Economy*, London, 1946.

he is not a landless labourer, but has individual rights or collective claims over the land. In the European context, the criteria of agriculture and self-sufficiency could be strictly adhered to but, Firth says, when we come to the orient, the criterion of agriculture is posed with problems.

Chayanov distinguished the peasant economy from the capitalist economy and explained that the first fundamental characteristic of the farm economy of the peasant is that it is a family economy. Its whole organisation is determined by the size and composition of the peasant family. The capitalist profit computation is not applicable to the peasant economy.

> Since the principal object of peasant economy is the satisfaction of yearly consumption budget of the family, the fact of most interest is not the remuneration of the labour unit (the working day) but the remuneration of the whole labour year (Wolf 1966:14).

Like Wolf, Daniel Thorner considers peasant economy as a 'distinctive group', distinguished from slavery, feudalism, capitalism, etc. For Thorner, roughly half of the total population must be agricultural and more than half of the working population must be engaged in agriculture. There is an existence of state power. The principal activity of the peasant household is cultivation of his own land[31]. Like Wolf and Chayanov, Thorner also holds the dualistic nature of peasant as one who runs household as well as farm. Unlike Wolf and Redfield, Thorner stresses the importance of urbanisation in the determination of peasant society. He recognises 'the underdog' or 'subject' status of peasant and considers the position of peasants to be the result of "the division or break between town and country side". Duality marks the peasant life at two levels. For Thorner, "peasantry as a group of subject and exists to be exploited by others. At the same time, from the point of view of production, the peasant household constitutes definite independent entities. Because of this duality in his position, the peasant inevitably straddles between free and un-free"[32].

Shanin offered an 'ideal type' of peasant societies with following features. *Firstly*, the peasant family was the basic unit of production and consumption in a

[31] Daniel Thorner, 'Peasant Economy as a Category in Economic History', in T. Shanin (ed.), op.cit., 1971.
[32] ibid., p. 206.

multidimensional social organisation. *Secondly*, land husbandry was the major means of livelihood. *Thirdly*, there was distinct traditional culture linked to the way of life of peasant communities. *Fourthly*, an elite living outside the community dominated the peasantry (Shanin 1987: 3-5).

Hence, the European peasantry was conceptualised as homogenous, undifferentiated and self-sufficient; the peasant household was the microcosmic representation of all relations present in the total peasantry[33]. Difficulties surface when the concept of peasantry which evolved in the European situation is applied to the Indian context. The Indian historical situation with its caste based social organisation poses a set of different condition for defining peasants. It has led altogether to reject the usefulness of the concept for the Indian situation. B. N.Ganguli in his inaugural address to the twelfth All-India Sociological Conference in 1974 confessed the problem of identification of a peasant. He observed, "The mixed status of the Indian peasants make the situation far more complicated. Whether, he is a cultivating owner or non-cultivating owner is not clear, and any identification on the basis of this criterion is a slippery procedure"[34].

The problems that emerged at the application of European concepts of peasantry to the Indian situations are as follows:

Firstly, Indian peasantry is not undifferentiated[35]. Peasants don't belong to particular castes. Peasant household falls into different caste strata. Since no village has all the castes, relations between different villages challenge the much-acclaimed notion of "self-sufficiency".

Secondly, the division of caste on the axis of 'Little Tradition' and 'Great Tradition' is also fraught with risk as each caste, whether "twice-born" or not, has a fair mixture of these traditions.

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[33] Theodor Shanin, 'Peasantry as a Political Factor', in T. Shanin (ed.), op.cit.

[34] B.N. Ganguli, '*The Peasant as an Analytical Category*', Sociological Papers, xii All-India Sociological Conference, Varanasi, 1974, p.12.

[35] Andre Beteille, *Six Essays in Comparative Sociology*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974, p.40-57.

Thirdly, the village has its own elite, the powerful landlords and decision makers, who are not "outsiders"-like the absentee landlords- but are integral to the community. And, these landlords, instead of always adhering to an exploitative stance, nurture and groom a patronising attitude. The village is contextualised in such paternalistic relations, and it is not wrong to say that Jajmani system was rationalised in these terms.

For understanding Indian peasantry, therefore, one needs to analyse the historical condition in which the occupational structure changes or is carried forward. The notions, which emerged in the context of European peasantry may not be in operation, when we come to a society where peasantry is not undifferentiated, where there is link between diverse occupations directly or indirectly related to agriculture, where landlord is not an absentee but an integral part of the village set-up, and where the traditional occupations are carried forward to be commercialised in an open market system. Such ideas need to be kept in mind while conceptualizing Indian peasantry or for that matter the peasantry in any developing society.

1.5 Scheme of Chapterisation:

This dissertation, titled as 'Changing Agrarian Structure and Labour Migration: A Study of Orissa', comprises of five chapters:

Chapter One, the introductory part of this dissertation, makes the ritual unveiling of this research work by a focused 'Statement of the Problem'. Here a healthy engagement will be marked with the 'sociology of agrarian studies or peasant studies'. A flavour is being added by making its relation with the peasant mobility and labour migration in the changing agrarian context. Socio-anthropological construction of 'village community', 'agrarian reality', 'peasant and peasantry' and finally of peasant/labour mobility is explicitly delineated in this chapter. Followed by this, the research questions and objectives, methodology and significance of the study is well stated according to the suitability of the research work. In the last part of the introductory session, conceptualization of 'peasant and peasantry' is made keeping in view of quintessential of heuristic clarification. Here, a comparative analysis of 'peasant societies' of western

(occidental) and oriental view could not escape from the scrutiny of the present research work.

The ***second chapter***, 'Agrarian Structure of India: Continuity and Change', initiates with conceptualization of 'agrarian structure' in the Indian context. To have a comprehensive understanding of 'agrarian relation' in India, an attempt has been made to explain it chronologically, i.e. pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period. The governmental agrarian reform policies at the context of independent India are critically evaluated. The changing pattern of labour relations at the commencement of green revolution is well placed with the justified field studies by various research scholars. In the famous 'mode of production of debate', rigorous intellectual contention and scholastic fight ends with the consensus on the idea of 'domination of capitalist mode of production in Indian agriculture in spite of regional variations'. Theoretical approaches pertaining to agrarian structure are made in the last section of this chapter to underpin this research work.

Following the chronological pattern of second chapter, ***third chapter***, 'Agrarian Structure of Orissa: Problems and Prospects', explains the evolution of agrarian relationship in Orissa. Various land ownership patterns and land tenure systems pattern that prevailed in different epochs of Orissan history are comprehensively stated. The true pictures of exploitative landlord-tenant relationship get ventilation in this chapter. It also makes an outline of the defective agrarian system by drawing some prospects. The weakness and strength of various land reforms measure of colonial and independent Orissa is briefly pointed out in third chapter. In a nut shell, the agrarian life of Orissa is embodied here.

In the ***fourth chapter***, 'Labour migration in Orissa: A Symptomatic reality', a deductive method is applied to understand labour migration in the changing agrarian context. An explanation on the evolution of agricultural labourer is developed followed by the evolution of agricultural labourer in Orissa. Prevailing types of agricultural labour system, labour migration, social composition of agricultural labour and migrant labour has been delineated here. Nature and types of labour migration is comparatively analyzed

in the colonial and post-colonial India and Orissa. To serve the necessity of methodological understanding of labour migration, various theoretical perspectives on migration are explained where emphasis is being added to the structural Marxist model. The central argument of this chapter revolves around the premise of 'migration of labourers from rural areas is largely governed by several structural conditions and historical antecedents'.

The ***concluding chapter*** of this dissertation summarizes some of the key findings of the previous main chapters. While making correlations of previous chapters it argues that labour migration in changing agrarian structure is not guided by the individual motives, rather due to emerging structural strain, exploitative nature inherent in the agrarian context, molded by the historical antecedents and the change in patron-client relationships. It has shown the dialectical relationships between agrarian structure, persistent exploitation and labour migration. Finally, some suggestive measures are developed to serve the obligation of this research work.

CHAPTER: II

Agrarian Structure of India: Continuity and Change

To study the agrarian question according to Marx's method..... We should look for all the changes which agriculture experiences under the domination of capitalist production. We should ask: is capital, and in what ways is capital taking hold of agriculture, revolutionizing it, smashing the old forms of production and poverty and establishing the new forms which must succeed.

-Karl Kautsky

2.0 Introduction:

The term 'Agrarian relation' has complex socio-historic and politico-economic dimensions. In the sociological sense too, it admits of a variety of meanings. In technical sense, it refers to the tenurial arrangements under which land owned by one person is leased-out to the other. It deals mostly with the problems and effects of tenancy on the agricultural production, class relations, general well-being of the tenancy, and so on. Broadly speaking, the term encompasses numerous facets of agrarian realities of the countryside. For example, in addition to the levels and types of tenancy, it may also take note of general class configuration, questions relating to the mode and level of wage payment, class bias in the working of local level institutions and so on. Likewise, by 'agrarian structure' we mean the institutional framework of agricultural production, which includes land tenure system, distribution of ownership of land between large landowners and small peasants, tenancy systems, the burden imposed on the peasants by government and the land owners. It is well explained in the previous introduction chapter. It seems that the problems of Indian agriculture cannot be comprehended without reference to the agrarian structure.

It is to be remembered that agrarian relations do change with time. The precise mechanism of change may be conditioned by historical, political and social circumstances. Briefly, the forces responsible for change may either be endogenous or exogenous. The most important endogenous changes arise from contradiction between the dominant classes comprising landlords, moneylenders, merchants etc. and the exploited class such as poor peasants, agricultural laborers, and so on. In the process of historical change and with the development of production forces, the contradictions between the two classes tend to become sharper hastening the demolition of archaic and

exploitative agrarian relations. The momentum of change in the agrarian relation is further accelerated by the rapid development of industrial Sector. For instance, it may create more and more employment opportunities causing migration of rural population, hasten the spread of monetization of the rural economy having far-reaching implications for the rural areas.

The stimulus for change in the agrarian relations might also come from the exogenous changes, such as the introduction of new innovations in the form of technologies. For instance, the penetration of new agricultural technology may quicken the process of rural proletarianisation in a variety of ways such as prompting the erstwhile absentee landlords to resume their leased out land for self-cultivation leading to the eviction of tenants, inducing them to enlarge their operational holdings by leasing-in land from marginal and small farmers, buying land from poor people forced in to distress sale, usurping the mortgage land, and so on (Byres 1972: 191-215, 1981: 405-454, Griffin 1979).

Hence, Agrarian relations prevailing in a given society at a point of time bear traces of its specific history. These are manifestations of prevailing customs, rural institutions, local class configuration and a host of other such factors. These relations, in turn, govern not only the pattern of accumulation, resource utilization and adoption of technological innovation, but also the distribution of developmental gains among different sections of society. In this chapter, to have a better clarification of the agrarian relations of India, it is explained chronologically in three stages, i.e. 1.Pre-colonial, 2.Colonial, and 3. Post-colonial India. Before that, a conceptual clarification on the 'agrarian structure' of India is being made. In the last section of this chapter an attempt is made to delineate the various theoretical approaches to agrarian structure in a comprehensive manner.

2.1 Conceptualizing Agrarian Structure of India:

By 'Agrarian Structure' we broadly mean two fundamental dimensions of agricultural production – the social relations of production, and the forces or means of production. This is what Marx termed as 'Mode of production'[1]. There is a huge and complex debate on the mode of production in Indian agriculture depending on the complex agrarian relationships in diverse regions of India. This will be comprehensively explained in the next chapter.

Daniel Thorner (1976:8) uses the term 'agrarian structure' to refer to the network of relations among the various groups of persons who draw their livelihood from the soil[2]. He holds the view that agrarian structure is not an external framework within which various classes function, rather it is the sum total of the ways in which each group operates in relation to other groups. These relations are flexible and also formed, defined and enforced by the law and customs simultaneously.

P.C. Joshi (1975) has chosen the agrarian class structure framework to study the socio-structural changes that have been taking place in the wake of post-independence agrarian developmental programme. For Joshi the study of 'agrarian social structure' is primarily the group connected with land[3]. His definition is primarily in terms of relationship existing between the owners of the land and the actual producers. Hence both Thorner and Joshi share the view on agrarian social structure: agrarian relations- the relations among different groups of people and classes who draw their livelihood from land in the process of cultivation.

Andre Beteille (1974:28) has observed the contemporary agrarian situation from structural-functional approach and holds a wider view. He holds the view that, "the study of agrarian system will center on the problem of land and its utilisation for productive

[1] Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow: Progress Publishing House, 1977, p.21.
[2] Daniel Thorner, *Agrarian Prospect of India*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1976, p.8.
[3] P.C. Joshi, *Land Reforms in India: Trends and Prospects*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers. 1975, p.13.

purposes"[4]. He recognizes the interrelatedness of structural elements in agriculture such as technology, work cycle, organisation of production and agrarian hierarchy. Following Beteille's argument, it may be argued that agrarian social structure comprises land, cultivation of which requires people, a given technology and interrelations of these dimensions. In addition to the above factor, the state and physical factor also determine the character of agrarian social structure.

Beteille has observed that caste and agrarian classes are two different levels of realities having their own characteristic mode of organisation and their own pattern of values. However, there is close correspondence between the two[5]. Thus the pattern of inequality prevailing in rural India can only properly be explained through the studies of these two modalities.

Similarly, V. B. Singh also reduces the agrarian relation to mean "the rights and statuses of cultivator's vis-à-vis the state which has become the rent collector and regulates the rights and status through legislation"[6]. Along with state, the importance of the nature of technology must not be ignored in the agrarian relationship. To a large extent, it determines the man's relations with one another with the given differentiation in ownership, control and use of land.

Burton Stein writes about the agrarian systems, "My use of the term 'agrarian system' as is a concept which permits me to treat the relationship between people, group of people, and the land as a systematic unity"[7]. Here, the term agrarian system focuses on relationships between persons and the land as a part of whole. Irfan Habib argued that in agrarian systems the basis of domination and power is derived from control of land. The political, economic and social institutions are related to and integrated with the control of

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[4] Andre Beteille, *Studies in Agrarian Social Structure*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974, p.28.
[5] ibid., p.143.
[6] V.B. Singh, 'Agrarian Relation in India', in Ignancy Suchs (ed.) *Agricultural Land Reforms and Economic Development,* Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1964.
[7] Burton Stein, 'Integration of the Agrarian System of South India' in R. E .Frykenberg (ed.) *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian history,* Regent of the University of Wisconsin, 1969, p.175.

land. He writes, 'the concept of the agrarian systems assumes a whole and developing complex of relationships among groups of people and the basic resource of land'[8].

Like Habib, Bernard S. Cohn mentioned that ownership of land ensured stability of social status to the owners of land. Therefore, the wealth accumulated from non-agricultural activities (trade & services) were transmitted to landed status because of the glorification of Zamindari status[9]. However, the stability of social status was not dependent upon land for all times to come. The elite altered the bases of their power, from time to time, to maintain their dominant position in the countryside.

The co-existence of agrarian classes and status groups of non-economic nature is the most fundamental fact about the Indian agrarian structure to be reckoned with[10].The agrarian social structure varies from one region to another. The relations among classes and the social composition of groups, that occupying special class positions in relation to land-control and land-use in India are so diverse and complex that it is difficult to incorporate them all in a general frame[11].

Despite the diversity of social arrangement on land in different parts on India, Daniel Thorner used the terms '*Malik*', '*Kisan*' and '*Mazdur*' for the chief agrarian classes. Thorner has attempted to reduce them into well-defined and precise social categories on the basis of the three following criteria[12].

(1). Type of income obtained from soil: (a)-rent, (b)-fruits of own cultivation, and (c)-wages.

(2). The nature of rights: (a)-proprietary or ownership, (b)-tenancy (with varying degree of tenancy security), (c) - sharecropping rights or (d) - no rights of all.

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[8] Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Moghul India*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963, p.175.
[9] B. S. Cohn, 'Structural Change in Indian Rural Society', in R. E. Frykenberg (ed.) *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian history,* Regent of the University of Wisconsin, 1969, p.53.
[10] D. N. Dhanagare, 'The Model of Agrarian Classes in India', in *Peasant Movement in India, 1920-1950*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983.
[11] ibid.
[12] Daniel Thorner, *Agrarian Prospect of India*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1976.

(3). The context of field work actually performed: (a) - absentee who does no work at all, (b)- those who perform partial work, (c)- total work done by actual cultivator with family labour and (d)- where work is done entirely for others to earn wages (Thorner 1956:4).

Grigory Kotovasky in his analysis of agrarian classes in India mentioned four classic categories, 'bourgeoisie capitalist type and land owners', 'rich peasants', 'landless or land-poor peasantry' and 'agricultural labourers'[13]. Gadgil mentions two important classes in the country side, the 'substantial landlord' and the 'trade money-lender', who according to him dominate over the rural economic system and exploit the cultivators.[14]

Similarly, Ramkrishna Mukherjee has classified three rural class categories out of the nine occupational categories. These are 'land holders and supervising farmers', 'self sufficient peasantry and the group of share croppers', 'agricultural labourers and service holders'[15].

Differentiation of peasantry is a historically specific reality depends upon land tenure systems, quality of land, and social structure of the region, sub region and village. Robert Eric Frynkenberg,[16] in this regard, presents a view of socially structured land control relationships with gradation between two theoretically absolute polarities. On one extreme is the lord over land and labour, and at other end are the labourers on land. Between the two are innumerable intermediary strata. And this relationship between land control and social structure is quite complex. Like Habib, he also argues that all kinds of holdings and rights are intricately linked to definite socio-ceremonial and communal as well as economic and political roles.

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[13]Grigory Kotovasky, *Agrarian Reforms in India*, New Delhi: Peoples Publishing House, 1964, p.68.
[14] D. R. Gadgil, 'A Ceiling on Agricultural Land Holding in India', *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 14 (4), 1959, Oct.-Dec.
[15] Ram Krishna Mukherjee, *The Dynamics of Rural Society*, Berlin, 1957.
[16]R. E. Frykenberg (ed.), Land *Control and Social Structure in Indian history*, Regent of the University of Wisconsin, 1969.

Indian society has a unique agrarian structure which reflects and represents a blending of remnants from the pre-British economic order together with modern western concept of private property[17]. In order to understand the agrarian systems of modern India, we are required to make an in-depth historical analysis of her colonial past by which India was brought to the network of the exchange of the capitalist systems, though in a subordinate state dependency. This colonial economy influenced the social relations and means- tools and techniques, irrigation, labour, land, etc. of agricultural production.

2.2 Agrarian Relations in Pre-colonial India:

The agrarian structure of pre-colonial India was characterized by self-possessing, self-working and self-sufficient village communities where the term like production relations in terms of landlords, share-croppers and tenants at will were unheard of (Mukherjee 1957: 27). The agrarian relations in these communities were rooted in the century old customs and traditions and not in statutes (Thorner and Thorner 1962: 5). These communities survived on the basis of hereditary division of labour marked by close integration and harmony between agriculture and handicraft industries. Land transfer and absentee landlordism were unknown in these communities, where cultivators held on land primarily in terms of possession than that of ownership. The land was used for subsistence production rather than for profit making and as a commodity to be freely sold (Mukherjee 1957: 15-27). The only authorities these communities recognized were the king whom they paid $1/6^{th}$ to $1/4^{th}$ of their produce in ancient period and the $1/4^{th}$ to $1/3^{rd}$ in Mughal period. The share was governed by custom and was known as customary rate or '*pragana* rate'. This was collected by the representatives of the king who were known as *Zamindars* and *Jagirdars*.

From the evidences available, it is, however, assumed that in prehistoric times land was the common property of the village communities, though cultivation was not common since the Vedic period. However, scholars like Baden-Powell and Radha Kumud Mukherjee, Maintain that private property and peasant proprietorship existed in India even in the Vedic period. Evidences from the scriptures and ancient philosophical

[17]Daniel Thorner, *Agrarian Prospect of India*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1976, pp. 11-13.

works are quoted in support of all the different points of view. *Manusmriti* maintains that land is the property of him who cut away the wood or who titled and cleared it' (IX-44). But *Yajnavalkya* says that land belongs to the King and the tiller possesses only the usufructuary right. In *Arthasastra* (i.41) it is maintained that land may be confiscated from those who don't cultivate them and given to others; or they may be cultivated by village labourers and traders, those owners who don't cultivate them might pay less'. In *Jaimini's* view (Purva Mimamsa, vi. 7, 3), 'the King cannot give away the earth because it is his exclusive property but is common to all beings enjoying the fruits of their own labour on it[18].

Hence, the above scriptural view shows that state ownership was not totally absent, but limited by or combined with common ownership of the village. Marx has described it as the *Asiatic System.* But it is to be remembered that the *Asiatic System* that prevailed was, in many respect different from European slavery and serfdom. However, the land system was always in a state of constant flux in the course of millenniums. During Kautilya's time the authority and the power of king increased, and new planned settlements of fallow land and forests became widespread. The Individual peasant enjoyed the right of use as long as he cultivated the land. The king's share of the produce (the land revenue) was 1/4, 1/6 and 1/10 at different periods. However, it should not be assumed that the peasants were a free, happy and prosperous lot at all times. There were tribes who enjoyed no social status and who were forced to work as semi-slaves or semi-serfs, resembling both but different from slaves under the Roman Empire and the Serfs of the European Middle Ages.

2.2. a. Feudal Land Relations in Ancient India:

Feudalism began to develop in ancient India more than 2000 years ago. The rule of Gupta dynasty and the period that followed saw the development of feudalism in land relations though quite unlike that of medieval Europe. Marx has argued it as the form of "Asiatic Feudalism' or more precisely, the 'Asiatic System' that prevailed in India for

[18] Bhowani Sen, *Evolution of Agrarian Relations in India*, New Delhi: Peoples Publishing House, 1962, p.37.

many centuries had grown out of that primitive mode of labour and appropriation in common. The special feature of Indian Feudalism was that of '*tributary form*', that is, unlike European Serfdom, forced labour was not the general feature, the lord or overlord revived only tributes (Sen 1962: 47). The village community collected the tribute from Individuals and paid to the feudal lords. These tributes were often fixed by custom and sometimes enforced by the ruler themselves. These specific characters of Indian feudalism arose out of certain general features of ancient Indian History. It did not, of course, suddenly spring up from nowhere; it had developed though vicissitudes of epoch and did not find a firm footing until the Middle Ages (Sen 1962: 47).

The immediate predecessor of ancient Indian feudalism is perhaps some sort of slavery. S.A. Dange in his '*India: from primitive communism to slavery*' has shown that the primitive tribal communism gradually became transformed into some sort of slavery during the so-called *puranic* epoch (Sen 1962: 48). However, it is unlike that of Greek and Roman type where it emerged out of the ruins of primitive communist society. The specific form of Indian slavery determined, to a great extent, the specific feature of Indian feudalism. The village communities constituted the element of social organization which determined many specific features of the development of Indian society. The nature of the political stability from dynasty to dynasty rendered the village communities rigid, self-sufficient and isolated. Within these village communities' slavery could not replace small peasant property, for whose existence the community offered protection. But in India, Slavery could not become the mode of large scale production.

Over the period of time the development of monarchies like the Maurya Empire and subsequently the Gupta Empire showed the development of bureaucratic administration. During these epochs, the land became divided between the chiefs of the state, the village communities and the Individual producers. The producers had the right to use his produce after payment of some of his produce to the village community ownership and the rulers or their vassals had the right to collect tributes from the village communities. But the state was, in certain sense, the ultimate owner, and it collected a share of produce, realised through tributary chiefs or through feudatory princes. This was

the tributary form of feudalism (Sen 1962: 49). Under this form, the direct producer does not work under the direct Supervision of the landlord, but he must pay a tribute, the rate of which was often decided by custom. Even where village communities did not exist, the form was the same. Only, community did not intervene in any dispute between the lord and the producer. The producer here was not free in the sense that by custom, religion and law he had no choice about the form or in regard to the amount of surplus labour to be pointed with. In between the collapse of one dynasty and the rise of another the local rulers and the chiefs become the feudal lords.

2.2. b. Medieval India:

On the eve of the Muslim invasion, there existed no powerful monarchy but complete feudal disintegration. The main features of Indian feudalism developed sporadically during the ancient monarchies and grew rapidly in course of their disintegration. The main outline has further developed and perfected through the entire period of Muslim rule. However, the main features of Indian feudalism, inherited by Muslim rulers have been summed up by Ram Krishna Mukherji in the following words[19]:

1. Control of feudal sovereigns and their representatives over the village for collection of taxes and tributes and concentration of public works in the hands of state.
2. Within the decentralized social units of village communities everything is being decided by the village council. There is also the persistence of subsistence economy based on a harmonious combination of industry and agriculture.
3. This autonomous and self-sufficient existence of village communities is free of internal tensions. Further, this stabilized by the hereditary classification and division of labour based on *Jati* on different form of *Varna*.

But the system had by then undergone significant changes under the impact of new social forces. Muslim period is marked by the revival of trade and expansion of

[19] As quoted from Bhowani Sen, op. cit., p.96.

money economy. This time, produce rent is substituted by the money-rent, which strengthened the economic power of the rent collectors and revenue farmers. Private property of these rent collectors, etc, known as *Zamindars* and *Jagirdars* came into being and firmly established. The *Jagirdars* were the King's officers enjoying land-gifts; they emerged as a new class of landlords. But the occupancy right of the *khud-kasht*, i.e. the, tenant cultivator resident in the village, did not at once disappear. Under Muslim rule, land system in India was divested of much of its primitiveness, characteristics of the Asiatic System, and developed into a type of feudalism, which resembled, in some respects, the western classical form (Sen 1962: 51). As distinguished from the earlier system, land revenues were collected, in general, not by state officials, but by local chiefs or lays with whom settlements were made by the central state authorities. This system, first appearing after the downfall of the Maurya Empire and particularly in the Gupta period (320-650 A.D.) was extended and regularized under Muslim rule.

As distinguished from the earlier system, assessment of land revenue was more systematized and standardized. The process was initiated under Sher Shah (1540-45 A.D.) and perfected under Emperor Akbar. During Akbar's regime, on the whole, estates were divided into three categories: *Khas Mahals*, *Zamindaris* and *Jagirdaris*. The *khas mahals*, i.e. crown lands, were those where the *Zabti* system of assessment, i.e. Akbar's regulations were applicable. *Zamindaris* were the estates of the chiefs who did not accept any service from central state power or *Mansabdari* under the imperial government, but became the rulers in their own domains, subject to the payment of tributes to the emperors. *Jagirdaris* were those estates, which were given to *mansubdars* (i.e. administration under the imperial government) in lieu of payments for their services. The *Jagirs* were given in perpetuity and the *Jagirdars* maintained their own system of revenue assessment and collection (Sen 1962: 53). Unlike the earlier period (vedic, Gupta era), under Muslim rule, ejection of peasant seems to have been replaced by corporal punishment. The uniformity of land relations, formed by customs and traditions of the village communities, lost its vigor under the Mughal Empire. Here, with the growth of feudal characteristics as distinguished from the tribal and clan features of the ancient times, the elements of heterogeneity had increased. Customs were being replaced more

and more by regulations from above and which in turn became transformed into new customs in course of time (Sen 1962: 53).

With the decline of the Moghals, empire-tyranny increased, feuds became the normal order of the day. Peasants suffered under the whims of tyrants, revenue agents and assignees. This tyranny of the seventeenth century was based upon a social background different from its European counterpart of the same epoch. The system that had developed under the Mughal emperors had the following characteristics (Sen 1962: 56); *Firstly*, land belonged to the peasant, in the sense, that he enjoyed hereditary occupancy right if he was a resident of the village. Even his rent could not be increased by the *Zamindar* beyond the customary level (*Nirikh*). *Secondly,* land could neither be purchased nor sold. Generally the peasant was not evicted; even if he was evicted for failure to cultivate, land was not to be resumed as the *Khas* land of the Zamindar, but another peasant had to be invested with its occupancy right. In short, land never passed out of the hands of the peasantry. *Thirdly*, the *zamindars* whose tributes to the ruler were fixed were themselves petty rulers and had to fulfill the traditional duties of a ruler for the betterment of agricultural operations.

However, the agrarian relations that continued from early Hindu rule up to the end of the Muslim period, is marked by developmental activity unlike the Vedic period. The despots and tyrants, the *zamindars* and *jagirdars* and all the men of the top, were concerned with the development of agriculture, the maintenance of an irrigation system, reclamation of wasteland and construction of roads etc. Unlike the European states, the feudal relations in India took place within the framework of Asiatic System. It contained the features of unity of industry and agriculture (the peasant and the artisan were one and the same), the village as the self-sufficient unit. Despite the emergence of money economy, relative advance of commodity production and the growth of feudal over lordship over the peasantry, the Indian society remained ossified; the ancient institutions such as the caste system, untouchability and even tribal relics did not disappear, but remained within the bosom of the unchanging village. The greed of the Indian tyrants was not for money but for landed estates. This was due to the status added to land. The

class that remained most influential in Indian society during Muslim rule was the land holding class[20].

Historians have also gathered enough evidence to show that the Indian village was internally undifferentiated, self-sufficient and stable were incorrect[21]. According to Irfan Habib, during the Mughal period of Indian History:

> Economic differentiation had progressed considerably among the peasantry. There were large cultivators, using hired labour, and raising crops for the market, and there were small peasants, who could barely produce food grains for their own subsistence. Beyond this differentiation among the peasantry, there was still sharper division between the caste peasantry and the 'menial' population (Habib 1982: 247).

However, pre-colonial agrarian relations were also marked by some sort of conflict and tensions. There were also instances of the peasant movement revolting against local rulers and landlords, though, these were organized and inspired by some religious ideology or a millenarian dream[22]. Whenever revenue demands became unbearable, the typical response of the peasantry was to flee *en masse* to other territories where conditions were more conducive to land cultivation (Habib 1963; More 1966: 332)[23]. Dharma Kumar (1992) also argues that there was emergence of sizeable population of those who primarily worked as agriculture labourers in pre-colonial South India and other places generally belonged to some specific low caste groups.

The notion of *Jajmani* system was also popularized by the colonial ethnography, which tended to conceptualize the agrarian social structure in the framework of reciprocal exchange relations. Here, each served others; therefore, each in turn was a master as well as servant (Wiser 1969: xxi). On the contrary, it has been argued that the dominant landlords used the system of hereditary obligations and occupational duties to perpetuate

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[20] ibid., p.54.
[21] S.S. Jodhka, "Agrarian Structures and Their Transformation", in Veena Das (ed.) *Oxford Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp.1213-1242.
[22] D.N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements in India*: 1920-1950, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983, p.2
[23] As quoted by S.S. Jodhka, op.cit.

and legitimize the local variety of pre-capitalist /feudalistic relation (Beidelman 1959: 6, Djurfeldt and Lindberg 1976: 42)[24].

2.3 Agrarian Relations in Colonial India:

On the eve of British conquest, money economy and merchant capital had grown in India to a great extent. The centralized absolute monarchy was in a state of collapse. But the main economic structure of Indian feudalism did not yet show any symptom of breakdown.

According to the legal forms of land relations, first developed under the great moghals, the right of a tributary feudal-lord (technically called the Zamindar) could be obtained from the emperor on the promise to pay stipulated revenue (Sen 1962). This was called the *zamindari* right under which the tributary feudal lord had the right to rule over the people inhabiting in the estate. With the declining influence of the emperor, the provincial governors became virtually independent from which zamindari right could be directly obtained. The company's first step was to assume these zamindari rights over the estates of Calcutta, Gobindpur and Sutanuti from the provincial Governor, Nawab Azim-Ush-Shan, in the year 1697. The replacement of a native overlord by a foreigner caused the first breach in the existing land relations.

In the prevailing system, unlike the Foreign *Zamindars,* the native *zamindars* or revenue collectors were not so much interested in making money as they were interested in maintaining social leadership and political supremacy and thereby maintained aristocracy. Marx rightly argues that over lordship of land began to pass from the class of aristocracy to the class of 'moneyocracy'. The introduction of a new *zamindari* system marked the beginning of new feudal landlordism in total disregard of the peasant's traditional right. It broke down the ossified asiatic system which had existed for several millenniums. The new form of monetary economy characterized by commodity relations ruined the rural artisan, smashed the closed bond between agriculture and industry and broke down the isolation of the village. Land became a commodity. Under this

[24] ibid.

transformation, the Great Bengal Famine occurred in 1770 followed by famines of 1784, 1787 and 1790. The Great Fakir- and later the Sanyasi – rebellion broke out during 1772-1789 against this plunder tyranny of foreign oppressors which is the harbinger of new consciousness[25]. *Zamindari* system was of two types, i.e. the permanent settlement and temporary settlement type. Permanent zamindari settlement existed in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Banaras and North Madras. Temporary *zamindari* (or the Jagirdari) settlement existed in Uttar Pradesh; the *jagirdari* system which prevailed mainly in East Punjab and Rajasthan was merely another variety of temporary zamindari settlement under different name. There were several types of the zamindari tenure in India, such as the *Talukdari* system in parts of North Gujarat and the *Khoti* system in the Konkan. The land revenue assessment and administration in these cases were governed by Special Acts. This ongoing crisis of agrarian relations forced the government to make some measures in the form of land settlements, likewise, (1) permanent settlement (zamandari), (2) Ryotwari system, (3) Mahalwari system.

2.3. a. Introduction of Permanent Settlement:

The situation urgently called for remedial measures not only to revitalize the agriculture but also to stabilize the revenue collection and save the Indian market from getting ruined and pauperized. The process began with the introduction of new property rights in land. The first, and historically the most controversial, was the permanent settlement introduced by Lord Cornwallies through regulation II of 1793. Under the settlement, zamindars, the erstwhile revenue collectors, were declared the proprietors of the soil on the condition of payment of a fixed amount of revenue which was fixed in perpetuity. The land revenue demand was fixed at 90 per cent of the rental value of their estates, leaving 10 per cent as their remuneration. The zamindars were also empowered to enhance the rent on the grounds of any improvement in agriculture.

It was introduced with expectation of the steady flow of revenue, on the one hand, and inducing moneyed men to undertake much needed capital investment to rehabilitate

[25]H. R. Sharma, *Agrarian relations in India: Patterns and Implications*, Har-Anand Publications, 1995, p.31.

the agriculture, on the other. Others have also argued that the permanent settlement also had politico-strategic implications, for in the landlord the British rulers saw a possible support base in local society[26]. It has also been argued that the company by this arrangement sought to keep India as an agricultural economy appendaged to the British industrial empire. The greed of maximization of revenue was fulfilled while agriculture continued to be languishing as before.

It was assumed that zamindars would collect half the produce and pay two third of it to the government as '*pashkas*'. But the actual collection by the zamindars was very high and cultivators share had been reduced from 1/3rd to 1/5th (Dharma Kumar 1982: 218). The peasant position was reduced to extremely deplorable condition and became a puppet in the hands of *zamindars* due to the introduction of permanent settlements and the resultant status of raiyats, Patel remarked:

> By the force of authority of the British Government in India millions of cultivators in these three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were transformed, almost overnight, from the peasant proprietors into tenants-at-will. In the whole history of man kind one would look in vain for a parallel to this classic example where in so many were sacrificed in such a short time so that few may prosper and rule (Patel 1952: 44).

Under this provision of settlement, the status of the zamindars was not secure. The zamindars were obliged to pay the land revenue to the government within a stipulated period. The non-fulfillment of this task could lead to the confiscation of their estate. The zamindars, encouraged by the difference between the land revenue to be paid to the government and the rent to be collected from the farmers, indulged in the practice of sub-infeudation rather than evincing any interest in the development of agriculture, as was originally anticipated by the authors of permanent settlement[27]. The occupancy ryot under zamindari tenure has frequently been the victim of illegal exactions like *abwabs*, etc. the right of sale and transfer is restricted and, in many cases, denied. Furthermore, in the *zamandari* areas, almost all sources of cultivation, like irrigation and land, are the private property of landlords. They became an additional weapon in the hands of the landlord to exploit the peasants.

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[26] A. R. Desai, *Social Back Ground to Indian Nationalism*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1976, p.39.
[27] H.R. Sharma, op.cit., p.31.

Thus, the introduction of *zamindari* system, in the words of land revenue commission, led to the process of sub-infeudation and rack-renting of the peasantry and the evils of absenteeism; of management of estates by unsympathetic agents; of unhappy relations between landlords and tenants and of multiplication of the tenure holders of middlemen between the cultivators and the government (Mukherjee 1952). Under the system intermediary gained at the cost of both actual cultivators and the state. While the actual cultivators suffered because of rack-renting, the state lost because of permanently fixed revenue. The additional economic burden also weakened the 'traditional' structure of patron-client relations between the zamindars and the local tenants, leading to disintegration of what Scott Calls 'the moral economy of the peasantry' (Scott 1976)[28]. Instead of fulfilling the expectation of colonial rulers it accelerated the trend towards 'parasitic landlordism'[29]. By the middle of nineteenth century the entire area under permanent settlement was in crisis.

2.3. b. Introduction of Ryotwari System:

Consequent to the above noted developments, the concept of permanent settlement fell into disrepute. In contrast to the zamindari system, a much more stable and elastic system in terms of revenue in the form of Ryotwari Settlement was introduced by Captain Reed and Thomas Murno in 1792 in the district of Bramahal of Madras province. The *ryotwari* system was introduced in the Southern Madras, Bombay, Berar, East Punjab and portions of Assam and Coorg. It was further extended to other parts of the province which were not covered under the Zamindari system.

In India, the British rulers introduced the ryotwari system only because the zamindari system was found less profitable. They hoped that a settlement entered with the peasant will enable them to appropriate the entire agricultural surplus, while under the zamindary system; the big landlords paid to the government only fixed revenue (Sen 1962: 77). Under this, the actual land holders (ryots) were given formal proprietary rights. The ryot directly come under the state. Government entered into an agreement

[28] As quoted by S.S. Jodhka, op.cit., pp. 1213-1242.
[29] ibid.

with Individual cultivators who was recognized as proprietor with a right to sublet, mortgage and transfer the land by gift or sale. The ryot in theory was a tenant of the state, responsible for paying revenue directly to the state treasury, and could not be evicted as long as he paid his revenue (Baden – Powell 1892: 126)[30].

The first assessment which demanded half of the produce was extremely severe and oppressive. In 1807, the assessment was reduced to one third of the produce but could not be effected due to insistence for higher revenue demands from the tenancy. Under the subsequent settlement, the revenue demand was officially lowered to 50 per cent of the gross produce on wet and 33 per cent on dry lands. The one third assessments represented the entire economic rent in many cases and proved highly oppressive. The oppression of the cultivators continued unabated until 1855 when a comprehensive survey settlement was initiated. Under the new settlement, the assessment was determined taking into consideration the value of crops to the net cultivation cost which was a better indicator of the surplus available with the ryots and one half of it was fixed as a revenue rate. The practice of re-assessment was finally abandoned in 1937. The ryotwari system was extended to Bombay and Central Provinces after the annexation of these provinces from Maratha rule in 1817-18[31].

Under the *ryotwari* tenure (or Mahalwari), the peasant proprietor is in many cases free from some handicaps. Under this system, they gain the strength to struggle against rack renting and market domination, which had slightly greater advantages than the occupancy ryots under the zamindari tenures. In the *ryotwari* areas, though the government had, as a general rule, neglected the task, yet facilities for irrigation have been expanded in certain areas. It is interesting to note that the two predominantly *rytorwari* zones – South India consisting of Madras, Andhra, Mysore and Kerala and North-West India consisting of Rajasthan, East Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir – have been provided with more irrigation works than Eastern India (Sen 1962).

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[30] ibid.
[31] H.R. Sharma, op.cit. p. 34.

However, peasants in the ryotwari areas should not be considered as more fortunate than their class brothers in the *zamindari* areas. The greed of British rulers ruined them both economically and physically. The tremendous increase in the assessment during revision, of settlement in 1860s, the famine of 1866-67, crop failure of 1867-68 and 1870-71 and the famine of 1899-1902 made the conditions of peasantry still more miserable and led to the agrarian unrest and revolts, of which Bardoli Satyagraha was notable (Sharma 1995: 34). The peasantry suffered, people were impoverished, villages deserted and lot of cultivable area was rendered waste.

2.3.c. Mahalwari Settlement:

Another variety of land settlement was as *Mahalwari* or *Malguzari* was introduced in the united provinces, Punjab and the central provinces under Regulation IX of 1833. It was first adopted in Agra and Avadha and later extended to Punjab. Under this, village was identified as the unit of assessment and the settlement was made with the entire village/mahal. The peasants residing in the village contributed to the total revenue demand for the village on the basis of their respective holdings. However, it is not very different from the ryotwari settlement. Effective ownership of the cultivated land was vested in the cultivator here as well, but the revenue was collectively paid by the village. A villager of 'good social standing' was generally given the responsibility of collecting the revenue from individuals and paying the assessment on behalf of the village[32].

However, there were variations in detail as between the different parts of the country under this system. Variations in regard to the procedure and period of settlement and the land revenue assessed. The state demand varied from 40 to 70 per cent of the rental. Regulation of 1822 entitled the State to as high as 83 per cent of the gross rental of the estate of which was subsequently lowered to 66 per cent in 1833. The state demand was further reduced to 50 per cent of net produce of net rental value of an estate under rule XXXVI of Saharanpur Rules in 1855. Land tax in Punjab was fixed at half of the gross produce in 1846-47 which continued up to 1856-57 when it was lowered to one fourth, then to one sixth of the gross produce (Dutt 1906: 34-92). whatever may have

[32] S.S. Jodhka, op.cit.

been the original intention of those who advocated the *Mhalwari* system based on the recognition of the joint character of the village and the common rights in lands attached to the village, it led to the break-up of the old village community and the growth of an un-coordinated individualism[33].

The significant distribution of provinces according to the three principal land tenures are well presented by Karuna Mukharji in the following table:

Table 2. a.

Sr. No.	Varieties of landlords tenure	Varieties of joint village tenure	Varieties of independent single tenure
1	Permanent settlements (zamindars of East and West Bengal)	U.P. Mahalwari settlement except Oudh Talukdars	Madras ryotwari
2	Temporary settlements (remaining zamindars of east and West Bengal)	Punjab Mahalwari	Bombay and Berar raitatwari
3	Temporary settlements (Oudh Talukdars)	Madhya Pradesh Malgujari	Special systems of Assam and Coorg.

Source: Karuna Mukerji, Land Reforms, p.94.

This review of the three prevalent system of land tenure in the pre-independence period, viz., the zamindari, the Mahalwari as the Ryotwari tenures indicates clearly that the early British administrators approached the problem of land settlement and assessment only pragmatically. It also made it clear that these tenures did not rise spontaneously out of the historical development of Indian society; rather they were economic experiments introduced by the British rulers, experiments that sought to graft certain alien system into Indian soil. Marx correctly characterized the *zamindari* system as a caricature of English landlordism and the *ryotwari* system as a caricature of French peasant proprietorship (Sen 1962: 76). These unsettlements were right from the very inceptions, harbinger of an agrarian crisis which turned the peasants into paupers, ruined Indian agriculture and ushered in a whole era of devastating famines.[34]

[33] M. B. Nanavati and J.J. Anjaria, *The Indian Rural Problem*, Bombay: Vora Publishers, 1970, p.240.
[34] B. Sen, op.cit., p.75.

2.3. d. Commodification of Land and Rising Indebtedness:

Prior to the advent of British rule, land was inalienable from the tillers of the soil. Rights in land were divided among the king, the feudal satraps and the peasants from whom land could not be taken away. The Royal Commission on Agriculture reported that to the farmers land was totally valueless; unless they cultivated it, it had no market price, for no one would buy it or make advances upon it as security, so that their recourse was to became pauper and perish[35]. But the steadily growing monetization of economy, maturing into money rents, shook the roots of this inalienability. With the introduction of British land tenure system, the transfer of land was legalized, particularly in *ryotwari* and *mahalwari* areas, while the new land settlements conferred formal and transferable/alienable rights over land, the growing revenue demands and the increasing market orientation of agricultural production created conditions under which land began to acquire the features of commodity. Land became a commodity; it could be purchased and sold like any immovable property.

Here, land acts as a source of security for the peasant to borrow money from the moneylenders. Instead of crops, the moneylenders began to see his land as a mortageable asset against which he could lend money. Even if, the government helped the money lender through the judicial system by enacting some legislations like civil procedure code of 1859, The limitation Act of 1859, The Law of 1855 and the introduction of compulsory registration of deeds dealing with immovable property (Chaudhari 1982: 151-152).

Colonial rule, with the process of 'de-industrialization' of Indian economy, shattered the roots of old urban handicrafts along with the collapse of rural cottage industries. While trade and towns were growing more and more people were thrown back on to agriculture because cottage industries were ruined without any compensation of modern factories, in the absence of patronage. At the same time, the influx of cheap machine-made goods from England after industrial revolution hastened this process.

[35] H. R. Sharma, op.cit., p.35.

Economic ruination of urban and village artisans increased the pressure on land considerably[36].

Apart from growing commercialization / de-industrialization, an increase in population during nineteenth century made good-quality cultivable land scarce. The area of per capita cultivated land diminished because of the increasing dependence of population on land. Furthermore, the most serious consequence that follows from the above mentioned conditions is the steady decline of self-supporting persons and the growth of unemployment among the various sections of the peasantry. Land, as a commodity, acts as an instrument in the exploitation of peasantry and the growth of landlessness among the peasantry. In history, it is known as a process of untying the peasant from land. In Western Europe, it was the harbinger of a new mode of production called capitalism (Sen 1962).

Indebtedness was the immediate corollary of the condition of landlessness among the peasantry, though it was a not a new phenomenon. The peasant was coerced to offer his land as guarantee against possible default. In the economic environment scarcity and transferability of land, the moneylenders or rich landowners, as a distinct social category, entered the credit market. During the emergency and needful time, the peasant could go to the *sahukar* (Moneylender) for a loan of grain and get it according to the ability of his pay back. He acts as a 'crude balance wheel to even out periods of scarcity and prosperity' (Moore 1966: 358). This otherwise, in the words of Weber, can be called as 'neighbourhood help' (Weber 1978: 361)[37]. This impoverished the small and, often also, the middle peasant, and strengthened the position of big landowners and moneylenders in rural society.

Borrowing from moneylenders resulted in indebtedness, land transfers, tenancy and so on. Peasant indebtedness and land alienation acquired such gigantic proportions that even the colonial administrations began to see this as 'a problem' (Darling 1947,

[36] D. R. Gadgil, *Industrial Revolution in India in Recent Times*, London: Oxford University Press, 1933.
[37] As quoted form S.S. Jodhka, op.cit.

Thorburn 1983). For instance, in a study on Punjab, it was found that, in 1930, as high as 87 per cent of the proprietors were under debt, the average debt per proprietor was Rs.463 and total debt was 12 times the land revenue paid by all concerned whether indebted or not. About 40 per cent proprietors is debt were small proprietors owning landless than 8 acres whose average debt was Rs.310. Only 20 per cent of the tenants were free of debt and average debt was Rs.290. Among the tenants-at-will and form servants 22 per cent were free of debt. The average debt was Rs.135; their debt was low because of their low credit worthiness (Darling 1947: 15-16)[38]. N. Bhattacharya argues that the total population of male agricultural labourers in the state of Punjab, coming from peasant and landowning castes went up from 0.8 per cent in 1911 to as much as 29.7 per cent in 1931 (Bhattacharya 1985: 136). Likewise Bailey also argues that, in Orissa, once a market in land developed peasants began to sell their lords whenever they were faced with a 'contingent need' (Bailey 1954)[39].

The mounting indebtedness triggered off massive land transfers from hands of agriculturalists to non-agriculturalists. This process was more pronounced in Ryotwari areas where the peasant was endowed with the right to alienate/transfer his land by sell or mortgage or sublet it. Even if, land transfer took place in the zamindari areas despite the fact that the right to transfer the land was not granted to the peasants.

Towards the closing decades of the 19th century, the custom of alienating land had got firmly established in the Society under the legal recognition of Tenancy Act of 1928 and fully in Tenancy Act of 1938 (Chaudhari 1975: 133). However, rising peasant indebtedness and land alienation is followed by growing peasant discontents. The Deccan riot of 1875 is one of those that had drawn the attention of Britishers by passing the legislations such as Deccan Relief Act of 1879 and the Punjab Alienation of Land Act of 1901.

[38] H.R. Sharma, op.cit., p.36.
[39] S. S, Jodhka, op.cit.

Hence, it can be argued that these land transfers were not merely changes in the titles of land; they affected seriously the agrarian relations of the country. In ryotwari areas, peasants were disintegrated in to landlords and rich peasants on the one hand, and tenants-at-will and agricultural labourers on the other. Likewise, in the zamindari areas polarization of the peasantry occurred into landlords and *jotedars,* on the one hand, and under-raiyats, share croppers and agricultural labourers on the other[40].

2.3. e. Commercialization of Agriculture:

The monetization of rural economy under the British rule brought about huge changes in the far-reaching characters of the rural economy. It dismantled and disorganized the old land system. Indian agriculture entered into the sphere of commodity circulation and there by started the commercialization of agriculture. Commercialization of agriculture, itself mean two basic process: *firstly*, a shift in the agrarian economy from production for consumption to production for the market; and *second*, a process where land starts acquiring the features of a commodity and begins to be sold and purchased in the market, like other commodities.

However, production for market is not entirely a new phenomenon in Indian agriculture. During ancient period, India had trade with the foreign empire. But this was based on the Asiatic (Feudal) System characterized by the unification of agriculture and handicrafts. During Muslim rule, commerce based mainly on artisan-produced goods, began to develop as an independent element of India's urban economy. However, there were instances of production of cash crops such as cotton, tobacco and sugarcane by the rich peasants (Habib 1982). Initially, these markets were generally local in nature with limited demand and supply. But the onset of direct British rule changed the entire scenario and interrupted the earlier process of development. British rule changed the prevailing set-up in two ways: *firstly*, the isolation of the Indian village was broken and the peasant products were directly brought into the sphere of international trade. Hence, peasant produces for the market because money had become indispensable to him. *Secondly*, Indian handicrafts were replaced by the imports of manufactured goods from

[40] H.R. Sharma, op.cit., p.40.

English and consequently the traditional character of India's foreign trade underwent radical transformation (Sen 1962).

The laying of the railways and the opening of the Suez Canal accompanied with Industrial Revolution in England made the Indian village a part of the global market. The introduction of the payment of land revenue in money form and the manifold increase in land revenue at the same time compelled the peasantry to produce the cash crops and sell their grains in order to meet the state's revenue demands. However, the degree of commercialization varied from region to region. The area devoted to food crops gradually declined due to the large export of food and non-food export. The Rayalseema region of South India shows the decline area of food crops from 78.2 per cent in1901-4 to 58.2 per cent in 1937-49, while at the other end it increased from 17.0 per cent to 30.1 per cent of cash crops during the same period (Satyanarayana 1991: 57). The per capita availability of food grains declined heavily due to large export of food and non-food crops and decline of food crops. This decline was highest in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa at 30 per cent. Even if, Punjab saw a decline of 18 per cent. G. Blyn estimated the exportable commercial crops grew more than ten times faster at 1.31 per cent annually, compared to only 0.11 per cent increase per annum for food grains from 184 to 1947 (Blyn 1966)[41].

Now, Commodity exchange and commercialization of agriculture made the peasant vulnerable in different ways. They have sharpened the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation under conditions of semi-colonial economy. Merchant's capital and usury have depressed the living conditions of entire peasantry, often led them towards pauperization and have even strengthened semi-feudal exploitation through varied forms (1962). Forced commercialization of agriculture disintegrated the traditional systems of food security. The serious aftermaths that followed were the crude famines during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. According to an estimate, 3.5 to 4 million people (one-tenth to one-eighth) of the total population of the region perished during the 1876 famine is part of South India (Kumar

[41] As quoted by S.S. Jodhka, op.cit.

1982: 231)[42]. Similarly, 3.5 million people died in the 1943-4 Bengal famine. Though it was attributed to the widespread crop failures by the colonial rulers, it was not true in fact (Sen 1981, Greenough 1982). According to Sen (1981) it was not the scarcity of food, but the changes in the 'exchange entitlement' that caused the 1943 Bengal famine.

The situation was further accelerated by the unprecedented inflation resulting from war expenditure, high food prices, low wage rate along with declining employment and also cyclonic destruction. It was argued that the monetization of rural economy with commercialization of agriculture, commodification of land and emergence of free agricultural labour, led the passé of capitalist economy in colonial India. There is no unanimity of opinion on it. How far it is true can be further examined in the 'mode of production' debate section.

2.4 Changing Agrarian Relation in Post-colonial India:

The independence from colonial rule in 1947 marked the beginning of new phase in the history of Indian agriculture. On the eve of independence, feudal and semi-feudal agrarian relation characterized rural India. The peasantry under all verities of land settlements was exploited in terms of rack-renting, insecurity of tenure, forced labour, usury, and so on. This resulted in the impoverishment of the peasantry and stagnation of agricultural production. In a nut shell, it can be argued that colonialism left two historical legacies: The absence of socio-structural dynamism on the one hand and on the other the consequent emergent of political forces aimed not only at the creation of sovereign states, but also at remedying the absence of this dynamism. During colonial regime, dearth of agrarian reforms were being initiated for complete restructuring of agrarian relations in the interest of both the emancipation of the peasantry from the semi-feudal production relations and fostering the agricultural development. Immediately after the dawn of independence, comprehensive agrarian reforms were initiated to accomplish the designed objective. Indian state also took over the task of supervising the transformation of its stagnant and backward economy to make sure that the benefits of economic growth were not monopolized entirely by a particular section of society.

[42] ibid.

Even after the change of colonial political set-up, the inequality developed in colonial-rule continued to exist at micro level structure of Indian society. Daniel Thorner is among the first who observed the perpetuation of earlier pattern of land relations and debt dependencies, and the nature of property relation where cultivator always have the low social status, being unable to access assets for investment on land. These complex legal, economic, and social relations uniquely typical of the Indian countryside served to produce an effect that Thorner described as a 'built-in depressor'[43].

However, India made an humble attempt through various agrarian reform measures to achieve the desired objective by dismantling the feudal or semi-feudal model of production. Out of these measures, the most notable were land reform policy, community development programme and the green revolution that are explained later on.

2.4. a. Land Reforms:

Re-organization of economy became the matter of central attention for all intellectuals and the leaders of freedom movement after the independence of India (Joshi 1987). Land is the basis of all economic activities on which the fate of a nation's agricultural economy depends. Thereby, land reform also became a question of considerable economic interest and debate in the discourse of development in India. During colonialism, India's traditional landownership and land use pattern were changed. The introduction of the institution of private property de-legitimized the community ownership systems of Indian rural societies. The introduction of the land tax under the permanent settlement Act 1793, and the popularization of Zamindari settlement dismantled the traditional patron-client relationship that the landless shared with land owning class. Through various land settlement policies, the Britishers created a parasitic class of intermediaries, and the actual tillers, did not enjoy any ownership rights over the land, which they cultivated.

In the years immediately following India's independence, a conscious process of nation-building looked upon problems of land with pressing urgency. While there was a

[43] Daniel Thorner, *Agrarian Prospect in India,* New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1976, pp.10-13.

general agreement that the prevailing agrarian structure marked by absentee landlordism and semi-feudal relations of production, needed to be reorganized, two extreme positions were taken on the following crucial question: 'what kind of agrarian reforms are required and which would work the best?' and is there an economic logic behind land norms? The competing answers to the questions came to be known as '*the farm size productivity*' debate[44].

Two schools of thought emerged in this debate. The first school known as 'institutionalist' – argues that land distribution not only democratizes the villagers but also increases the productivity of land. This led to the slogan like 'land to the tiller'. In contrast, the second school of thought argues that the modernization of Indian agriculture cannot be possible in a small land holding. It required landlord reorientation. They needed to be motivated to cultivate their own land with wage labour and using modern technology. The land reform according to them, would only divide the land to 'unviable holdings', rendering them unfeasible for the use of modern technology[45].

The Indian government introduced land reforms in her first five-year plan with the aim of re-distribution of land among the tillers. Unequal distribution of land ownership created by the colonial rule hindered the developmental programme in agriculture. Thus the need of distribution of surplus land among the rural poor was felt. The major steps that India has taken through her various five-year plans for land reforms are:

1. Abolition of intermediary tenures between the state and the cultivators.
2. Conferment of ownership of rights on the tillers of the land, security of tenure, regulation of rent.
3. Fixation and implementation of land ceiling legislation and distribution of surplus land.
4. Consolidation of holdings.
5. Compilation and updating of land records.

[44] S.S. Jodhka, op.cit., pp. 1213-1242.
[45] ibid.

6. Reduction of existing pressure on agriculture by shifting of a sizable portion of the farm population to non-farm activities.

Though the intention of the land reforms passed in India soon after its independence was quite progressive and ever radical, the actual results were different from the stated attention[46]. The policies of land to the tiller and protection of tenants were not sufficiently realized. The concentration of land ownership continued, because, at the initial phase of land reform, there was no provision of ceiling of holdings. The benefits of these land reforms accrued to those erstwhile landlords and the intermediate class at the cost of poor tenants. The small tenants and the weaker sections could not gain the fruit of these policies. P.C. Joshi has rightly called it as 'sectorial or sectional reforms.'

The government of India directed its states to abolish intermediary tenures, regulate rent and tenancy rights, confer ownership rights on tenants, impose ceiling on holdings, distribute the surplus land among rural poor, and facilitate consolidation of holdings. However, the actual implementation of these legislations and their impact on the agrarian structure is entirely a different story. Most of these legislations were intentionally provided with loopholes.

The net result of the land reforms in India has been the creation of a powerful class of owner-cultivation without involving any major redistribution of land. While Zamindars and absentee landlords may have been abolished, in their place has emerged a class of rich farmers, numerically in a minority in the rural areas but dominant in the economic, social and political spheres, who have been the main beneficiaries of land reforms. Along with rich farmers, the medium sized landowners have also derived some benefits from land reforms. Daniel Thorner rightly argues that a small group of people are used to running the village, economically, socially and politically. The members of this group have both a sense of power and the means of exercising it. They have devised a thousand ways of getting around the land reforms. Unless their power is reduced

[46] P.C. Joshi, 'Land Reform and Agrarian Change in India and Pakistan since 1947', in R. Dutta and P.C. Joshi (ed.), *Studies in Asian Development*, Delhi: Institute of Economic Growth, 1971, p.26.

substantially, their fellow villagers will continue to be frustrated from the land reforms. By virtue of their economic and social position these same influential folk are used to running the political life of the village. They dominate the village officials or they serve as village officials and know the higher-ups in *Taluk* or *Tehsil* affairs[47].

The overall trends of agrarian charge following land reforms in India have been aptly summed up by P.C. Joshi:

(a) Land reforms, especially in India, have been characterized at the *ideological* level by agrarian radicalism, giving rise to great expectations on the part of the rural poor. At the *programmatic* level, however, land reforms have only tended to promote and consolidate the interests of the intermediate class, big peasants and the medium landlords.

(b). The land reform programmes, thus, have a dual impact. Benefiting mainly the intermediate classes, it has left unsatisfied the vast expectations of the rural poor. The farmers have been upgraded and pushed into prominence in the land and power structure. The latter have, in contrast, lost even the limited security, which they enjoyed under the old system without a tangible gain in any other form[48].

Though land reforms succeeded in weakening the hold of absentee landlords over rural society and assisted in the emergence of a 'class of substantial peasants and petty landlords', the disparities in land ownership pattern continues to be in-egalitarian[49]. The land reforms did not bring the intended results, than even failed. The condition of the landless and small tenants became further miserable because of the traditional bonds were disturbed without ensuring the security to the under-privileged sections.

2.4. b. Community Development Programme (CDP):

As a part of development strategy in India, Community Development Programme was launched on October 2, 1952 in a few selected 'blocks' and it was soon extended to the entire country. It was an integrated and comprehensive approach to address the rural

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[47]Daniel Thorner, *The Shaping of Modern India*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1980, pp.160-161.
[48] P.C. Joshi, op.cit., p.20.
[49] V.S. Vyas, 'Changes in Land Ownership Pattern: Structural Changes in Indian Agriculture', in E. J. Hobswam (ed.), *Peasants in History: Essays in Honour of Daniel Thorner*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 181-193.

problem. It was partly in conformity with Gandhi's vision of development with a considerable variance with modernist approach. Unlike other (land reform and cooperative credit) developmental measures, the CDP had emanated from 'productionist' approach to rural development. It had been inspired by the agricultural extension service in the United States and was based on a notion of harmonious village community without any significant internal differences and conflict of interests[50]. Its central argument is that development cannot happen in isolated and fragmented manner; rather it must be an integrated one involving all aspects of life and whole community. It was a method through which five year plan seeks to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages[51]. It is of multidimensional purpose: development projects including provision of social services, development of industry as well as agricultural and non-agricultural activities and performing local government functions in rural areas. Its objective was to provide a substantial increase in agricultural production and improvements in basic services, which would ultimately lead to a transformation in the social and economic life of the village.

Under community development programme, fifty-five community projects were launched. Each project area comprised about 300 villages, covering an area of 450 to 500 sq. miles, i.e., about 1, 50,000 acres with a population of about 2, 00,000 persons. A project area was divided into three development blocks of hundred villages, each with a population about 65,000 persons. Each block was divided into about twenty groups, each containing five villages. Each group of villages was being served by Gram-Sevak (the village level worker). Of the villages, one generally became the head quarter of the Gram-Sevak.

The programme was extended to wider areas at the end of the first five year plan and 603 national extension service blocks, and 533 community development blocks covering 1,57,000 villages and a population of 88.8 million persons were covered. Nearly one out of every three villages in India was brought within the orbit of this programme.

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[50] S.S. Jodhka, op.cit.

[51] A.R. Desai, 'Community Development Project-A Sociological Analysis', in A.R. Desai (ed.), *Rural Sociology in India,* Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1969, p.611.

The second five year plan proposed to bring every village in India under this scheme, 40 per cent of the area being brought under a more intensive development scheme. In all 3,800 additional Extension service blocks would be set up 1,120 of these being converted into community project blocks. Later on it was modified.

Various scholars conducted a large number of studies on community development programme and rural social transformations. Most of them have recognized that the CDP could not get the desired result. An evaluation of the impact of CDP by Dube in 1958 points out that 'nearly 70 per cent of its benefits went to the elite group and to the more affluent and influential agriculturalist'. The gains to poor agriculturalist were considerably smaller. For the economic development of this group, as well as for that of rural artisans and agricultural labourers, no programme was initiated by the projects[52].

Mandellbaum argues that 'those who are mainly landless labourers, often gain nothing. They have nothing to begin with, nothing which can be improved, no means of getting on economic start, and so they remain economically as well as socially disadvantaged. The gap between them and other villagers frequently widens rather than diminishes on account of development projects[53].

However, the enthusiasm with which the programme was started could not be sustained. A non-political approach to agrarian transformation resulted in helping only those who were already powerful in the village. The inherent social stratification, unequal power structure coupled with power-distance ideology obstructs the participation and involvement of local people in community development programme. The socially weak are often treated as subordinates and remains a passive follower of the directives of the

[52] S.C. Dube, *India's Changing Villages: Human Factors in Community Development*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1967, pp. 82-83.
[53] David G. Mandelbaum, 'Social Organisation and Planned Cultural Change in India', in Daniel Lerner & W. Schramm (ed.), *Communication and Change in Developing Countries*, Honolulu: East and West Center Press, 1998, p.157.

real assumed superiors[54]. Most of the benefits were conferred by a small section of the rural elite.

2.4. c. Green Revolution: Its Aftermath:

Two major evolutionary steps mark the post-independence period in the agricultural planning and development in India. The introduction of CDP in 1952, with extreme emphasis on rural reconstruction, neglected the production aspect in agriculture. Therefore, the second phase of (1960-65) saw the introduction of Intensive Agricultural Development Programme (IADP), with a fresh consideration of the assumptions, method and techniques as well as machinery of planning and plan implementation is the field of agriculture. A team of agricultural personnel from the Ford Foundation, supported by the U.S. sponsored technological package for agricultural development, recommended a strategy for agricultural growth to the Indian government. The thrust of this was the achievement of higher productivity through the use of new technologies of High Yielding Varieties of seed (HYV). Initially the IADP operated in fourteen districts on an experimental basis; it was later extended to 114 districts (out of 325) under the name of Intensive Agricultural Areas Programme (IAAP) in 1965.

The term Green Revolution had been first used during the late 1960s to refer to the effects of the introduction of High Yielding Variety (HYV) seeds of wheat and rice in the developing countries. It signaled the beginning of a transformation of agriculture from an impoverished 'way of life' to a profitable business occupation[55]. M.S. Swaminathan argues that – 'the green revolution in developing countries essentially has been a public sector enterprise, though it is predominantly a private sector enterprise in developed world[56].

The rational behind green revolution was the maximization of farm productivity by using new varieties of seeds that required fertility enhancing inputs, i.e. chemical

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[54] L. Krishnan, 'Has Rural India Changed', in S. Mittal and V. Rao (ed.), *Development and Change in India,* Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1993, p. 78.

[55]F.R. Frankel, *India's Green Revolution: Economic Gains and Political Costs*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971, p.197.

[56] M.S. Swaminathan, *Sustainable Agriculture: Towards an Ever Green revolution*, Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1996, p.144.

fertilizers, controlled irrigation conditions, and plant protecting chemicals (pesticides). It would be erroneous to equate the green revolution with HYV alone. It also requires the provision of cheap institutional credit, price incentives, and marketing facilities. In short, green revolution was the large-scale application of modern science and technology to agriculture.

However, 'green revolution' had been the center of all attraction for academicians, policy makers and political leaders at the initial period of its introduction. Various kinds of interesting debates were going on by the various scholars on the socio-economic consequences and the prevailing mode of production in the post-green revolution context. Nevertheless, green revolution has been the dominant thesis for agricultural modernization in the post-independent India. The widespread use of these varieties and marked increase in the field output made us self-sufficient in respect of food and for export to earn the foreign exchange. Food-grain production increased by 19.1 per cent is the post-green revolution period (1965-73) over the pre-green revolution period (1961-65). Punjab and Haryana marked 87.2 per cent and 64.9 per cent respectively. Hence, Ministry of Agriculture, of Government of India declared 1967-68 as the year of 'green revolution'.

However, various scholars and the political opponents did not easily accept the glorification of green revolution. All the sections of farmers could not achieve the gain of green revolution. Because of higher cost effective to access modern inputs like fertilizers, pesticides and proper irrigation facilities; poor peasant could not gain advantage of such revolution. Many scholars argue that the new agricultural technology was accessible only to the large-scale farmers, and the prosperity unleashed by the green revolution was distributed differently to the various categories of big farmers at the cost of small-scale, marginal farmers. The poor, small and marginal farmers, with no capital of their own and little or no access to credit, were unable to do so.

Although the green revolution measures were considered to be 'scale-neutral'[57]; but it is far from reality. The bureaucrats, pertaining to agricultural development, rarely believed in the notion of scale-neutrality, and their action was hugely pro-rich policy. Joan Mencher (1978) in a study of the agricultural officers, revealed the biasness of officers towards the large farmer, being far from neutral. 'What they thought was needed to further the green revolution was to forget about small farmers, because they could not really contribute to improved production. To these officials, progressive farmers are those who have viable farms and who are fairly well of '[58]. Mencher further argues that some of the small-scale holders in Chinglepet were also interested to access new inputs and were as innovative as the rich landowners were. But these farmers lacked the facilities to try new methods, and seldom received encouragement from the development bureaucrats.

Frankel argues that the poor peasant, associated with handicaps under the existing agrarian structure along with limited material improvement, had become increasingly resentful of institutional arrangements and deprived from their legitimate share of the increased production by modern technology[59]. Likewise, Byres argues that the rich peasants are not merely the influential actors in the countryside, but also they play a determining role in the state apparatus and mould the development strategies in their favour. Their superior resource endowment, class ties and close linkage with block officials, access to information and a command over institutional credits strengthened the clutch to adopt the new technology[60].

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[57] Initially green revolution measures were considered to be 'scale-neutral'. It was there expected that, whether it is HYV Seeds, pesticides, insecticides, fertilizers, or whether it is lift irrigation, mechanization of farm operations and other farm subsides, small farm holders would benefit as much if not more than large land owners would.

[58] Joan P. Mencher, *Agriculture and Social Transformation in Tamilnadu-Past origins, Present Transformation and Future Prospects*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1978, pp.239-240.

[59] F.R. Frankel, op.cit.

[60] T.J. Byres, 'The New Technology, Class Formation and Class Action in the Indian Country side', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1981, Vol.8 (4), p.407.

John Harris observes that, small peasants might have got slim involvement with new modern production process because of apparent profitability of HYV cultivation. For that they borrow money from moneylenders to meet the production costs and because of debt, they sell the large part of product at the lower cost immediately after harvest[61].

Like Harriss, Jodhka (1994), in his study of three villages in green revolution districts of Haryana, argues that while bigger farmers had enough surplus of their own to invest in the new capital-intensive farming, for smaller landowners it means additional dependence on borrowing, generally from informal sources. In order to clear the debt, they have no choice but to sell the farm yield in the market leaving nothing for consumption. Further, they bought food for consumption when the prices were higher. Thus, the adoption of new technologies with limited resources meant that they are further drowned to the trap of dependencies. On the other hand it had definitely strengthened the economic and political position of the rich farmers. Hence, it can be argued that green revolution is not resource-neutral also[62]. Mostly, there is no chance of de-proletarianisation of agricultural labourers along with capitalist development of agriculture. Like Breman (1985), he argues that the capitalist development in agriculture has led to erosion of the ideology of patronage and loyalty from the mind of agricultural labourers and farmers leading to tension between both of them[63].

On the issue of changing pattern of agrarian relations of production in the context of post green revolution period, Sheilla Bhalla[64], like others (Beteille 1971, Gough 1989), agues that despite some elements of continuity that she observed, the relationships between farmers and attached labourers were also changing into formalized contractual arrangement. Due to the shift towards capitalist agriculture, there is increasing demand for attached labour. A significant change that she observed was the institutionalization of the formalized contract system like a modern one. The new technology has undoubtedly

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[61] John Hariss, 'Capitalism and Peasant Production: The Green Revolution in India', in T. Shanin (ed.), *Peasants and Peasant Societies,* Oxford: Blackwell, 1987, p.232.

[62] S.S. Jodhka, op.cit.

[63] S.S. Jodhka, 'Agrarian Changes and Attached Labour: Emerging pattern in Haryana Agriculture', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1994, Vol.29 (39), Review of Agriculture, pp. 123-31.

[64] S. Bhalla, 'New Relations of Production in Haryana Agriculture, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1976, Vol.11 (13), Review Agricultural, pp. 23-30.

improved the inherent bargaining position of agricultural labourers in the green revolution areas of Haryana.

P. C. Aggarwal[65] has argued that green revolution has not curtailed the labour demand per hectare, though the nature of labour demand has changed. Due to mechanization of agriculture multi-cropping and more intensive agriculture are initiated and it requires more talented labourer for year round employment. As the use of modern machine required skilled labourers, the demand for unskilled landless labourers declined and their ability as farmers reduced. It seems clear that demand for labour will diminish as agriculture becomes more mechanized. They are losing out in several ways. For instance, the demand for their traditional services has diminished; availability of land on crop sharing basis has reduced, inflation has kept their real wages almost constant, and alternative employment opportunities have lagged behind need.

G. S. Bhalla, in his survey, has shown that in Punjab in between 1961 and 1971, there was a doubling of the number of landless labourers. The small cultivators were not only dispossessed entirely of their land, but also the traditional means of self-employment, through leasing in supplementary land from large land owners was now withdrawn on much less available to them. Small peasants and tenants were increasingly pushed out of self-employment into wage labour[66]. It has further increased the inter-regional inequalities. The areas with better irrigation facilities, favourable agro-climatic conditions with developed infrastructural facilities became more developed and prosperous region deriving benefit from HYV seeds, while little change happened to other states. Again, the increasing of proletarianisation in Indian agriculture led to the emergence of agrarian tensions and conflicts and made the agrarian relations more explosive.

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[65]P.C. Aggarwal, 'Impact of Green Revolution on Landless Labourers: A Note', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1971, Vol.6 (47), p.2363-5.

[66]G.S. Bhalla & G.K. Chadha, *Green Revolution and Small Peasants: A Study of Income Distribution and Punjab Cultivators*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing House, 1983.

Jan Breman[67], in his study of central plains of south Gujurat, has revealed how the process of agricultural modernization, accompanied by the change in social relations of production, led freeing of agricultural labour relations of patronage and institutionalized dependencies. He observed the process of 'de-patronization' being experienced in the farmer-labour relationship in the village of south Gujurat. He argues that dissolution of previous relationship of dependence is the consequence of transition to capitalist mode of production and development of modern infrastructure connected with it. He has also observed that poor landless labourers are more inclined to leave the native area for shorter or longer period. He rightly termed it as the 'circulation of labour' rather than 'migration of labour' in view of its periodic ebb and flow.

Hence, it can be concluded that rural upper class benefited much from green revolution. It not only quickened the process of economic polarization is rural areas, but it has also contributed in destroying the patron-client relationship between landlords and tenants, and landowners and labourers. One of the serious consequences of it is the emergence of landless agricultural labourers. Reciprocal obligation became a distant past.

2.5 Mode of Production Debate:

In the inconclusive debate on the so-called 'mode of production'[68] in Indian agriculture that took place in the seventies, mostly in the pages of the 'Economic and Political Weekly', there was a great display of theoretical rigor. The modernization of agriculture has led a number of Indian and foreign intellectuals to fight on the question of 'mode of production' in Indian agriculture or more broadly in India. Primarily 'mode of production' thesis has been the tool of understanding the under development of third world nations for the structural Marxists. Marx pointed out that the transition of a state

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[67] J. Breman, *Of Peasants, Migrants and Pauper: Rural Labour Circulation and Capitalist Production in West India,* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985. pp.82.

[68] Marx's analysis of mode of production refers to the complex relationship between forces of production (i.e. tenurial rules, resources, and instrument of labour, and labour power) and the social relations of production. Production is the process by which man with their labour power and instrument of labour transform the objects of labour in order to reap some material economic return. The object of labour and instrument used constitute the means of production, but the process itself requires the participation of men who are brought together in terms of specific set of social relations. These social relations are specifically defined in terms of the ownership and control of the means of production and the social product.

from feudalism to capitalism leads it to a developed stage, which is being experienced by the European nations. It is found among the modern nations as one of the forms arising from the dissolution of feudal landlordism and that it is a necessary stage of transition for the development of agriculture itself.

The problem in dispute is that of whether or not a capitalist transformation of agriculture had already begun to take place during the British colonial period. Whether or not contemporary changes mark a significant transformation of the agrarian economy[69], the question what constitutes agrarian capitalism and of the determination of agrarian capitalism was the central attention of scholars. A large number of scholars with their findings argued, whether there is capitalism or semi-feudalism, colonial or dual-mode of production persists in Indian agriculture. The debate revolves around certain questions:[70]

1. Was there capitalism in Indian agriculture? (a)- Or is it a recent phenomenon? (b)- Is it a dominant tendency? (c)- By what criteria can the existence of capitalism in agriculture be proved?
2. Is it a pre-capitalist or semi-feudal one? If so, what are parameters?
3. What was the production relation in colonial India? Is it a dual mode of production or bears the separate identity of colonial one.

Number of scholars by employing their method of analysis conducting their empirical field trips, have reached at different conclusions with regard to existing production relation in Indian agriculture. Some have argued that capitalism has already started among the Indian farmers (Patnaik 1971, Thorner 1980, Gupta 1962, Kotovsky 1964, Omvedt 1981). Though, there was no unanimous opinion about the criterias of capitalism, still we can draw some basic elements from the argument of various scholars. However, it should be noted that the framework and terminology of discussion are explicitly Marxist. Capitalism in agriculture is determined by (a) the employment of hired

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[69] John Hariss, *Capitalism and Peasant Farming: Agrarian Structure and Ideology in Northern Tamilnadu*, Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 10.

[70] Alice Thorner, 'Semi Feudalism or Capitalism? Contemporary Debate on Classes and Mode of Production in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1982, Vol. 17 (49-51) pp. 993-99, 2061-86.

labour, (b) commodity production, i.e. production for market rather than for subsistence, (c) use of improved machinery and other capital equipment and (d) reinvestment of profit for the intensification of production.

Utilizing the criteria of using hired labour in the larger scale unit, S.C. Gupta (1962), and G.G. Kotovsky (1964) have reached at the conclusion that the capitalist sector represented the leading tendency in the Indian agriculture but that yet it did not dominate. Daniel Thorner, in his field trips, has observed that there have been some tendencies among the farmers for implementing the new scientific method, increase of farm mechanization and self-cultivation by the enterprising farmers, using hired labour, leasing out their land on rent in small parcel, and able to obtain higher output etc. He has also observed the development of 'gentlemen farmers' who have their command over funds, their education and their connection in the right places that have facilitated the development of capitalism in Indian agriculture. He concluded that, 'before the 1960s there used to be in the plains of India only a few pockets of genuinely capitalist agriculture – parts of the Punjab and western U.P. central Gujarat and coastal Andhra. Now for the first time there has come into being in all parts of the countryside in India, a layer, thick in some regions, thinner in others, of agricultural capitalist[71].

The debate about the mode of production in India was at first focused on the question of whether or not the existence of generalized commodity production in which labour power is itself a commodity – which was or appears to have been the case in nineteenth century India – constitutes the necessary and sufficient conditions of existence of the capitalist mode of production[72]. Utsa Patnaik slightly disagreed with the above assumption. She argues that the characteristics of genuine capitalist are not the appropriation of surplus value generated by neither wage labour nor the sale on the market of higher proportions of produce. Though, these are necessary, they are not the indispensable conditions. Rather, the accumulation, and reinvestment of surplus value on an ever-expanding scale determines the capitalist one. The capitalist in agriculture can be

[71] Daniel Thorner, op.cit.
[72] John Hariss, op.cit.

recognized by the degree of capital intensification. Patnaik argues that, this process was under way in India from the mid-1950s onwards, in her view, because of the expanding domestic market created by the large governmental outlays under the five year plans[73]. Historically, she contends that capitalist is a former landlord or rich peasant. He does not suddenly appear out of the blue as clearly – defined 'pure' socio-economic type: he develops within the pre-existing non-capitalist economic structure. Patnaik spoke initially of a pronounced trend of capitalist development in agriculture by the late 1960s. She later modified this and argued that India is characterized only by a limited and distorted form of capitalist development which does not revolutionize the mode of production. She argued that the Indian social formation has distinct transitional structure, but that is not necessarily 'on the way' to being completely transformed by capitalism[74].

Paresh Chattopadhyay, criticizing Patnaik, argues that commodity production is the necessity condition of capitalism. He argues that commodity production involves the labour-power which itself become commodity. Therefore, Patnaik's thesis of accumulation and reinvestment of surplus value fall within it[75]. In his view, the British preserved as well as destroyed the condition of India's pre-capitalist economy, accelerated as well as retarded the development of capitalism in India. He argues that capitalist development was a reality in India during the British period. But he insists upon 'all the ups and downs, advances and retreats of his development', as well as 'the contradictions engendered by capitalism's co-existence and co-presence with the still dominating pre-capitalist relations[76].

The proponents of semi-feudal position argue that, still there is the persistence of pre-capitalist relation productions that were inhibiting the development of forces of production. Until and unless the pre-capitalist relations of production are transformed into capitalist relation of production, technological development leading to dynamic capitalist

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[73] Alice Thorner, op.cit.

[74] Utsa Patnaik, 'Capitalist Development of Agriculture', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1971, Vol. 6 (39), Review Agricultural, pp. 123- 30.

[75]Chattopadhyaya, 'On the Question of Production in Indian Agriculture: A Preliminary Note', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1972, Vol. 7 (13), Review of Agriculture, pp. 39-46.

[76]P. Chattopadhyaya, 'Mode of Production in Indian Agriculture: An Anti-Kritik', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1972, Vol.7, review of Agriculture, pp. 185-192.

economy will not came into existence and the capitalist labour market cannot assume its 'dominant" form vis-à-vis the pre-capitalist labour market (Bhaduri 1973, prasad 1972, Nirmal Chandra 1974, Rudra 1974). These scholars pointed out the institutions of social arrangements (usury, share-cropping etc.) of pre-capitalist relations that retard technological development in agriculture.

Amit Bhaduri,[77] in his study of 26 villages of West Bengal in 1970 concluded that the dominant character of 'production relation' could be best described as 'semi-feudal' having more commonality with classic feudalism of the master-serf type than with industrial capitalism. He mentioned four prominent features of semi-feudal relations: Share cropping; perpetual indebtedness of small tenants; concentration of two modes of exploitation, namely usury and land ownership in the hands of the same economic class; and the lack of accessibility to the market for the small tenants. Bhaduri rightly pointed out the issue of double exploitation which requires that the available balance of paddy with the tenants, share croppers must always fall short of his family consumption. Therefore, the landlord is always against the technological development which might raise the productivity level of the tenant, and they would weaken the political and economic power of land owner, and thereby the tenants are in the trap of constant indebtedness. The same observation is also made by Pradhan Prasad in his study of three districts of Bihar[78] and by Nirmal Sen Gupta[79].

However, 'the articulation of distinct mode of production in India has been criticized by a group of scholars who have contributed in the formulation of the concept of 'colonial mode of production' (Alavi, 1975, Banaji 1977, Bagchi, 1975). Hamza

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[77] A. Thorner, op.cit.

[78] Prasad's survey of three District of Biharin 1970 and 1972 shows the same findings, share cropper is common feature, usury is still prevailing and large land owners, who cultivate with hired labourers, prefer 'attached' workers. Like Bhaduri, Prasad also noticed that, double exploitation is the major factor of low utilization of resources such as irrigation and improved technology in agriculture. Alice Thorner, op.cit.

[79] According to Sen Gupta, in post-independent India 'feudal mode of production and feudal social formation' survive in assimilative form, ruining over a variety of proportionality between 'feudal mode and capitalist mode'. He notices that, the agrarian formation which was 'colonial semi-feudal' in colonial period can be called 'semi- colonial semi-feudal' in the post colonial period (ibid.).

Alavi,[80] while postulating colonial mode of production argues that neither 'feudalism' in colonial India nor contemporary rural 'capitalism' can be theoretically grasped except in the context of the world-wide structure of imperialism into which India was, and is, articulated. Had there been distinct modes of productions in a particular social structure, there would have been contradiction between them where one dominates over other. No one can mark the conflict between 'feudalist' landlord and the rural capitalist; rather both cooperate with each other forming a specific structure of colonial agrarian economy. A particular feature of colonial mode in India has been the creation of 'large number of destitute small holders – 75 per cent all forms in modern India. With regard to class contradictions as well, the colonial mode has its own pattern. He concludes that the form of capitalism, in colonial India differed from those of the 'metropolitan centers' of capitalism because of the internal 'disarticulation' of the colonial economy and of 'deformed' character of its extended reproduction, resulting from its subordination within the colonial system. Alavi finally argues that India can best be understood in terms of a concept of structurally differentiated form of capitalism which he refers to as the 'colonial mode of production'[81].

Disagreeing with Alavi, Banaji (1977) argues that the concept of 'colonial mode of production' posits no mechanism or dynamics to explain the character of the colonial and post-colonial economy and society of India. His own argument is that the capitalist domination of India is effected through 'small-commodity production' on the foundations of small-scale merchant money-lending capitalism. And this was the predominant form of social relations of production in colonial India. The various discussions on colonial India have all emphasized the baneful effect upon the older Indian economy (whether characterized as Asiatic feudal on pre-capitalist) of its involuntary integration into the world capitalist circuit. All agree that India is still tributary to this as semi-colonial status. Others prefer to speak of India's peripheral capitalism in relation to metropolitan centers[82].

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[80] Hamza Alavi, 'India and the Colonial Mode of Production', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1975, Vol.10 (33, 34 &35), 1235-1262.
[81] John Hariss, op.cit., pp.12-13.
[82] A. Thorner, op.cit.

S. G. Lin holds the view that, it is dual mode of production, which is prevailing in Independent Indian Society. According to him, there is a superimposition of more than one mode of production. In Lin's formulation 'the two primary mode (pre-capitalist and capitalist) inter penetrate' generating a single mode with dual character having, at once both a accommodating and conflicting internal dynamics[83].

However, the scholastic fight ends with the consensus that, in spite of local specificities and considerable regional variations, the capitalist mode of production indeed was on its way to dominate the agrarian economy of India. It is most profound in the region experienced by the green revolution[84].

2.6 Theoretical Approaches to Agrarian Structure:

Diverse scholars have developed their argument on the agrarian studies pertaining to different theoretical plane. And they have their own method of studying the agrarian structure. It can be divided into four categories, i.e., 1.Evolutionary model, 2. Institutional, 3. Neo-Populist and 4. Marxist model

2.6. a. Evolutionary approach to agrarian structure:

H. S. Maine and Baden Powell were the main protagonists of evolutionary model to agrarian structure. Both these scholars were concerned with the evolution of the 'original nature of rights on land in India'. Their central argument is on the matter of who exercised control over land, who cultivated the land, what was the pattern of distribution of the produce, the evolution of community ownership of land into individual ownership of land, and the emergence of over lordship on Agrarian structure etc[85].

H.S. Maine has enormously relied on the records of bureaucrat. He reveals that the evolution of community ownership into private ownership is through a gradual

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[83] ibid.
[84] S.S. Jodhka, op.cit.
[85] H.S. Saxena, *Changing Agrarian Social Structure in Rural Rajasthan*, Jaipur: Classic Publishing House, 1988, p.14.

process. He speculates that the growing sense of personal rights and ambitions combined with a tendency in almost all offices to become hereditary has been the stumbling block in the harmonic exercise of control over land by the village community[86].

Baden – Powell's argument is more based on factual information. For instance, he argues that the existence of Rajput proprietary bodies as a result of the clan movement and single aristocrat adventures are factual evidence of the creation of over lordship[87].

The issue of conflict and deprivation were neglected by both these evolutionists in their study of Indian agrarian structure. Some of their findings are misleading and inconsistent with the available historical evidence. The claim, that the common sharing of the produce by the various strata of Rural Society does not adequately justify the prevalence of the notion of the communal rights on land. The communalist type of ownership in regard to the property right of land is contradictory to the oldest Indian Agrarian records which gives information inconsistent with this postulate. The right on land was individual as well as communal. It belongs to all alike in the sense that who ever will exact himself will be the owner of land. Labour would have been the main qualification of an individual to become the land owners.

Irfan Habib, the protagonists of evolutionary development of agrarian structure rejects the view of Baden-Powell (1974) and Maine (1975) on the 'origin of communal rights in land.' He argues that village community is a corporate body formed by the villagers for their collective action, other than production organization. The peasant right to the land was always his individual right, not the communal one[88]. He has observed the various aspects of agrarian structure in the historical perspective with more exactitude. He adopts the evolutionary approach to almost all dimensions of agrarian society, in respect of their origin and development. His socio-structural analysis of the agrarian system is closer to the Marxian evolutionary variant.

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[86] H.S.Maine, *Communities in the East and West*, London, John Murray, 1975, p.135.
[87] Baden-Powell, *The Land System of British India*, Vol.1, Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1974, pp.28-72.
[88] Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963, p.123.

Habib reveals that the zamindari rights in land and its allied attributes have not dropped all of a sudden from the sky, but must have been created through evolution by social forces operating from time to time[89]. He is of the view that under the circumstances, the village headman, who was previously meant to collect the state revenue, wielded considerable power over the village and acquired, contains rights identical with those of the zamindar. Gradually, his jurisdiction extended even to include right of allotting the woodlands of the village[90].

Habib has also observed the evolutionary nature of agrarian exploitation. According to Habib, earlier there was hardly any scope for exploitation, when land belonged to the peasant and peasant belonged to the land[91]. There was no separate class of 'landless labourers'. In times of need, people following occupations other then agriculture were engaged as labourers, particularly, the low caste people, assigned to the most contemptible occupation.

Bhowani Sen is another exponent of the Marxian variety who agrees to the concept of evolutionary development of the Indian agrarian system. However, he slightly differs from others in that he assumed that in the pre-historical time, land was the common property of the village, though cultivation was not common since the Vedic period[92]. Sen also holds the same view as Habib (1963) that the specific features of the Indian feudalism did not suddenly spring up. They arose out of certain general features peculiar to ancient India. It has developed through the course of epochs, but did not find a firm footing until the Middle Ages. Under Muslim rule, it shed its primitive characteristics. At this stage in some respects, it resembled western feudalism. Its immediate predecessor was, perhaps, some sort of slavery in India[93]. A new feudalism was introduced by the British in total disregard of the peasant's traditional rights. For the first time in history, the Indian agrarian structure lost its traditional social background. Land became a commodity.

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[89] ibid., p.159.
[90] ibid., p.133.
[91] ibid., p.115.
[92] B. Sen, op.cit., p.137
[93] ibid., p.47.

Applying the Marxian assumption, Sen argues that the disintegration of peasantry into various classes as the first symptom of capitalist development. The Indian agrarian system has already witnessed the features of Feudalism, the exploitative nature of the agrarian using system, rack-renting, inferior tenancy, unbalanced division of produce, unequal exchange between peasantry and merchant and consequently the alienation and pauperization of the peasantry and the consequent gradual depression of agriculture. Sen maintains that Indian agrarian system has already entered the phase of capitalism, but it is accompanied by a radical change in the technique of production and partial disintegration of peasantry.

2.6. b. Institutional Approach:

Some British ethnologist and ethnographers in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries applied this approach to study the Indian society. Gunnar Myrdal also accepted the institutional approach to study the under developed societies. Their major areas of interest in Indian society were village community caste system and joint family.

Charles Metcalfe, the British Ethnologists, glorified the village community as 'little republic'[94]. He considered village community as self sufficient, static unit. Metcalfe does not see the 'transition' (from status to contract) which S.H. Maine did see. Because of one-sided picture of Indian villages, he neglected to see, consciously or unconsciously, the other side of the system – the conflicts of caste and class interests, social, religious and political upheavals, and ultimately the crisis existing in commodity production. In fact, the deliberate and conscious attempt to consider village as self-sufficient static and harmonic unity is vehemently criticized by the scholars like Irfan Habib, Dharma Kumar etc.

[94] The village communities are 'little republic' in the sense that they have nearly everything what they required and almost independent of any foreign relations. Metcalfe states that wars pass over it, regime come and go, but the village as a society always remains 'unchanged, unshaken and self-sufficient'. He considers the Indian village as monolithic, atomistic and unchanging entity.

A.S. Altekar, in this regard, developed three basic arguments which are as follows: *Firstly*, the village communities were not unchanging both in terms of time and place. There were differences between northern and western communities in India. This was due to fact that those in the north had changed owing to the socio-economic and political factions that were not operating in western India[95]. *Secondly*, the village communities were not 'republics' since throughout the Indian history, the community was always subordinate to and a constituent of larger political units[96]. *Thirdly*, they were not democratic but self-governing. In author's own word, "the republic again is very unfortunate, it conveys notion of democracy of equal region of general election and so on. Nothing of this kind took place in our village communities. There was no idea of equality"[97].

The institutional approach was systematically applied by **Gunnar Myrdal** (1968) in his major works, '*Economic Theory and underdeveloped Regions*' and '*Asian Drama – An inquiry into the poverty of Nations*'. There he rejected a single factor analysis and saw the essence of a social problem concerning a complex of interlocking, cellular and 'cumulative' changes. Secondly, he recognized the importance of 'non-economic' factors for economic development. He also recognized a set of six conditions, forming 'social systems' in their various combination sets, which dominate in South Asian Societies, especially India. He categorized out put and incomes, conditions of production, and levels of living as 'economic', attitude towards life and work and institution as 'non-economic', and policies as 'mixed' condition.

So Myrdal's point of contention is that there will not be adequate economic development without making the institutions favorable to it. He conclusively states that in India, the heavy population pressure, unfavourable neighborhood relations (particularly with China and Pakistan),fragmented domestic politics (based on casteism and communalism) and the problem of national integration are functioning as break to the

[95] A.S. Altekar, 'Teachings of History', in A.R. Desai (ed.), *Rural Sociology in India*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1978, p.169.
[96] ibid., p.170.
[97] ibid., p.170.

full development which is simply impossible without changing social institutions at the first and foremost[98].

Andre Beteille (1974) has analysed the Indian agrarian socio-structural changes in the functional perspective. Like others he also used the framework of agrarian class structure for analyzing the relationship between deprivation and the resultant agrarian tensions. His classification of agrarian population is within the confines of the hierarchical structure of the caste system. Beteille has observed that caste and agrarian class are two different levels of realities having their own characteristic mode of organization and their own pattern of values[99]. However, there is close correspondence between the two. Thus the pattern of inequality prevailing in rural India can properly be explained only through the studies of these two modalities.

Beteille holds the view that deprivation or inequality does not necessarily lead to conflict. The structure of hierarchal framework of values of the caste system gave legitimacy to unequal relations in the agrarian system. But, both the caste system and the agrarian system have been changing fast during post - independence period. The traditional components of obligations which the upper class had towards the lower classes are now being superseded by the political components[100]. It is the structural change in the agrarian social setting which now makes inequality more perceptible and less tolerable. There is increase in the impersonal as opposed to personal order. The conceptual framework of the caste system is rather fading away and the concepts of depicting the realities of the agrarian class structure are becoming increasingly popular. He also pointed out the emergence of an ambidextrous class of people. The quoted "gentlemen-farmers", who are skilled in manipulating both the new bureaucratic rule and the traditional personal contacts, is an obvious example of it.

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[98] G. Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Enquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968, vol.1, p.303.
[99] A. Beteille, *Studies in Agrarian Structure*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974, p.94.
[100] ibid., pp.112-13.

2.6. c. Neo-populist approach:

The 'Neo-populist' approach to study the agrarian structure was developed in Russia by A.V. Chayanov (1987) and his associates, in the late 19th century as alternative to the Marxist theory. The central argument of this approach is that village is overwhelmingly 'homogeneous'. Peasantry is economically undifferentiated, with its superior 'efficiency' of production because of extensive use of family labour

Chayanov recognized the exclusive use of family labour in peasant economy. He rejected the categories of capitalist farming – namely wages, hired labour, profit, calculation etc. and emphasized on the category of the 'labour product' of the peasant family where "the degree of self exploitation is determined by a peculiar equilibrium between family demand satisfaction and the drudgery of labour itself"[101].

His point of argument sounds the 'utilitarian' tone of James Mill and is based on the basis of 'demographic differentiation'. That is the factors of number, age and sex in the family. To put in his words, "the amount of labour product is namely determined by the size and composition of the working family, the number of its members capable of work etc"[102]. Chayanov saw "the modernization of traditional small farming as lying along neither a capitalist nor a socialist road but as a peasant path of raising the technical level of agricultural extension and cooperative organization, at the same time conserving the peasant institutional framework of the family small holding"[103].

The 'Neo-populist' approach to study Indian agrarian structure is also followed by A.K. Sen (1966), C.H. Hanumantha Rao (1971) and others.

Following Chayanov, **A.K. Sen** observed that small farms have a higher productivity per acre compared to big farms and, in this sense, are more 'efficient'. However, he admitted that the type of efficiency in question was 'static' efficiency on the basis of given resources allocation, but from a dynamic point of view, particularly with

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[101] A.V. Chayanov, ' The Theory of Peasant Economy', in D. Thorner (ed.), Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987.

[102] ibid.

[103] M. Harrison, 'Chayanov and the Economics of Russian Peasantry', *Journal of Peasant Studies*,1974, Vol.11 (4), July, p.390.

reference to the future growth of output, hired labour-based capitalist farms might be more efficient than family labour based farms[104].

C.H. Hanumantha Rao also glorified the share-cropping system. He went to the extent to prove that even under conditions of economic uncertainty with little scope for decision-making; he also accepted that share cropping might ultimately cease to be efficient as 'profitable modern inputs assure significance'[105].

2.6. d. Historical Materialistic Approach:

A.R. Desai applied the historical materialistic method to study the Indian agrarian system, problems of rural social deprivation and conflict. Combining the economic and historical data with the sociological findings, he has interpreted the phenomenon of social transformation of the society in terms of dialectical approach. He is of the opinion that the problem of agrarian deprivation lies at the very root of the structure of the agrarian system as well as in the social structure of the rural society as such. Hence, the changes in the structure of the agrarian system and social structure affect the structure of deprivation.

Desai found out that ownership of land in the form of private property was almost absent in the pre-British India. The peasantry owned and cultivated the land[106]. It was also remained unaffected under the Mughal regimes and did not show the phenomenon of deprivation. As the agrarian class structure was almost of a single tier, the notion of agrarian class conflict as a result of agrarian deprivation may have been absent[107]. As a result of the new agrarian policies of the British and the transformation of land into private property or commodity, the entire gamut of agrarian structure in the land relations and in the relations of production changed. The agrarian population was divided into various socio-economic groups, e.g., serfs, zamindars, tenants, peasant proprietors,

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[104] A.K. Sen, 'Peasant and Dualism With or Without Surplus labour', *Journal of Peasant Economy*, 1966, Oct.
[105] C.H. Hanumantha Rao, 'Uncertainty, Entrepreneurship and Share Cropping in India', *Journal of Peasant Economy*, 1971, may-June.
[106] A.R. Desai, *Social Back Ground of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1976, p.20.
[107] ibid., p. 10.

landless labourers, share-croppers and others. This is due to the various techno-economic relations created by the contemporary circumstances.

Desai argues that the biased agrarian structure leads to deprivation. However, it is further accentuated during the post-independence period though attempts were made to change the British Agrarian structure. Further, the government's agrarian policy based on the postulates of a mixed economy aggravates the major contradiction of agrarian society. It keeps the entire agrarian sector as a private enterprise. It strengthened the upper stratum at the cost of lower stratum. It thereby creates a situation of greater tension and collision, and higher harmonies and progressive growth of toiling sections of rural society[108].

Finally, he argues that the agrarian structure has remained almost the same as it was before, or if there has been any change, that is the shift in economic axis, e.g., from feudal hands to capitalist hands. Likewise the pattern of agrarian deprivation has undergone changes in the wake of post-independence agrarian reforms. He is of the view that to end the agrarian crisis and for proper development of rural society, the economic axis of the Indian agrarian economy should be shifted from capitalist to socialist.

Like Desai, **P.C. Joshi** has also combined economic data with that of sociological inference to study the socio-structural changes which have been taking place in the wake of post-independence agrarian developmental scheme. Along with applying the frame-work of agrarian class structure for the analysis of the phenomenon of agrarian deprivation and class conflict, he also minutely observed the changes that have been taking place in the mode of production in agriculture and agrarian class structure during post-independence period. He argues that the agrarian developmental programmes in the post-independence period are biased towards the upper stratum at the cost of lower strata of rural society.

[108]ibid., p. 86.

The present agrarian deprivations have cropped up from the very nature of agrarian planning, ranging from programmes of abolition of the Zamindari to the provisions of credit facilities and the modern farm technology[109]. He further reveals that land reform measure like the abolition of Zamindari, ceiling on land holding and other tenurial reforms have not only failed in their basic aims in providing security to the people on the lower rungs of agrarian society, but at the same time they have also making the rich, richer and the poor, poorer.

Though the pace of capitalist mode of production was accelerated due to programme of land reform, community development programmes and green revolution, it is also responsible for the genesis of obstacles in its fast growth. It leads to division of agricultural economy into various sectors-capitalist, personal owner cultivator and tenant – sharecropping sectors etc. though they are not mutually exclusive categories[110]. Joshi holds that the emerging agrarian circumstances have been helpful in eliminating the old traditional feudal classes, modifying the monopoly of landlord on the land and power structure. But at the same time the position of erstwhile intermediate class in the land relations and in the power structure has also been strengthened and consolidated, causing perpetuation of imbalance in the rural sector.

One of the outstanding findings of Joshi is that the break-up of traditional pattern of patron-client relationship between the landlords and the tenants and between the land owners and the landless workers. This accentuated the problems of insecurity of the poor villages. This is due to side effects of unbalanced developmental programme due to growing economic polarization which is a result of the introduction of modern farming technique and other developmental measures.

Daniel Thorner, as a Marxian exponent of the Indian situation has also analysed the structure of agrarian deprivation and forms of agrarian class conflict in the frame-work of agrarian class structure. He understands the process of stratification which is

[109] P.C. Joshi, Land Reform in India and Pakistan, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1970, p.52 and Daniel Thorner, *Agrarian Prospect in India,* New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1976, p.82.
[110] P. C. Joshi, Review Article, 'Rural Base', *Seminar*, may, 1970.

implicit in the agrarian structure in the framework of concrete operations concerning land. He has directly taken up the question of ownership, control and use of landed property by different categories of rural people, without giving much weight to heterogeneity of the caste hierarchy while explaining the problems of agrarian society. Despite wide regional variations, he classified the Indian people associated with soil into three broad categories, viz., *Malik, Kisan* and *Mzadoor* (or proprietor, peasant and labourers). He reduced them into well defined and precise social categories on the basis of the three following criteria of e.g. (1) type of income obtained from the soil, (2) the nature of rights, (3) The extent of field work actually performed.

Like Joshi, he is also critical of the biased government policies. He has described the adverse effect on the peasantry of the bureaucratic and legislative procedural delays in respect of land reforms. Even if the huge base of agrarian masses remained untouched by the land reform. The agrarian masses are still in the same position in which they were before independence. This is due to the feudal involvement with the power structure[111]. The plan of abolition of zamindari was prejudiced. There are several loopholes in the Zamindari Abolition Act which provide sufficient maneuvering ground to landlords to continue their previous position in the majority of cases.

Thorner categorically stated the emerging trend of investment by the urban rich into the agricultural operations. He termed 'gentleman farmers' as those investing into the agriculture with the motive of profitability[112]. After his visits to the villages in Karnal, Meerut, Kaira, Baroda, Tanjore, Basirhat, Patna and Bara Banki, he concluded remarkably in 1967: "before 1960's there used to be in the plains of India only a few pockets of capitalist agriculture – parts of the Punjab and western U.P., central Gujarat, Coimbatore and Coastal Andhra. In all parts of the countryside in India, a layer, thick in some regions, thinner in others of agricultural capitalist"[113].

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[111] Daniel Thorner, *'Agrarian Prospect in India'*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1976. p. 37.
[112] D. Thorner, *The Shaping of Modern India*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1980, p.224.
[113] ibid., p.237.

Thorner is of the view that the situation in rural India has changed enormously. But the remarks of feudalism have been surviving even today, though the resistance to change would come more possibly from those who have grown into *Maaliks*. Thorner is very keen that land must go into the hands of the people who have been slogging in the fields under the hot sun working on the land. However, an atmosphere has been created in which the rich cannot survive by dispossessing the masses. Sooner or later, egalitarian principles would prevail on norms of agrarian life.

Conclusion:

Agrarian system of India is of multiple hues, varies from region to region and epoch to epoch. It is the blending of indigenous tradition traced back to the antiquity of Vedic era and Mughal Empire, and the British tradition during the colonial rule and the self-conscious efforts made by the state in the post-independent India. While many puranic views held the idea of common land ownership and agrarian structure in pre-colonial India was characterized by self-possessing, self-working and self-sufficient village community; it lost its vitality at the commencement of British administration. Britishers made the land revenue policies and tenurial arrangement according to their suitability i.e. Zamindari, Ryotwari, Mahalwari system. Marx has correctly characterized the *Zamindari* system as the caricature of English landlordism and the *Ryotwari* system as the caricature of French proprietorship. Due to monetization of rural economy, commercialization of agriculture, decay of village industries and the demand of high land revenue, rising indebtedness because of usurious rate of interests, absentee landlordism etc, peasant suffered from intolerable miseries. Agricultural labour class suddenly swelled during the colonial period.

Reconstruction of rural economy became the focus of planners, policy makers and politicians. Developmental initiatives like Community Development Programme (CDP), Cooperative Movement, Land Reforms, and Green Revolution were addressed to serve the rural economy and modernization of agriculture. But they were far from achieving the stated intention. Land reforms favoured the erstwhile landlord creating 'sectorial or sectional reforms'. Let alone the equity of distribution and the ideology of 'land to

tillers', Community Development Programme and Green Revolution could not achieve the desired goal. As green revolution involves the capital intensive technology and huge investment in the production process, it could not be accessible to the poor or marginal farmers. Being associated with handicaps under the existing agrarian structure along with limited material development, the small farmers could not become compatible with modern technologised production process. It increased the hiatus between big and small farmers and income gap is also further accentuated. Landless labourers get doubled along with economic polarization. Decay of patron-client relationship and distribution of peasantry marked the development of capitalism of agriculture.

Of course, there is regional variation in the development of capitalism and prevailing mode of production. As discussed earlier, Bhaduri (1984) saw agrarian relations in eastern India as a classical case of 'semi-feudal' mode of production. Similarly, Bharadwaj (1974) argued that agrarian relations in the countryside were structured around a network of unequal exchange relations between those who possessed land, labour, and credit. A substantial volume of literature shows that agrarian structure has transformed the direction of a capitalist mode of organization at least in the areas of green revolution. The changes in agriculture have not secured a better quality of life for all social categories in the agrarian structure of village communities.

Chapter: III
Agrarian Structure of Orissa: Problems and Prospects

Day by day, the peasants make the economists sigh, the politicians sweat and the strategists swear, defeating their plans and prophecies all over the world - Moscow and Washington, Peking and Delhi, Cuba and Algeria, the Congo and Vietnam.

-T. Shanin

3.0 Introduction:

Orissa is one of the backward eastern states of developing India. Agriculture holds a pivotal place in Orissan economy in terms of both income and employment around which economic privileges and deprivation revolves. Agriculture is the principal occupation of small peasant families. Even during 19th century the predominance of agriculture in Orissa both in the total product and the working population can be noticed. According to the 1991 census 86.57 per cent of total population of Orissa live in rural areas. Agricultural sector continues to dominate the economy, of the state absorbing 80 per cent of the workforce and contributing more than 50 per cent of the state domestic product. The percentage dependent on agriculture steadily increased from 1961 to 1991 (except-1981). For instance, the working population in agriculture was 70.33 per cent in 1951, 73.83 per cent in 1961, 77.44 per cent in 1971, 74.65 per cent in 1981 and 80 per cent in 1991 (Mahapatra & Das 1993: 296-297). This indicates the growing dependence of more and more population on agricultural sector. Like 1981 decade, there is decline of dependence on agriculture in 2001. In 2001, agriculture provides employments to around 65 per cent of the work force directly or indirectly (Govt. of Orissa, 2004: 21/2). Out of the total rural poor families in Orissa, 87.36 per cent were agricultural labourers, marginal and small farmers (Govt. of India, 2002, 248-49).

Orissa has varied patterns of agrarian relationships and revenue systems prevalent in different parts. This can be traced back to their origin, namely respective regions to which they belonged before being amalgamated into a single state. There was no codified revenue law and uniform land right pattern. Diverse historical factors are responsible for such exploitative, deuniform, stereotypical agrarian system in Orissa. This chapter is directed towards understanding the agrarian structure of Orissa. The substance

of this chapter is the discussion of various land tenure system, tenancy legislation chronologically, i.e. of pre-colonial, colonial and post-independent period. It also makes an attempt to explain the perpetual tenancy relations, tenancy structure and landlord-peasant relationships. A glance has been given on the defective agrarian system and exploring prospects of agriculture in Orissa.

Orissa was conquered in 1803, when the province was in a state of chronic anarchy. As a part of 'divide and rule policy' of the British, Orissa scattered into various provinces. Accordingly it had three broad types of land tenure system; the *Zamindari* in five districts, the *Ryotwari* in one part of the districts, and *Subsidiary alliances* in a number of princely states covering as many as seven districts of Orissa (Pathy1981)[1]. Under the colonial land tenure system, in Orissa, the state had no direct contact with the owner; least was the contact with the producer.

Capitalist relationships were slow to develop in *Zamindari* areas. Incentives for the agricultural labourers were marginal. Wage was for minimum subsistence. The phenomenon of under development is precisely a matter of dualistic economy. This was due to hybrid structures comprising partly of capitalist system and partly the penetrating features of the previously existing feudal system[2]. It is dualistic in the sense of mode of production where in the rich farmer of well-endowed regions flourish through modernized agriculture and the resource poor small and marginal farmers and agricultural labour continue to languish in poverty. The commercialization under the colonial mode of production did not contribute to improvement of living standard of the masses[3]. There appeared to be a close inverse relationship between the percentage of area under commercial crops and level of living of agricultural labourer class.

The period in between 1803 to 1947 in the economic history of Orissa was a period of economic stagnation and political unrest. Under colonial policy, the peasant

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[1] This classification was made when Orissa was divided into thirteen districts. But now it is no more thirteen rather subdivided into thirty districts. It was before 1991. It is depicted in the map Orissa initially.

[2] J. K. Mohapatra and U. M. Das, 'Agrarian Transition and Social Development in Orissa', *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 1993, Vol.54 (2), April, pp. 292-309.

[3] G. Parthasarathi, 'Land Reform and Changing Agrarian Structure in India', in A. K. Gupta (ed.), *Agrarian Structuer and Peasant Revolt in India*, New Delhi: Crinterion Publication, 1986, p.23.

economy of Orissa greatly suffered. Surplus for sale in the market was almost impossibility for a vast number of small cultivators. That incapacitated them to fetch money to pay the cash rent. Small and poor peasants sold their land to the landlords due to their inability to pay land revenue or being unable to fulfill the Zamindar's excessive socio-economic exaction (Mahapatra and Das 1993: 295). This resulted in creating a number of small holders on the one hand and an expanding stratum of landless labourers on the other. This policy also resulted in distress migration. The marketable surplus was not (not even now) a surplus over the needs of the producer. It was a forced surplus at the cost of needs due to social and economic compulsions (Mahapatra and Das 1993: 295). In the later half of nineteenth century the crisis in the agrarian economy of Orissa made the position of the peasantry most miserable. Orissa throughout the century remained predominantly rural and its expanding grain trade was constrained by the terrible poverty and backwardness of the villagers. Marx has rightly noticed that this work of spoiling of Orissa and the rest of India became the main source of primary accumulation of world capital. He observed, "The conditions of the ryots were not raised; Indeed, they were humbled and oppressed still more, and the whole revenue system was thrown out of gear" causing a "whole series of local uprisings of ryots against the landlords"[4]. In fact, the crisis in the agrarian economy of Orissa was tragic consequence of the establishment of the British Raj in the first of the Nineteenth century.

The British made a serious blow to the self-sufficient village community. Some of cotton industries and some important cottage industries of Orissa got shattered at the cost of Britain's textile interests. In spite of some improvements in the infrastructure, the economy remained backward. As landholding groups, *Brahmins*, and *Karans* emerged more powerful than *Khandayats* because of their superior social status. But their feudal way of living could hardly generate enough surpluses to develop the economy. Similar is the case with *Marwari* and *Gujurati* who entered into Orissa in later part of 19th century.

Rural Economic stratification was largely determined by size of holdings, tenancy statues and caste composition. However, they had a common identity based on land use,

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[4] As Quoted by Binod S. Das, in 'Orissa's Economy in the Nineteenth Century', *Social Scientist*, Vol.4, (12), 1976, July pp.38-50 from Karl Marx, 'Capital', Vol.1. Pp.714-715.

mostly tied to each other in a complex sort of exploitative tenancy relationship, constraining efficiency in land use practices and perpetuating low productivity and agricultural backwardness. The "agrarian structure in the colonial Orissa was feudal and semi-feudal", although the peasant proprietorship constituted a sizeable segment of the agrarian economy.

On the basis of physical features and agro-economic conditions, Orissa can be divided into four zones:

The Northern plateau: covering districts like old Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundergada and parts of Dhenkanal. It constitutes 23 per cent of the states total geographical area.

The central river Basin: Comprising districts like old Bolangir, sambalpur and parts of Dhenkanal. This part also accountas for 23 per cent of the state's territory.

The Eastern Ghat Region: Comprising districts like old Kalahandi, phulbani, Ganjam & Koraput. It constitutes 36 per cent of the total geographical area of the state.

The coastal plains: Comprising districts like old Balasore, Cuttack, Puri and part of Ganjam. It accounts for the remaining 18 per cent of the states area[5].

Agriculture is most developed in the coastal plains followed by the central river basin zone. Barring a few pockets, agriculture in the two other zones is very backward. It should be noted that the agrarian economy is interwoven with the economy based on forests, mines and rivers or lakes in different pockets. Paddy is the main crop for cultivation.

The year 1936 marked a landmark in Orissan history. In the year 1936 Orissa formed as a separate province. The political organization of All India Kisan Sabha and Krushak Sangh were formed on the same year. With the formation of separate state, the

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[5] Robin Mearns and Saurabh Sinha, '*Social Exclusion and Land Administration in Orissa, India*', Policy Research Working Paper 2124, The World Bank South Asia Region Rural Development Sector Unit, 1999, May, pp. 1-72.

Congress government took lot of initiative by drawing some tenancy legislations. The effectiveness and provision of such legislations are well discussed in the later section of this chapter.

3.1 Land Settlement in Colonial Orissa:

Land revenue was one of the traditional mainstays of British Indian Finance. State ownership of land was a decisive factor that influenced both colonial agrarian relation and the entire economic structure in India. The changes in the agrarian relations led by the British rule varied from place to place. Like elsewhere in India, Orissa had different kinds of tenurial holdings having marked differences within a specific area. One of the staggering features is the lack of uniformity of land revenue system in British Orissa. Different parts of Orissa belonged to different units of revenue administration. Bengal land revenue system affected the fate of the tenants of the districts of Blasore, Puri, Cuttack; Madras system has been operative in the area comprised within the districts of Ganjam and Koraput; Sambalpur experienced the land revenue administration under the jurisdiction of central province as an administrative unit[6]. For the assessment and collection of land revenue, three kinds of settlements were made in British Orissa. They were *Zamindari, Mahalwari* and *Ryotwari.*

Again the pattern of land revenue settlement and collection of taxes were not at all uniform all over Orissa. The lack of uniformity in revenue administration can be traced to the British intervention in Orissa dating back to the introduction of permanent and temporary settlements under the foreign province, which found the continuation of traditional arrangements almost salutary to its own interests[7].

3.1. a. Zamindari System:

The Zamindari System prevailed in north Orissa comprising Cuttack, Puri, Balasore districts and in South Orissa comprising Ganjam and Koraput districts. The Zamindars were the intermediaries between the state and actual tillers of the land. The

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[6] J. K. Samal, *Agrarian History of Orissa Under British Rule*, New Delhi: Kaniska Publishers, 1993, p.255.
[7] ibid., p.257.

Zamindari system was of two kinds i.e. permanent and temporary. While the temporary settlement covered the greater part of North Orissa, the permanent settlement covered few tracts[8].

In the historical perspective the rise of Zamindars as intermediaries between the powers of the state and rights of the tenants was a matter of the Maratha and Mughal administration that rested satisfied with stipulated tributes to the exchequer. Prior to the British occupying Orissa, the land revenue was paid by various revenue agents. Some of them represented large tracts and others single village and plots Land Regulation xii of 1805 treated the whole body of revenue agents, comprehensively as Zamindars irrespective of individual history, right and origin. All such persons, under whatever designation they had discharged this function, became landlords under the British system and this was the origin of the Zamindars of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore districts[9]. This earlier model of revenue collection was advantageous to the Britishers in matter of collecting revenue without spending any amount on forging a new structure for the steady inflow of revenue to the state exchequer. Secondly, the retention of the traditional system was considered more convenient and politically beneficial than introducing a new hierarchy or fresh arrangement for revenue administration. This was to avoid the possibility of rebellion or mobilization from the upper stratum people. Instead of going for any drastic change in revenue collection, levying of rent, they perpetuated the system within the framework of their newly formulated policy of temporary and permanent settlement[10].

Most of the estates of North Orissa were temporarily settled while all the estates of South were permanently settled, but in either case the settlement was effected to the convenience of the foreign rulers and the estate holders remained loyal to the British overlords for protection of their interests[11].

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[8] S. C. Padhy and A. S. Rani, *Peasants and Land Reforms in Orissa: 1936-76*, Kolkata: R. N. B. Publishers, 2004, p. 94
[9] Ibid., p. 94
[10] J. K. Samal, op.cit., p. 257.
[11] ibid., p.258.

In 1873 it was assumed that no part of the province was still ripe for a permanent settlement, and a temporary settlement was concluded for a term of thirty years. This settlement was preceded by survey and accompanied by a detailed enquiry into the validity of all privileged tenancies. In temporarily settled estates, the revenue to be paid to the state exchequer was fixed for a period of thirty years with a view of terminating the lease for enhancing the rent after a fresh survey. It presents less grim picture in respect of land survey, classification of land, fixation of rent on the basis of productivity and tenancy rights stabilized under records of rights. In such estates survey was completed every 30 years or so in order to ascertain tillage, and for new assessments to be imposed on acreage. This helped the British to raise the revenue when the term ended[12].

They appointed local tax collectors for their purpose and often let them fairly wide margin to exercise their own options in fixing the rentals and getting other obligations satisfied. Such tax collectors were not the recipients of any fixed salary for their labour; therefore they had to force the tenants to pay more than what was to be turned over to the landlord out of the produce from their land. Sometimes the process was so irrational that the amount in cash and kind often reached up to half of the worth of produce form tillage. Even in worst of days when farmers get scant produce either in consequence of drought or flood, the collector of rent pressed for the stipulated amount which had been fixed before crops were harvested. Even if, no remission of revenue was granted in such condition (Samal 1993: 264)

At the beginning, the company administration did not attempt to introduce permanent settlement or its laws in Orissa. Shortly before the expiry of temporary settlements, the question of giving Orissa a permanent settlement was raised. On a letter dated 23 April 1866, the British India Association upheld the claims of the Zamindars to such a settlement, based chiefly on the despatch of the secretary of state, dated 9 July, 1862. In permanently settled estates, the sums to be paid by the landlords was fixed in perpetuity, without being revised according to any increase in the tillage or any importance on land either brought out by the cultivator themselves or effected by any

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[12] ibid., p.260.

beneficial measures taken by the overlords (Samal 1993: 258). In comparison to temporarily settled estates, the Zamindars in permanent settled estates are more secured. They did not apprehend either any revised increase on their tribute or any lapse of rights to their estates as they could pay what was fixed in perpetuity. Secured in perpetuity, such Zamindars remained loyal to the company and the crown, but the state exchequer experienced no inflation in its bulk since the tribute remained fixed.

Since the land revenue was fixed once for all incase of the settled areas, the British rulers did not take any interest either in formulating tenancy rules or in carrying out proper survey for the classification of land and proportionate assessment of rent on the basis of revised settlement. On the other hand, the tenants were left to the mercy of estate holders who leased out the cultivable land under arbitrary terms and conditions reserving the absolute rights. In case of permanent settlements, landlords obtained the character to protect their rights over their own estates only in exchange of a fixed amount of payment on annual basis. In such settlements, there was little interest in promoting agricultural activity. They lacked the permanent interest in looking after the tenants or cultivable plots except making quick gains out of the temporal nature. They benefited at the expense of the tenants who after received only $1/3^{rd}$ to the intermediate master in various ways.

In the mainland of Orissa, the *Zamindary* system was enforced. Both the local and outside Zamindars[13] were very harsh in collecting rent to meet the British demand for revenue. In either case, settlement with Zamindars did not prove at all beneficial to the interest of tenants. When the average assessment per sq. Km. in Bihar and Bengal was Rs. 171/-, it was Rs 232/- in case of Orissa. Besides, initially under frequent temporary settlements, the revenue assessments were repeatedly enhanced. As a consequence, the local Zamindars borrowed from the outside scruffs at an enormous rate of interest, and

[13] Under the Sun-set law, many affluent Bengalis including traders, moneylenders and those connected with East India Company, acquired Zamindari in Orissa, because some of zamindaris failed to the pay revenue in times. See M. Mohanty, 'Social Roots of Backwardness in Orissa: A Study of Class, Caste and Power', *Social Science Probings*, 1984, Vol.1 (2), pp. 184-228 and J. N. Pathy, op.cit.

within a short time almost half of them were dispossessed due to their failure to pay the revenue in time[14].

3.1. b. Ryotwari Settlements:

The *Ryotwari Settlement* was of minor importance in Orissa as it covered a part of a district. The new land revenue policy of 'Ryotwari System' covers half of the area of Ganjam plains. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century some Zamindars of Ganjam rebelled against British hegemony creating unrest. The government declared those estates escheated and introduced the ryotwari system in some parts of Ganjam districts, to ensure revenue collection through appointed officials who exacted rent straight from ryots in accordance with settled provisions[15]. The very aim behind the system was the destruction of greatest estates and creation of peasant proprietors "to depress the rich and elevate the poor". The Ryot in theory was treated as tenant of the state, responsible for paying revenue directly to the state treasury but could not be ejected by the state so long as he continued to pay the revenue.

The fixation of rent, which amounted to half of the net produce, was done on fair principles of revenue assessment, taking into account fertility of soil, and conducive or adverse conditions for farming. On the whole in contrast with Zamindar system, this appears to be a less evil and more rational form. The Ryot was given a document called as *Patta*, which recorded the extent and assessment of each field in his occupation. Under the Ryotwari settlement assessment of land revenue was subject to revision after 30 years. Usually fifty per cent of the net produce of holding was regarded as revenue to be paid to the government, the net produce being determined by the gross produce minus the cost of cultivation. Under the Ryotwari system, the ryots had no right to appeal to law courts questioning the validity of the revenue assessment made by settlement officers[16].

However, the condition of the Ryot in Ryotwari areas was no better than the Zamindari areas. There was vast scale of pauperization of peasantry due to heavy

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[14] Jaganath Pathy, 'Land Reforms and the Problems of Agricultural Development in Orissa: A Discursive Review', *Indian Journal of Regional Science*, Vol. 13 (2), 1981, p.140.
[15] J. K. Samal, op.cit., p.264.
[16] S. C. Padhy and A. S. Rani, op.cit., p. 106.

pressure of revenue assessment. This system too, in course of time created a class of rentires from among those who were employed for the collection of revenue and to look after the problems of law and order. The small peasants became indebted and sold their small parcels of land. The increasing indebtedness in Ryotwari areas was mainly for two reasons, (a)- The introduction of money assessment instead of kind in land revenue, (b)- The *kistibandi* was not everywhere fixed, fluctuating at the time of harvest and much less with the marketing produce. Besides, the moneylenders were basically interested in usurping debtors land. The rates of interest varied from 15 to 18 per cent and in some cases even more (Padhy and Rani 2004: 111). Furthermore, the frequent visit of flood, draught and famine added to their misery.

Though the condition of cultivators was not much encouraging in ryotwari system, it seems to be the first important administrative reform in revenue matters. Here, some sort of scientific principles of revenue assessment was introduced for the first time against arbitrary assessment of Zamindari settlement in Ganjam district. It destroyed the injurious intermediaries and directly dealt with the ryots.

3.1. c. Mahalwari system:

Though the home government preferred *Ryotwari settlement* of Munro for certain advantages over all other system, the Regulation VII of 1822 introduced *mahalwari settlement* in Orissa. The Mahalwari system, which was the intermixture of the Zamindari and village headman system, was in operation in Samabalpur districts comprised of central province. It was a modified version of Zamindari system, which prevailed in other two blocks of Orissa, administered by Madras and Bengal presidency.

Under the Mahalwari system, the *gauntias* or village headmen were in charge of collecting the rent and submitting it to the government. He stood between the government and the ryot as the local custodian of land. For this he enjoyed rent-free land for the services rendered to the government. However, he could not devise any clandestine means to make profit at the expense of ryots or cultivators. The ryots were secured with their possession of holdings without enjoying rights of transfer as long as they paid the revenue assessed on their land.

The Regulation VII of 1822 introduced mahalwari settlement in Orissa for five years i.e. 1822-27. For the purpose of land revenue administration, the Sambalpur district was divided into two tracts, the *khalsa* and the *Zamindari*. The term *khalsa* was used to indicate land held by village headmen direct from government. There were 17 Zamindaries with a total area of 3248 sq. miles. The area of the khalsa was 1657 sq. miles that consisted of 119 *malguzari,* 870 *Gauntiari* and 16 *Ryotwari* villages[17].

These three distinct arrangements in revenue administration show the iniquitous rental system where the government stood by leaving collection of revenue at the mercy of intermediaries. *Zamindari* system was highly exploitative, unfair and profiteering, thus forcing the tenants into abject poverty and ignominious subjection. *Ryotwari*, for all its enlightened aspects and benevolent designs, failed to deliver the goods. *Mahalwari* was a compromise between the two, but nonetheless equally unscientific[18].

3.2 Land Reform & Tenancy Legislation in Orissa:

In agrarian societies land is the most important means of wealth and source of power and prestige. Therefore, changes in the institutional framework of agriculture, their pattern of ownership and use of land and other natural resources will have far reaching effects on the social order in agrarian societies. Initially, British Raj was concerned about the interest of the peasant over their holdings and regulated the legal relation between the landlords and peasants. Later on their attention changed from peasant to the safeguard of the interest of landlords for political stability and easy revenue collection. The land revenue administration of the British was not same throughout their rule in Orissa. It changed from time to time according to the necessity of the situation. Right from their occupation till the formation of Orissa as a separate province, several reforms were brought in the land legislation. Here, an humble attempt has been made to analyze the various land reform programme and tenancy legislation in Orissa.

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[17] Government of Orissa, Report of the Administration Enquiry committee, 1958, Vol.1, pp. 35-39
[18] J. K. Samal, op.cit., p. 268.

3.2. a. Land Reforms before Orissa as a Separate State (1803-1936):

Orissa did not have any self-contained agrarian code up to 1913. Prior to that, it was governed by the Rent Act of 1859 and the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885. The Rent Act of 1859 was considered as a landmark as well as the first step in the evaluation of tenancy legislation and peasants rights. The Rent Act provided for the first time a definition of the right of occupancy over land both for the Zamindars and the tenants. However, the Act couldn't provide the desired result as far as the occupancy right was concerned. The Act conferred occupancy rights on tenants who had held land for twelve years. However, the occupancy rights it intended to give were not actually available and fruitful, because the provision of holding land for twelve years for claiming occupancy right could be easily violated by the landlords by shifting the tenants from one plot to another[19]. The Rent Act of Bengal, 1859 stipulated that under no circumstances the land rent be more the 40 per cent of the total produce and eviction of tenants were made legally impossible[20]. However, Rent Act did not put any restriction on the enhancement of Rent by the Zamindar and sale of tenancies.

The Orissa Tenancy Act-1913: In 1912, with the formation of a separate province of Bihar and Orissa, the need for a separate agrarian legislation for Orissa was seriously considered[21]. The Bihar and Orissa Legislative council passed the Orissa Tenancy Bill on 7th April 1913 which came into effect on 12th September 1913. The Orissa Tenancy Act of 1913, a separate agrarian law for Orissa was brought into force to secure the rights and obligations of all kinds of tenants. It defined the tenancy rights and recognized the rights of tenants to transfer their holdings without the consent of proprietors. The Orissa Tenancy Act-1913 defined a 'Tenant' as one who held land under another person, and was liable to pay rent for that land to that person[22]. It divided the tenants into four classes, namely (i) tenure holders including under tenure holders, (ii) raiyats, (iii) under-raiyats, who were tenant holding whether immediately or mediately under raiyats and (iv)

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[19] Rajib Lochan Sahoo, *Agrarian Change and Peasant Unrest in Colonial India, Orissa: 1912-1939*, New Delhi: Manak Publication, 2004, p.198.
[20] J. Pathy, op.cit., p. 140.
[21] Government of Orissa, *Land Tenure and Land Reforms in Orissa,* Board of Revenue, Cuttack, 1962, p.9.
[22] Government of Orissa, Law department, The Orissa Tenancy Act: 1913, Calcutta, 1951, p.20.

Chandandars. It further divided the raiyats into the following three categories, i.e. (a) raiyats holding at fixed rates, (b) occupancy raiyats which meant raiyats having a right of occupancy in the land held by them and (c) non-occupancy raiyats, who did not have any such occupancy rights[23].

It made complete provision for all matters relating to governance of tenancy relationships. It secured the rights of occupancy ryots in their land and prohibited rack-renting. It introduced the concept of "land to the tiller" for the first time in the tenancy system. It was accepted as the basic ideology of land reforms in later years. It gave substantial rights to the leases under big landholders. It provided that the later could be treated as tenure holders so that their lessees could be taken as ryots and take advantage of twenty year rule for right of occupancy[24]. The Orissa Tenancy Act stands as a landmark in the records of legislations in the coastal districts. It became the foundation for the future legislative measures in land reforms. Before the Orissa Tenancy Act came into force, the Orissan peasantries were deprived of fundamental rights to their landed property without the consent of the proprietor. Under the Orissa Tenancy Act, the cultivators for the first time acquired a legal right to transfer their land.

However, the Orissa Tenancy Act-1913 was not free from defects. The provision of the act contributed to wide range of sub-inflation under the proprietors of estates and it complicated the system of land tenures in a large measure. Like the Bengal Tenancy Act, it also favoured concentration of large land holdings and promoted landlordism, particularly absentee landlords. There were attempts to bring amendments to the Orissa Tenancy Act by the Oriya members of the Bihar and Orissa legislative council. These amendment proposals were not considered because the government felt it unwise to tamper with the Act and argued that the Act was satisfactory and was working well. The unwillingness in the government to amend Orissa Tenancy Act was part of colonial policy not to jeopardize the loyalty of the proprietary class to the Raj[25].

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[23] ibid., pp.20-21.
[24] S.C. Padhy and A. S. Rani, op.cit., p.141.
[25] Rajib Lochan Sahoo, op.cit., p.214.

3.2. b. Land Reforms after the Formation of Orissa as a Separate Province:

The formation of the Orissa province on April 1, 1936 was followed by the formation of the popular Congress ministry. The Congress ministry in Orissa attempted to redress the prevailing agrarian tension in rural Orissa by introducing various measures of tenancy legislations that were popular in nature. The most important of these were (i) Orissa Tenancy (Amendment) Act 1938; (ii) Orissa Money lenders Bill, 1938, (iii) The Orissa Land Mortgage Bank Act 1938. The ministry favoured enactment of agrarian legislation and amendment to tenancy laws in order to give protection to the common peasantry.

Orissa Tenancy (Amendment) Act- 1938: Congress ministry took up the proposal to amend the Orissa Tenancy Act, 1913 as per their election manifesto and introduced the Orissa Tenancy (Amendment) Bill in the Legislative Assembly on 25 September 1937. The Orissa Legislative Assemble witnessed hot debates on the Orissa Tenancy (Amendment) Bill. The opposition members contested most of the clauses and moved a number of amendments on the clauses of the Bill. The landlords had stiff opposition for their vested interest. The Bill finally received approval of the Governor and was passed in November 1938 with remarkable changes over the Orissa Tenancy Act-1913. The Orissa Tenancy (amendment) Act 1938 provided for[26]:

(1) The free transfer of rights without the consent of the landlord.

(2) The rights to the trees on his land, to plant trees, enjoy fruits and cut and utilize the timber of trees felled.

(3) Reduction of rate of interest on arrears of money rent from 12½ per cent to 6 per cent and

(4) Abolition of all impositions in addition to excess of the rent lawfully payable.

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[26] ibid., p.210.

The most important feature of the act was the abolition of mutation fee in transfer of land and provided that occupancy right was transferable without payment of any fee to the landlord. These amendments removed many grievances of the tenants[27].

The Orissa Moneylenders Bill-1938: The Orissan peasantries were on the trap of persistent indebtedness during the colonial rule. The high rate of interest charged by moneylenders further deteriorated the economic condition of the peasantry. It was clearly reflected by The Bihar and Orissa Banking Enquiry Committee Report (1929-30). The congress ministry introduced the Orissa Money Lenders Bill, 1938 in the third session of the legislative assembly on 31st August 1938. The bill aimed at regulating money lending transaction and granting relief to debtors. Initially, the peasants lent money at 30 per cent to 50 per cent interest, which was very torturous. The bill made provision of fixing the rate of annual interest at 9 per cent on secured loans and 12 per cent on unsecured loans, which would certainly be beneficial to the poor debtors. The bill was passed on 25th February 1939[28].

The Orissa Land Mortgage Bank Act –1938: Land Mortgage Banks have been established in several provinces of India and it is considered necessary to establish such a Bank in Orissa to relieve rural indebtedness, especially of the middle class. The Congress Ministry decided to establish a Land Mortgage Bank Bill, 1938. It was intended to develop agriculture by providing loans to the agriculturists. The Orissa Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank started work in February 1939, and helped many needy peasants with loans[29].

3.2. c. Land Reforms in Orissa during the Post –Independence Period:

At the time of independence, big feudal and semi-feudal interests dominated the land structure. There were heavy concentration of land at the hands of Zamindars and they were primarily interested in the rack-renting and conspicuous consumption. Following independence, the Orissa government instituted limited land reforms

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[27] ibid., p.14.
[28] ibid., p.213.
[29] S. C. Padhy and A. S. Rani, op.cit., p.145.

envisaging abolition of intermediary tenures that prevailed between the state and the tillers of the soil, tenancy reforms and fixation of ceilings on agricultural holdings[30].

The Orissa Estates Abolition Act, 1951: The continuance of intermediary interest like *Malgujar, Thikadar, Gauntia, Inamdar, Jagirdar, Sarbarkar* and *Mafidar* were the major impediments of agricultural development. The first phase of land reforms had tended towards abolition of intermediary rights. The subletting of land, frequent eviction of tenants from cultivated land and absence of the concept of the 'land to the tillers', did a large amount of damage to agriculture. The Orissa Estates (abolition) Bill was introduced in the legislature on 17th January of 1950. It was finally passed as Orissa Act 1 of 1952. It intended to eliminate the intermediary interests. There were altogether 4,25,693 estates, out of which by 1972, the amount of 4, 21,022 were abolished. In 1972, the Orissa Estates Abolition (amendment) Act was enacted to extinguish 17,502 trans-estates. The big landowners were asked to surrender all land except personally cultivated land up to 33 standard acres[31].

In lieu of abolition of their rights, they were paid a higher rate of compensation than many other states of India. Depending on the income level, the compensation was between 15 to 3 times of the net income of the ex-intermediaries (pathy 1981:142). Hence, with the elimination of intermediary interests, the tenants were overwhelmingly happy as many points of annoyance in the agrarian structure would disappear and peasants would look forward for a period of plenty and prosperity (Padhy and Rani 2004: 158). But the Act followed a spate of land grabbing and more and more tenants were evicted in the name of personal cultivation. Meanwhile, the semi-feudal landlords leased out their land under various disguises and subterfuges to obliging tenants with strict conditions. The situation created a number of isolated tenant agitations in rural pockets between 1952 and 1954 (Pathy 1981: 142).

The Orissa Tenancy Protection Act, 1948: Due to such impediments like large scale tenant eviction, agriculture could not devclop well. Tenant farms produce less. And the

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[30] J. N. Pathy, op.cit., P.141.
[31] ibid., p.142.

pre-independence peasant discontents compelled the second inter ministry to pass Orissa Tenancy Protection-1948. The Act restricted eviction of tenants by any landlord owning more than 33 standard acres and the maximum rent was limited to one third of the gross produce incase of tenants without any security of tenures. Large-scale arbitrary eviction and agitation took place in the coastal belt of Orissa where it was applied retrospectively. It occurred where the land holdings generally did not exceed the ceiling enacted. In the inland regions land records were suitably manipulated nullifying the purpose of the Act. Lack of records and weaker position of tenancy made the legislation difficult to enforce[32].

Orissa Tenants Relief Act, 1955: In 1955 the Tenant Relief Act was introduced which provided that no tenant in lawful cultivation of any land on 1st July 1954 or at any time there after would be liable to be evicted from such land by the landlord except for his personal cultivation to the aggregate extent of seven standard acres. It also fixed the maximum rent at one-fourth of the gross produce of the land and the value there of[33]. However, the survey in general indicated that the acts were very little effective (Misra 1970). About 80 to 90 per cent of tenancy agreements were oral and in 70 per cent of the cases of sale of land, the tenants could not buy the land due to lack of finance and being skeptical about the efficacy of the Acts[34].

Orissa Land Reforms Act, 1960: Another landmark in the legislative measures enacted for the benefit of agriculturist was the passing of Orissa Land Reform Act 1960. This was enacted with the important provisions of introducing uniformity of the tenures and to consolidate the rights and benefits accruing under various legislature and executive measures preceding it. It made the provision of better rights in favour of temporary lessees, share-croppers and tenants, conferment of occupancy rights in homestead lands and regulation of rent. One of the most important provisions of it was the protection of scheduled tribe and scheduled caste ryots from illegal alienation of land. This Act was subsequently amended by the Orissa Land Reform (Amendment) Act 1965, which provided fixation of fair rent at one-fourth of the gross produce or the value there of. It

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[32] J. N. Pathy, op.cit., p. 142.
[33] ibid.
[34] ibid., p.143.

permitted rights of ownership of holdings to the tenants in respect of non-resumable lands[35].

However, the tenancy figures went up considerably and the constant threat of eviction and legal non-recognition of sharecroppers as tenant together gave the landlords a highly personalized form of economic power over the tenants. The upper section of the tenants got advantage of the provisions of tenancy laws and through the pre-independence tenancy Acts. Furthermore, the Orissa Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1974 for the first time extended tenancy rights to sharecroppers, temporary lessees and recorded and un-recorded sub-tenants (pathy 1981: 143). It fixed a ceiling between 10 to 45 acres of various classes of land for a family of five: the final ceiling however, was between 18 to 81acres of different varieties of land, besides 3 acres of homestead land (Pathy 1981: 144).

3.2. d. Consolidation of Holdings:

The scattered nature of agriculture holding is an important impediment to the capitalist development of agriculture. Due to various socio-economic measures, the large compact holding scattered into different fragment and became unfit for exploitation under optimum economic conditions. Therefore, agriculture becomes expensive and time consuming and cumbersome. Implementation of modern technology and mechanization became impossible. Therefore, consolidation of holdings, which aims at achieving compactness of agricultural holdings, has been recognized as an ameliorative measure to such physical challenges in agriculture. It results in better management and supervision, increases profitability, stimulates land development and facilitates application of improved technologies in agriculture. In our state, the Orissa Agricultural Act-1951 was enacted to provide, among other things for consolidation of holdings. But no step was taken to consolidate under this Act. When in 1970 government decided to take up the new scheme, this Act was scrutinized and found to suffer from many practical deficiencies. A new legislation drafted mostly on the lines of the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh laws, was therefore drawn up and passed as the Orissa Consolidation of Holdings

[35] ibid.

and Prevention of Fragmentation of Land Act-1972[36]. Before the actual implementation of the act, some pre-consolidation or preparatory stages were initiated. Accordingly, the Orissa Consolidation Holdings and Prevention of Fragmentation of Land Act, 1972 was put into operation. Statutory operation, under this law, has been taken up in selected areas in the districts of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Ganjam, Dhenkanal and Mayurbhanj during the year1973- 1974[37].

Hence the whole land reform programmes in Orissa includes (a)-establishment of tenancy rights, (b) - protective legislations and (c)-ceiling fixation on land holding and distribution of ceiling surplus land. The agrarian structure of Orissa under colonial period was unjust and oppressive with gross inequalities in land ownership acting as a stumbling block to modernization of agriculture. After independence, an intensive activity in the thoughts and plannings in all fields of agrarian life of Orissa was made. It abolished the intermediaries and the ryots were empowered with economic rehabilitation enabling them better economic condition. However, the land reforms in Orissa have not succeeded in augmenting agricultural growth, let alone distributive justice. Yet more radical land reforms are necessary for the same objectives. Usually the failure of land reforms is attributed to the lack of political will and entrenched vested interests in the bureaucracy and judiciary. The government has neither the political will nor the administrative capability for the successful implementation of land reforms. One of the strange facts is that even the conservative parties of landlords and ex-princes have not favoured reform legalizations[38].

3.3 The landlord and Tenant relationship in colonial Orissa:

The relationships between the landlords and the tenants in Orissa were on the whole unsatisfactory. It was one of bitterness, coercion and disgust. The discontentment among the two classes became widespread in the 1930s and 1940s. The tenants complained of illegal exactions, non-grant of rent of receipts, impounding cattle and other harassment. On the other hand, the landlords complained that the tenants were persuaded

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[36] S. C. Padhy and A. S. Rani, op.cit., p. 173.
[37] ibid., p.174.
[38] J. N. Pathy, op.cit., p. 147.

by some local leaders to withhold rents, damage property and trespass on land which was not theirs[39]. Of course, it was found that people were slowly becoming conscious of their rights to occupy the land under the provisions of the law[40]. The peasantry was the immediate and sole victim of the oppression. They suffered from untold miseries. They had no occupancy right over the lands they cultivated. They were liable to ejection in spite of long possession and enjoyment for generation. Insecurity of tenure and arbitrary increase in rents were the stumbling blocks on the way of sound agriculture. The relationship between landlords and tenants can be well expressed on the following grounds.

3.3. a. Illegal Exaction of Peasantry: One of the causes of the unsatisfactory relation between landlords and tenants was the illegal exaction of money or goods or services from the tenants[41]. The official report of the government confirmed about the practice of such illegal exactions by the proprietary holders and their agents such as *Sunia bheti, Baha kharacha* (marriage fees), *Magan, paida miadi, bisodhini, salami, najrana* etc. But many tenant victims of such illegal exaction did not muster courage to take the matter to courts, as they were afraid that the Zamindars or their agents might have retaliated to them in various ways[42]. Many cases might have remained unnoticed or could not be proved due to lack of evidence. The practice of extorting money from tenants by the way of illegal exactions particularly presents paid in token of respect to the Zamindars on the occasion of his visits to the estate and on occasion of the marriage of his children continued to exist in Orissa during the colonial rule. Furthermore, the socio-economic condition of peasants helped the landlords to exact them arbitrarily. Though government was fully aware about the brewing tension between the landlords, proprietors and the tenants, it did not take any stringent measures to dishearten the landlord class. It was because of their fear of losing the collection of revenue and possible revolt by the proprietary class. The practice of exactions was widespread in larger estate and in

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[39] Rajiv Lochan Sahoo, op.cit., p. 128.
[40] Government of Orissa, *Land Tenure and Reforms in Orissa*, 1962, pp. 76-77.
[41] In this context Partha Chatterjee points out, "These illegal exactions of various sorts were foul means adopted by landlords to appropriate a larger share of the surplus, means preferable to a straight enhancement of rent which was more difficult to impose and sustain". Partha Chatterjee, Bengal, 1920-1947: *The Land Question*, Vol. 1, K.P. Bagchi, Calcutta, 1984, p. 18.
[42] Report on Land Revenue Administration in Orissa, 1937-38, pp. 8-9.

permanently settled estates and the feudatory estates of Orissa. Though the growing political consciousness among the peasantry reduced the instances of such illegal exaction, it could not stop the practice and the system continued to prevail to the detriment of the peasantry[43].

3.3. b. Economic Condition of the Peasantry: The economic life of agricultural population in Orissa was conditioned by geographical, physical and climatic factors on the one hand and by social organizations, age old customs and religious faith on the other. The standard of living of the Oriya agriculturists was very poor in colonial Orissa. The poor economic standard of the coastal population further deteriorated due to the periodic natural calamities like flood, draught and cyclone. Due to lack of sufficient security or alternative source of income the small agriculturists' rate of survival from the damage caused by the natural calamities was slow. Subsistence economy was most prevalent in colonial Orissa. Crops especially paddy and *biri* or *mung* were not only meant for the grains but their dry leaves or straws served as fodder and also for thatching the roof of the houses. The raising of cattle played an important role in the peasant economy of Orissa.

The government measures like irrigation, supply of agricultural technology like improved tools, fertilizers, seeds etc. and agricultural loans were insufficient and did not cater to the requirements of a large section of the peasantry[44]. Though there was remission of land revenue at the time of agrarian distress, it was not considered at the time of fall of prices of food grains and economic depression. Rather, government followed coercive process in collecting revenue, except for agrarian distress period, which was detrimental to the peasant economy. The growth of production for export and rising commercial crops was not truly phenomenal in Orissa. Therefore, Britishers did not take much initiative in modernizing the agriculture of Orissa.

3.3. c. Rent Burden on the Peasantry: Peasants in colonial Orissa suffered from huge rent burden. The increases in the revenue demand were brought about without any

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[43] *Krushak* , 30th April 1938, pp. 4-8 as quoted by Rajiv Lochan Sahoo, op.cit., p. 130.
[44] Rajiv Lochan Sahoo, op.cit., p. 136.

reference to the condition of the people, the productive ability of land etc. and were not based on any detailed assessment of total rent or changes there in. The assessments were essentially guided by the motive of maximizing the revenue from land without any consideration of the ability of the assessees to meet the demand. Along with its heaviness, the British demand was inflexible in both amount and timing of collection. The new (urban based) Zamindars who came to hold land through auction—purchase were more severe in rack-renting their ryots, perhaps because they were uninhibited by any 'patron-client' relation that might have restrained the earlier Zamindars[45]. During the initial years of British rule the Zamindars had experienced great hardship in meeting the revenue demand and their share in rent was small compared to the revenue collected by the government. Towards the end of the 19th century, the Zamindars appropriated the bulk of the rent. In addition to rent, many illegal *abwabs* were levied on the peasantry which constituted a major source of Zamindar's income.

The cultivators faced a serious problem regarding the medium of revenue payment. During the pre-British period, the principal currency in Orissa was *kauri*, which used to be imported from Maldives islands. However, from 1805 the British demanded revenue payments in Calcutta *sieca* rupees. The cultivators were the worst sufferers since they were compelled to exchange their *kauris*, obtained by selling their produce, for rupees to make rent payments. The real burden of rent became more severe due to the depreciation of *kauri*. This contributed to the discontent which led to the Paik Rebellion.

In so far as the protection of the ryots from illegal exactions of the Zamindars was concerned, the policy of the government was partially modified during the settlement operations of 1837-45. The rents of the *thani* ryots [46] were rendered fixed for the term of the settlement and leases known as *Kali pattas* were given to them. On the other hand, the

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[45] Pradipta Chaudhury, 'Peasants and British Rule in Orissa', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 19 (8-9), August-September, 1991, pp. 28-56.

[46] ibid. At the time of British conquest, there were two broad categories of peasant cultivators namely, the Thani ryots and the Pahi ryots. The Thani ryots were resident cultivators of the village. They enjoyed hereditary occupancy rights on the lands. They were exempted from paying rent for their house-sites. They also generally received preference in cultivating the rent-free land of their villages. But they usually pay a higher rent in comparison to Pahi ryots. All extra imposition, legal and illegal, were levied upon the Thani ryots and were gradually consolidated with their rent.

government was apprehensive about giving *pattas* to the *Pahi* ryots[47] on the ground that such documents might have given a false and mischievous impression of occupancy right. Thus, there was no change in the position of the pahi ryots whose rent remained liable to be raised if the proprietor so wished.

3.3. d. Rising Agricultural Indebtedness: By the last decade of nineteenth century, a very large section of the peasantry was seriously indebted. Nearly 80 per cent of the rural populations were more or less permanently indebted to the *mahajan,* proprietary tenure holder, or zamindar. The remainders were themselves landed proprietors, or have other means of maintenance than agriculture[48]. A great amount of rural borrowing and lending was in kind, in the form of paddy, for their subsistence, though a little margin of cash borrowing were made. A vast majority of peasants were in a state of near perpetual indebtedness. Immediately after the harvest, kind loan had to be repaid and payments in kind had to be made to the village artisans and servants. Furthermore, to settle cash debt and to meet current cash expenditure a peasant was compelled to sell a very large part of his remaining output. Usually, he sold so much that the stock left with him was insufficient to meet the consumption requirement of his family till the next harvest. Hence he was forced to borrow, within 4 to 8 months from the harvest, either in cash to purchase rice or in kind, for his own consumption. Thus, almost the entire small peasantry was caught in the regular cycle of distress 'sale and purchase' and depends on the short term consumption loan. The consumption loan was the principal instrument for exercise of economic power by the privileged over the poor. Apart from having to pay very high rates of interests, the small peasants were compelled by the debt mechanisms to participate in the output market, at unfavorable terms of exchange[49]. Given a combination of adverse factors like high rates of interest on loans, seasonal fluctuations on the price of output, the inconvenient timings of participation in the out put market, the smallness of

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[47] Pahi ryots are the non-resident cultivators. The pahi ryots were legally tenants-at-will. However, as they freely moved from village to village while the land man ratio was favourable, they paid a far lower rent than the tenants attached permanently to the soil. While the rent on Thani lands were assessed after careful field-by field enumeration, on the land cultivated by the Pahi ryots a lump assessment was made for each village. The Pahi rent rate was considered as competitive and was considerably lower than the thani rate. See Pradipta Chaudhury, op.cit., p.31.

[48] Pradipta Chaudhury, op.cit., p.33.

[49] ibid., p.47.

their total income, and intervention of middlemen, it was not surprising that the debt obligation of the vast majority of small cultivators increased over time (chaudhury 1991: 48). The holdings of indebted peasants were gradually reduced in size through the process of land transfer. Some peasants even lost their entire holdings.

3.3. e. Emergence of Land Market: During the British period *ryoti* right in land became a marketable asset. The ryots could mortgage and sold their holdings with a great deal of freedom. Hence, they could borrow with greater facility, by pledging land. At the same time, to the money-lenders in particular to the agricultural ones, land was attractive collateral to lend against[50]. The right of transfer of occupancy holdings was legally recognized by the Orissa Tenancy Act of 1913 (section 13), subject to the payment of transfer fee, maximum payable being 25 per cent of the purchase money, to the landlord. The consequence of debt default during the late British period became qualitatively different from those in the earlier times. During the pre-British period and the early years of British rule, a creditor recovered his dues in the form of direct labour service of the debtor when all other methods such as seizure of the latter's properties and cattle etc. failed. In contrast, during the latter part of the British rule, marketability of land meant that peasants traditional source of livelihood became alienable. It had a serious implication for the small peasants since he was liable to lose his assured means of livelihood incase of debt default. Transfer of *ryoti* land became a principal method of settling outstanding debt[51]. The rise in the price of land may be attributed to the increasing man-land ratio leading to competition for land, increase in price out put and decline in real burden of rent. In the areas under canal irrigation, benefits from irrigation contributed to the rise in the price of land. After 1890, the size of land market expanded significantly.

3.3. f. Flow of Money from Village to Capital: The role of the village money-lenders in the peasant economy of Orissa was indispensable in view of the absence of any other credit agencies to provide loans for agricultural operations. Most of them were

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[50] B. B. Chaudhury, 'The Process of Depeasantisation in Bengal and Bihar', *Indian Historical Review,* 1975, July, p.127.
[51] Pradipta chaudhury, op.cit., p. 45.

inhabitants of the locality; absentee landlordism was a feature of later period. The creditors were very often affluent peasants from whom the cultivators and sharecroppers took grain or cash loans. Although they were not urban moneylenders, the surplus income from the rural credit system show a definite tendency to flow towards the urban money market. The drain from agriculture operated not through a direct financial relationship between primary producers and urban financiers, but through a complicated financial superstructure of the rural credit system in which the affluent peasant-financier acted as the middle man between the peasant-debtors and urban money-lender, stockiest and wholesale dealer combining into one[52]. Since the Maratha rule in Orissa, the large majority of the village *mahajans* depended on urban money lenders and wholesale dealers of commodities. This system of complex financial relationship continued even in the first half of nineteenth century. Moreover, money lending operation within the village economy set in motion the broader outflow of resources from Orissa to Bengal, and ultimately from India to England. Orissa, thus, became an appendage of the colonial economy as a source of raw materials and a base of alien industrial capital at abnormally low prices. Hence urban areas got enriched at the cost of rural peasant economy.

3.3. g. Destruction of Diversified Production: During the first half of the nineteenth century, Orissa witnessed the spread of monoculture in place of a diversified subsistence agriculture producing nearly all necessaries of life in the self-sustained village community. But the diversified basis of traditional rural economy was destroyed by the competition of an alien capitalist economy. The rapid growth of rural population led to the concentration of manpower on land, leading to subdivision and fragmentation of the holdings. Village handicrafts declined. There was less cultivation of non-food crops, such as cotton for the rural manufacturers who met village requirements and decline of salt-makers in the second half of the nineteenth century. It created the paradox of rural unemployment in slack agricultural seasons and labour shortage in the time of sowing and harvesting. The traditional diversified production process, combining rice cultivation with the village-based industries, came to an end. It led to the socio-economic

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[52] Binod S. Das, 'Orissa's Economy in the nineteenth Century', *Social Scientist*, Vol.4 (.12), 1976, pp.38-50.

disintegration and sectoral distortion of Orissan economy set in motion in a process of 'static expansion' which worked through the perpetual restoration of a quasi-stable "subsistence equilibrium"[53].

Hence, from the above explanation, it can be illustrated that the peasants in colonial Orissa were in a constant process of pauperization. Cases like illegal exaction of peasant, poor economic condition, huge rent burden, and rising agricultural indebtedness made them insecure. The emergence of land market and the destruction of diversified production threatened the basis of rural peasant economy. Their persistent dependence on local moneylender and the role of middle man and lack of credit structure provided by the government made them vulnerable to constant eviction, being in the trap of debt, only helped the urban economy. It shattered their economic standard. Due to marketability of land, they lost their whole holding to fulfill the debt obligation; making them landless labourers. Often they migrated to the nearby towns because of no alternative in the native area. The decline in the economic position of the producers is to be noticed in relation to three types of peasants: (1)-peasants with land but no stock; (2)-peasants with stock but no land; (3)-different classes of landless labourers including day and seasonal wage earners[54].

3.4 Tenancy Structure in Post-Colonial Orissa:

Land is the prime input required for agricultural production. Its ownership structure and operation pattern significantly affect agricultural productivity in a region. The extent of inequality in ownership of land reflects on the exploitative or systematic relationship prevailing in the area. More the distribution of land is skewed, the less egalitarian is the society. Therefore, for analyzing social cleavages and examining implication of agrarian structure on agricultural productivity, the study of trends in land holding is drawing increasing attention of research scholars. Several studies have been undertaken to analyse the changes in the agrarian structure of India as a whole highlighting the inter-state differences. But no systematic study on Orissa with regard to trends in land holding and area has been undertaken so far. Therefore, in this section an

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

attempt is made to analyse the trends in land ownership structure, operation pattern and tenancy structure in rural Orissa for a period of four decades by using data from various rounds of NSS.

Orissa is primarily an agrarian economy; and agricultural growth holds the key to the overall development of the state. About 73 per cent of main workers are engaged in agriculture as cultivators and agricultural labourers. But the performance of agriculture in Orissa is dismal; though several factors are attributed for lower agricultural growth rate in Orissa, many consider inequity in land ownership and operation, and high incidence of tenancy as major impediments to agricultural growth[55].

The distributions of ownership holdings and owned area according to different size class for three time periods are indicated in the table 3.a. In 1991-92 about ninety per cent of ownership of holdings belonged to the category of landless, marginal and small farmers owning landless than 2 hectares or 5 acres, but they commanded only 54 per cent of owned land. Thus there is a considerable inequality in ownership of land. But longitudinal data on land ownership unfolds that the concentration in land ownership has not increased over the period. From 1971 to 1991 it is observed that the proportions of medium and large holdings are steadily decreasing. Also percentage of area owned by them shows a declining trend[56].

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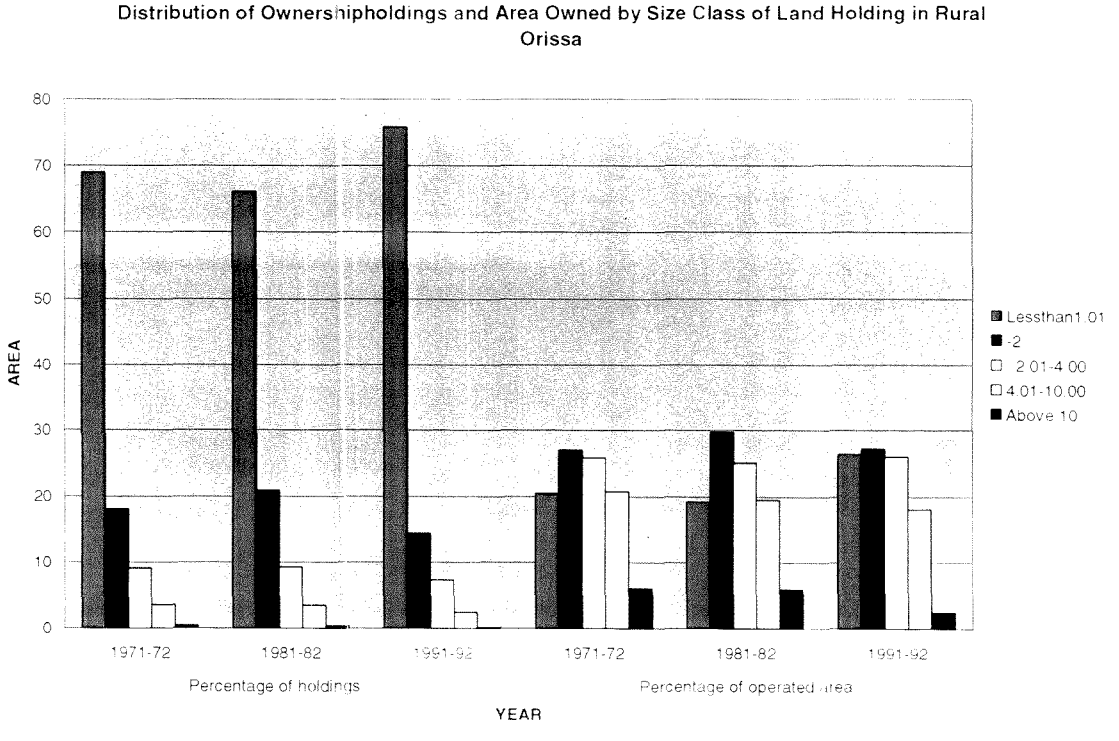
[55] Mamata, Swain, 'Tenancy Structure in Orissa: Implications for Agricultural Growth', *Artha Vijnana*, Vol. XLI (30), Sept., 1999, pp.245-261.
[56] ibid., p.248.

Distribution of Ownership Holdings and Area Owned by Size Class of Land Holding in Rural Orissa.

Table 3.a.

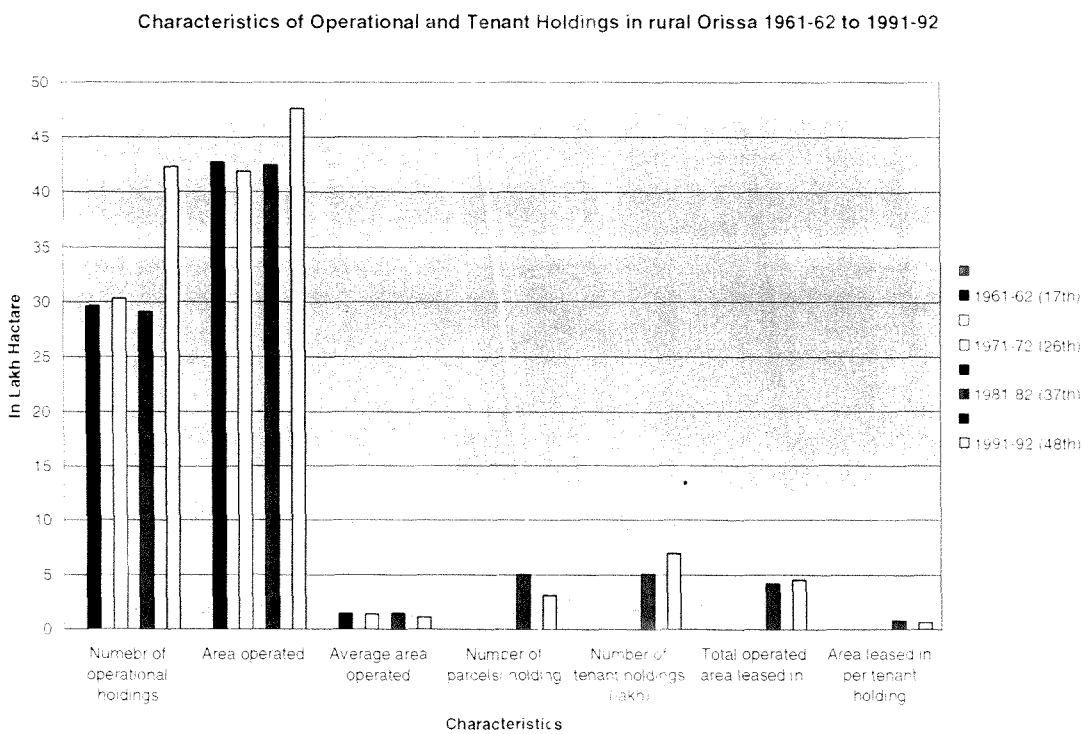
Size class of operational holdings (ha.)	Percentage of holdings			Percentage of operated area		
	1971-72	1981-82	1991-92	1971-72	1981-82	1991-92
Lessthan1.01	68.94	66.06	75.72	20.45	19.18	26.37
-2	18.08	20.84	14.42	26.95	29.73	27.16
2.01-4.00	9.04	9.31	7.34	25.88	25.04	25.99
4.01-10.00	3.52	3.44	2.4	20.72	19.5	18.08
Above 10	0.42	0.37	0.12	6	5.85	2.4
All Sizes	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00



Sources: (a) N.S.S. Report 26th Round (1971-72); (b) N.S.S. Report 37th Round (1981-82); (c) N.S.S. Report 48th Round (1991-92).

Characteristics of operational and Tenant Holdings in Rural Orissa 1961- 62 to 1991-92. Table 3.b.

Characteristics (in Lakh Hactare) & Year	Numebr of operational holdings	Area operated	Average area operated	Number of parcels/ holding	Number of tenant holdings	Total operated area leased in	Area leased in per tenant holding
1961-62 (17th)	29.66	42.72	1.44				
1971-72 (26th)	30.31	41.9	1.38				
1981-82 (37th)	29.15	42.4	1.45	5.02	5.06	4.21	0.83
1991-92 (48th)	42.3	47.59	1.13	3.1	6.92	4.51	0.65



Sources: (a) N.S.S. Report 17th Round (1961-62); (b) N.S.S. Report 26th Round (1971-72); (c) N.S.S. Report 37th Round (1981-82); (d) N.S.S. Report 48th Round (1991-92).

An analysis of trend in farm operators and area operated reveals that the number of operational holdings in Orissa has increased substantially from about 30 lakhs in 1961 to 42 lakhs in 1991(3.b). The total operational area has increased from 43 lakh in 1961 to 48 lakh hectares in 1991. Thus, within a span of thirty years there has been 42.6 per cent increase in number of operational holdings which far exceeds the 11.4 percentage increase in operated area. As a result the average area operated per household has decreased from 1.44 ha. in 1961 to 1.13 ha. in 1991 showing 21.5 per cent decline[57].

The size distribution of operational holdings and area operated shows that in the year1991-92, more than eighty per cent of farm operations belonged to marginal farmer and small farmer categories cultivating less than two hectares of land. Though they constituted 84.3 per cent of operational holdings they operated 52.3 per cent of total operational area. On the other hand, the large farmers (operating land more than 4 hectares) constituting only 3.6 per cent of total holdings cultivated a substantial portion i.e. 19.8 per cent of operated area. Thus, in Orissa there is skewed distribution of land area with its concentration in the hands of a few big farmers. However, percentage of area operated by large farmers shows a declining trend during the period 1961 to 1991[58]. In Orissa, the percentage of marginal operational holding has increased from 43.3 per cent in 1970-71 to 53.7 per cent in 1990-91, and also during the same period, percentage of area operated by them has gone from 11.9 per cent to 19.7 per cent. But the proportion of medium and large operational holdings and area operated by them shows a declining trend[59].

In inter-state comparison of tenancy indicates that Orissa belongs to the category of high tenancy states in India. In 1991 the percentage of area leased-in to area operated in case of Orissa was 9.5 per cent, which was greater than the all India average of 8.3 per cent. In Orissa, in 1991-92 there were numerically 6.9 lakh tenant holdings. They constituted 16.4 per cent of the total operational holdings. They leased-in 4.5 lakh

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[57] ibid.
[58] Mamata Swain, 'Trends in Agrarian Structure in Orissa', *Indian Journal of Regional Science,* Vol.35, (2), 2003, pp.49-60.
[59] ibid.

hectares of land, which was 9.5 per cent of the total operational area. Average area leased-in per tenant holding was only 0.65 hectare[60].

3.4. a. Nature of Tenancy Contracts:

Land tenancy can manifest itself in three major forms viz., share tenancy, fixed kind and fixed cash tenancy. Share-cropping/tenancy has been survived since the time of antiquity to the modern agriculture. In England, it was just a transitory category- metayer- after the abolition of serfdom and before the appearance of capitalist tenant farmer. The capitalist tenant farmer swallowed the landlord and disposed other peasants of their land in order to put agriculture on to the road of capitalism[61]. Irrespective of the level of capitalist control over agriculture, tenancy, in general, along with 'primitive form' of share-cropping, still exists as significant form of production. Whether the prevalence of tenancy is a sign of pre-capitalist character of agriculture or it is just one of the capitalist methods of surplus appropriation from the producers has been a matter of hot debate[62]

The major manifestation of tenancy in Orissa is share-cropping. The breakup of total leased-in area into different types of tenancy for major Indian states reveals that in Orissa sharecropping is more pervasive than fixed produce and fixed money tenancy[63]. In

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[60] ibid.

[61] Manjit Singh, 'The Political Economy of Agrarian Capitalism', *Social Scientist,* Vol. 25 (11-12), 1997, pp. 31-47.

[62] ibid.

[63] In the case of share tenancy, the tenant pays the land owner a fixed proportion of gross produce as rent. Under fixed kind or fixed cash tenancy, the tenant is required to pay a fixed specified quantity of crop or cash to the land owner irrespective of the achieved or actual yield. Different types of land tenancy systems have differing impact on the crop productivity depending on their incentives structure and risk factors for cultivators. In case of share tenancy a part of increased proceeds due to improved input use as appropriated by the lessor who does not share in additional effort or cost. Thus, it discourages a tenant to use costly yield enhancing inputs and make any fixed investment in leased in land, though the production risk is shared between the land owner and the tenant in the ratio of crop share. But incase of fixed tenancy, fixed tenants bears the full risk in production, as the kind or cash is fixed before the production process. However, as the entire incremental output accrues to the tenant after making a fixed payment to the land owner, fixed tenancy does not adversely affect efficiency in the short run. But the long-run impact of fixed tenancy may be adverse; if there is no security of tenure, the tenant will hesitate to make any fixed capital investment on land or undertake any land improvement measures. The classical economists and the Marxists those who are concerned with dynamics of tenancy contracts propound that share tenancy, fixed kind, fixed cash and owner cultivation are four consecutive phases in evolution of system of production organization signifying improvement/progressiveness successively. Share tenancy is considered as distinguishing feature of

1991-92 about 50.9 per cent leased in area was under sharecropping. The coverage under fixed money and fixed produce was only 19.7 per cent and 4.7 per cent respectively. The proportion of area under share tenancy shows an increasing trend. In 1971-72, 41.8 per cent of leased-in area was under sharecropping which has increased to 50.9 per cent in 1991. It is to be noted that in agriculturally advanced states like Punjab, Haryana and Tamilnadu fixed tenancy is more prominent than share tenancy (Swain: 2003).

The idea that share-cropping is a pre-capitalist hangover carried over to capitalist form of agriculture untenable historically as well as conceptually. Except for some states, even most of the states are following it. It has its functional necessity depending on the geo-political situation[64].

However, it should be noted that there is no more tenancy in the traditional sense of the term where by agriculture was a way of life, and customary sharing of the surplus product with the landlord was a part of the rent to be paid for his monopoly over land. Tenancy existed in past due to lack of commodity production which, inturn, was the function of low level of development of the productive forces. The present tenancy is altogether different from traditional one. Irrespective of the terms of lease- cash/kind rent or share-cropping – the persistence of present tenancy is entirely the function of development of the productive forces, and not the other way around. In this sense, instead of characterizing it as tenancy it would be better to call it lease, the term appropriate to

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backward, pre-capitalist or semi-feudalistic agriculture; fixed tenancy and owner are equated with advanced agriculture. However, share tenancy is quite widespread geographically because of its versatility and adaptability to different agro-ecological and diverse socio-economic conditions. Mamata Swain, op.cit., 1999, pp.244-261.

[64] In response to the shortage of labour, it can only be described as a form of incentive *wage* designed to increase the intensity of labour. it is a more efficient way of labour use than the wage labour as in the former there is in-built incentives to work. Share-cropping is consistent with profit making motives because it is more efficient (Cheung 1968) and can take care of prolonged productive time compared to the short labour time (Mazumadar 1975). It is a risk sharing devise (Cheung 1968); there is higher labour intensity in share-cropping, and hence a method of beating wages labourers in the labour market (Maria-Caballaero). The debate over the productivity of share-cropping, however, would be misplaced if the other determining factors- the level of penetration of commodities, the amount of use of modern technology, the level of certainty of the harvest, the socio-economic condition of the lessees, the access to the institutional loans, and the level of differentiation of the peasantry – are not taken into account.
Manjit Singh, 'The Political Economic of Agrarian Capitalism', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 25 (11-12), 1997, pp. 31-47.

the existing essence of tenancy[65]. The terms and condition of lease would be determined by factors of supervision costs, nature of labour process, and the techniques of production involved, and the balance of class forces which is not free from socio-political obligations and cultural constrains[66].

In Orissa, lease-in is more practiced by marginal and smallholdings in comparison to large farmers. The most important reason for leasing-in as reported by majority of tenants is non-availability of alternative job opportunity (Swain 1999). Because of inadequate job opportunity in the non-farm sector the landless and small farmers are leasing-in land to earn their subsistence. Their crop production is mainly meant for their domestic consumption. Hence, subsistence tenancy is more wide spread than commercial or capitalist tenancy.

As against the popular beliefs, one of the outstanding facts is that the lessor households were mainly marginal and small farmers. On the other hand, a very small percentage (3 per cent) of lessors belonged to big farmer category owning more than 4.01 hectare of land, which accounted for only 8 per cent of leased out area (swain 1999: 253).

Bharadwaj and Das (1976) in their study of villages of Orissa found out that the landlords are tending to shorten the leases to capitalize on productivity gains for each new tenant or for old tenants under threat of evictions. Sometimes the big landlords also prefer to lease out their small parcels of land to tenants with large families. They do it with the idea in mind that a tenant with limited alternative avenues of earning income is bound to work intensively to meet his subsistence needs; and the larger the family, the greater the compulsion to do so. As there is no security of tenure, an insecure tenant will always try to prove himself as efficient by putting hard labour as he is apprehensive of losing the lease otherwise.

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[65] Manjit Singh, op.cit., pp. 31-47.
[66] ibid.

In most of the cases, the tenancy contracts observed in Orissa are illegal, oral, informal, unrecorded and remain in concealed form. As there is no agreement signed between the landowner and tenant regarding the terms and condition of tenancy contracts, there is no security of tenure. The lessor can evict the tenant according to his sweet will. Therefore, the tenant has no incentive to make fixed investment on tenanted lands as the extra gain due to additional expenses may not accrue to him. In the absence of recording tenancy rights, a tenant cannot get credit from institutional sources (Swain 1999: 256).

In Orissa, tenancy is legally forbidden except under some unusual circumstances. Recently many micro level studies undertaken by research scholars reported that share tenancy is quite widespread in Orissa due to emigration of able adult male member of farm families to urban areas for employment, increase in wage cost, difficulty in labour supervision and non profitability of self-cultivation (Swain 1993, 1998, 1999). In today's Orissa most of the lessors are semi-absentee landowners staying in urban areas for their employment. It is most unlikely that they share in input cost and take interest in actual cultivation. Thus, prevalence of non-legalized leasing by small peasants with high rents, no security of tenure and absence of cost sharing have been detrimental to agricultural growth of the state due to its adverse effects on the crop production in the short run, as well as long run.

Hence, from the above explanation, it can be concluded that the average size of operational holding had declined substantially from 1.44 hectare in 1961 to 1.13 hectare in 1991 showing 21.5 per cent decline. Size distribution of land holdings and area reveals that there is significant inequality in distribution of land ownership and operation in Orissa. However, over the time, land inequality shows a declining trend. Orissa belongs to the category of high tenancy states in India with the manifestation of share cropping tenancy. Here, both lessors and lessees predominantly hail from marginal and small farmer category. The percentage of tenant holdings and leased-in area are higher for marginal and small farmer category and gradually declines for semi-medium, medium and large farmers. The term and conditions of tenancy contracts are inequitable and regressive in nature favouring the lesser. Contracts are oral, unrecorded, insecure with

high rent and characterized by absence of input cost sharing. Though tenancy is legally forbidden in the state, its prevalence suggests that in specific socio-economic context of labour abundance, land scarcity and dire hunger for land, tenancy seems to play a useful role by providing means of livelihood to the landless and poor peasants. Therefore, tenancy contracts need to be legalized and recorded with proper regulation of terms and conditions of tenancy contracts. This will facilitate resource adjustment and increased agricultural production by transferring land use right from those who are not able to cultivate to those who are willing to cultivate, while keeping the land ownership right intact and ensure security of tenure and fair rents to tenants.

3.5 Defective Agrarian Structure and Socio-economic Life in Orissa:

The above explanations clearly indicate the constraint as well as prospects for agricultural development in Orissa in the context of a given agrarian structure. The peasantry was the immediate and sole victim of the age-old traditional defective agrarian system. They suffered untold miseries. During the late nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century, the condition of peasantry was in worse condition. Even it brought individual acts of protest as well as revolutionary terrorism. The defective agrarian system, which is perpetuating since British colonial rule, is itself an impediment to further agricultural development and have bearing on the poor socio-economic condition of Orissa peasantry. The problems and prospects of Orissa agrarian economy can be discussed in the following ways.

Since the major means of production is land, its unequal distribution maintains structural inequality and acts as a hindrance to agricultural productivity, adversely affecting the states economy. The distribution of means of production is highly skewed. Seventy six per cent of the households (marginal and small) posses only 39 per cent of the total cultivated area, while another eleven per cent of households control 40 per cent[67]. According to one estimate 1.73 million cultivators of Orissa own less than 0.5 hectares and the number of landless agricultural labourers are estimated to be 1.9 million. The small peasants and landless labourers have hardly benefited either from land reforms

[67] N. K. Panda, 'Agricultural Growth and Rural Poverty in Orissa', *Vision*, Vol. 11 (4), 1983, pp. 19-24.

or from various rural development schemes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor (ERRP). Despite some land reform measures, the iniquitous pattern of distribution of land to the tillers still existed in Orissa. Since land is the major means of production, its unequal distribution maintains structural inequality and acts as hindrance to remove rural poverty.

There was almost complete neglect of modernization of agriculture. As in other parts of India, so also in Orissa, agriculture was technologically stagnant. The poor farmers use hardly any modern machinery. What was worse was that even ordinary implements were centuries old. Wooden ploughs are still used. The use of inorganic fertilizers was virtually unknown while a large part of animal manures i.e. cow-dung, night soil and cattle bones were wasted. In Orissa the average size of land holding stands at only 1.6 hectares. The small size of land holding prevents the use of tractors and the energisations of more pump sets. As a result, it indirectly affects the agricultural modernization. Moreover, poverty and traditional outlook never allow the Orissa peasantry to opt for the iron ploughs. According to 1979 figures the wooden and iron ploughs numbered 3,140,772 and 152,701 respectively[68]. The consumption of fertilizers was 40.84 Kg per hectare during 2001-02. It was much below the national average of 90.12 Kg per hectare (Government of Orissa 2004). Insufficient irrigation appears to be the major drawback of agricultural modernization in Orissa. The low irrigation potentiality has restricted the growth of intensive cash crop production and use of chemical fertilizers (Barik 1987: 439). Thus it is clearly discernible that Orissa agriculture is still backward and primitive.

The conservatism of Orissa peasants hampered the agricultural development. It was said that Oriyas were very conservative cultivators and had an apathetic indifference to agricultural improvements. His conservatism was noticeable in his dislike of new methods of cultivation. This is built up through their centuries old tradition and experience of cultivation and pessimistic vision towards modern outlook. Such conservation is due to natural idleness and apathy of the Balasore peasants, whom all

[68] Statistical Outline of Orissa, *Bureau of Economics and Statistics*, Govt. of Orissa, 1979, p.85.

accounts described as 'bigoted wedded to custom and poor' in the extreme..."[69]. Even if, it was held that the British government did not take necessary steps to remove their conservatism by enlightening them with modern techniques of agriculture. High illiteracy, low socio-economic background of peasants, acute poverty prevented them in the development of awareness. Also, the majorities of peasants are from rural background and belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In fact, it was poverty and want of enlightenment of Oriya peasants, which prevented them from developing agriculture.

The overcrowding of agriculture led to the deterioration of agriculture during the British rule. The dependence of the people on the land was aggravated by the decay of village industries. The decline of indigenous industries was mainly caused by the importation of foreign goods. Thus, thousands of peasants who had supplemented their income by part time spinning, weaving and salt making now have to rely overwhelmingly on cultivation. On the other hand thousand of rural artisan lost their traditional livelihood and became agricultural labourers or petty tenants holding tiny plots. The pressure on land that has already been more than the required has increased further causing hardship to the rural masses. In addition, this lead to further subdivision of land and fragmentation of holdings and agriculture became more and more uneconomic[70]. The total population of the state has more than doubled between 1961 and 2001 indicating an urgent need for augmenting the productivity of food grains. In such a paradoxical situation, the slow and negligible expansion of industries, petty production that did not generate much surplus, the lack employment generation further aggravated the socio-economic condition of the peasantry causing labour migration.

The middleman and local moneylenders plays a pivot role in extending financial assistance to the poor farmers in rural areas who charges usurious rate of interest. The poor peasants usually fall in the vicious circle of debt trap. Initially the government has scant attention to this faulty credit structure. Even government provides loan to those who

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[69] L. S. S. O. Malley, 'Bengal Districts Gazetters (Balasore), 1908, pp.85-86.
[70] Jayanta Kumar Samal, *Agrarian History of Orissa Under the British Rule,* New Delhi: Kaniska Publishers, 1993, p.215.

own land and amount is relative to quantum of land, which clearly indicates that, the landless labourers can hardly benefit from the developmental measures. For the marginal peasants the loan is a burden and for the rich it is an addition to their surplus. In village, it is found that most of the villagers are loanees. This enhances the land purchasing capability of the rich and weakens the land protecting ability of the poor. While the poor peasants use the loan for fulfilling the basic necessities, the rich peasants invest it in usury, land acquisition and other income generating activities. Thus, loan provided by the government agencies for agricultural development has added to the earlier inequalities[71]. Hence, small saving groups should be formed at the village level to provide credit farmers. This will reduce the dependency of the farmers on middleman. The role and function of the existing government rural financial institution like Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies should be readdressed to cater to the needs of the small and marginal farmers.

All the tenancy laws in operation laid grater emphasis only on the rights of the perspective parities and obligations with regard to payments and collection of revenue, rent, etc. but neglected all reference to the duties and obligation with regard to the improvement of agriculture. In fact, all these laws concerned themselves with the right of proprietors to collect rent and to the grant of rights to the tenants in respect of fixity of tenure, freedom to transfer etc. No duties or obligations on either proprietor to manage their estates according to rules of good estate management or on tenants to cultivate land in accordance with the rules of agricultural improvement had been statutorily laid down in any tenancy laws. This was a grave omission which had contributed largely to the gradual deterioration in agricultural efficiency and decrease in agriculture production (Samal 1993: 224). The problem received considerable attention only during and since the World War-II when shortage of food and other agricultural product became chronic and widespread (Samal 1993).

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[71] Premananda Panda and B. B. Mohanty, 'State Peasant Relationship in Orissa', *Eastern Anthropologist*, Vol.44, 1991, pp.253-264.

The state has a scant attention to the problems and miseries of poor peasants and did little to evolve welfare measures for the improvement of farming in any way. The agriculture department which came into existence in due course was ill funded, not properly manned and lacked real initiative to introduce any project for the betterment of farming, and amelioration of the miseries of the farming class. Virtually it was only a department by name and its sporadic efforts were confined to propaganda in order to make a public show that something was being done while nothing happened to transform the conditions on the ground. The implementations of land reform legislations were entrusted entirely on the bureaucrats who were recruited from the bourgeoisie proprietor class and serve their own class interests. In actual implementation of these legislations, the bureaucratic state works as a weapon in the hand of the landlords to uproot the poor peasants[72].

In Orissa, the landlords hardly invest more than 2 per cent of their surplus in agriculture. Thus, the rack-renting, usurious money lending and speculative trade have been their principal methods of appropriation of agricultural surplus, which they largely spend on conspicuous consumption and luxury items. The abundant availability of cheap labour, absence of secondary employment avenues, the heavy indebtedness of the peasantry and quick profit through the trade further strengthen the hands of their counter productive role in agriculture. The investment of state on the development of agriculture is very negligible.

The slow growth of agriculture in Orissa was severely affected by an unprecedented climatic condition and vagaries of nature. Frequent occurrence of cyclones, floods, drought, and complete wash out of standing crops leave the farmers at the borderline of survival. They adversely affected their purchasing power and expansion of home market; let lone national and international markets. The natural calamities like flood and drought caused extensive damage to rice crops, which was the mainstay of the people. The flood or draught was mainly responsible for local scarcities that occurred in

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[72] Jayanta Kumar Mohapatra and U. M. Das, 'Agrarian Transition and Social Development in Orissa', *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.54 (2), 1993, pp.292-309.

Orissa in most of the years. At times, it caused deep and widespread distress resulting in terrible famine. In certain flooded tracts of Puri and Balasore districts, the villages suffering the most were those which were liable to inundation by salt water. Vast areas in all the coastal districts of Orissa were suffering regularly and persistently from the devastation of floods. The government of the Crown did not do the necessary to solve this vital problem. There should be effective measures to control such devastating calamities.

Orissan population is multi-ethnic in composition and there was lack of uniformity in the economic system as it prevailed in the British Orissa. The hilly and forest region of the area was dominated by the tribal population, which exhibited several cultures and diversity of customs and practices. Tribal economy was primitive, barter oriented, localized and non-competitive without market facilities. The government attended to it in its own interest and not in the interest of the tribal. The social system in the rural belt was not amorphous since the largest chunk of population belonged to the Hindu community, which shows caste stratification as the harmony achieved through a hierarchy. Caste system certainly had been the mark of an ossified system, yet it endured in spite of the liberal education imparted through English schools.

How far the economic structure was determined by caste ideology can be easily confirmed by a close look at the economic system that prevailed in rural India. All crafts were organized within the system according to the caste system, each member of the caste pursuing his craft without exercising any option for either a vertical or a horizontal shift. What vocation one should adopt as a means for subsistence and survival; did depend on what caste he was born in and what he should inherit within the cultural practices of his family. Fortunately enough, agricultural was a case of neutral like some trade and commercial activities. However, caste system also affects the land ownership structure. It is on record that nearly 60 per cent of the upper caste, mainly Brahmins and Karans held land in British Orissa on different terms and conditions, the rest being landless workers for whom few vocations could be considered now discerning[73].

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[73] S. C. Padhy and A. S. Rani, op.cit., p.121.

Farming was the crux of the local economy and 80 per cent of the population had to depend on cultivation in one form or other. Nearly seventy per cent of the small and marginal farmers got their plots for cultivation as share-croppers who had to abide by the rules of subletting. However, there were no fixed rules, no fairplay in matters of settling land with sharecroppers, no fair consideration of either the caprice of weather or the fertility of soil. The landowner thrived at the cost of sharecroppers since he was protected by the tenancy acts that granted him inalienable settlements while sharecroppers could seek no legal measures to promote their interests.

With such a vicious circle of highly unequal land control, widespread tenurial systems, low wage, paucity of employment, low growth of industry and little modernization of agriculture have further helped the stagnation of agriculture. Therefore, there is always a need to address the agricultural problems at the micro-level, more particularly the issue of small, marginal poor farmers and agricultural labourers. At the same time, adequate attention should be given to the development of infrastructural facilities. And all this can be possible through radical agrarian reforms.

Conclusion:

Orissa is land of peasants whose only source of income is agriculture. The economic condition of the peasant during colonial rule was terrible. The self-sufficient village economy of rural Orissa got shattered due to 'divide-rule policy' of the Britisher's. They were not much concerned about the development of infrastructure and improvement of the backward agriculture except for maximizing the revenue. The faulty revenue collection method and land tenure system made the peasants most vulnerable. The peasants of Orissa as in other parts of India were suffering in the hands of landlords, feudal kings, *mustadars, gauntias* and village landlords. The various tenancy legislations could not improve the condition of the peasantry. They were biased in favour of the landlords and upper class people. The Britishers were also not in a motive of change due to the possibility of rebellion or loss of revenue from the landed class and upper section of the society. Therefore, high land revenue, illegal exactions, rising indebtedness and various peasant movements were the common phenomenon in colonial Orissa.

The description of the agrarian structure of Orissa clearly demonstrates the continued domination of feudalism/semi-feudal relations of production. Middle farmers are mostly unequipped with any types of capitalist means of production rather attached to the semi-feudalistic pattern. The relation between agricultural labourers who sell their labour and peasant proprietors who engage farm hands for cultivating their lands is not a capitalist nor do they have capitalist farming. The upper caste absentee landlords enjoy absolute privileges, generate economic and political influence and the failure of land reform strengthen the hands of these classes.

The backwardness of Orissan agriculture can be attributed to factors like extra economic compulsions- indebtedness, caste structure, 'political' domination, etc.- which tend to influence the analysis and impel to characterize such agriculture as 'semi-feudal' or 'transitory stage of capitalist agriculture'. Perhaps Kautsky's (1980) term 'feudal capitalist exploitation' is more appropriate to characterize such agriculture than any other single concept. Some also interpret the above hybrid concept as 'super-capitalist' exploitation by employing pre-capitalist method of extraction, over and above the compulsion imposed by the dominant capitalist mode of production[74].

Recently, Orissa has shown a negative sign in respect of almost all indicators of development. Orissa remained unaffected and experienced no remarkable sign of modern economic transition due to primitive agricultural techniques, insufficient irrigation, land fragmentation, uneconomic holding, unequal distribution of means of production and land man ratio, inadequate investment in agriculture and industry, slow agricultural modernization, growing marginalization and pauperization, over pressure on agriculture, alarming rural indebtedness and above all the existing unequal land relations. The capitalization of relation of production has not been able to penetrate the Orissan agrarian structure. The existing pattern of agriculture, tenancy system, non-free and attached labourers, are the signs of semi-feudal mode of production. But differentiation among the

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[74] Manjit Singh, 'The Political Economy of Agrarian Capitalism', Social *Scientist*, Vol.25 (11-12), 1997, pp. 31-47.

peasantry, secular stagnation, labour as a commodity and free wage labour system show partial development of capitalistic features in Orissan agriculture in few pockets. These mixed symptoms characterize a partial transition in the mode of production reflecting semi-feudalistic elements. Despite the above depressing trends in agricultural field, it can be concluded that it has taken the road to capitalist development minus capitalist infrastructure.

CHAPTER: IV

Labour Migration in Orissa: A Symptomatic Reality

'There may be economic, scientific or sentimental reasons attracting people to remote places; people always have a variety of reasons for moving from one place to another. One of the few constant factors in human history is migration, often over huge distances for reasons that are difficult to discern'.

- F. J. Dyson

4.0 Introduction:

The image of the essentially immobile labour force and the 'reluctant workers' had long been a history in colonial discourse. This image of an immobilized labour force had its roots in the construction of Indian society as autarchic village republic ruled by the rigidity of caste regulations, which deterred movement and diminished initiatives so essential for mobility. The myth of an immobile peasantry persists, not only in anthropological literature, but just as much in common usage. Even village studies have contributed to similar reification of the past by emphasizing the closed nature and continuity of the local order and pay little attention to migration, which assumes the character of labour displacement.

However, there was an opposing view that ascribed the colonial state and its agent the task of liberating potentially mobile section of the population from the thralldom of the stagnant society. According to this view, there were sections of population belonging to the lowest castes and tribes who were not subject to intense regulations of village society and they were thought to be peculiarly suitable for labour mobilization.

Peasant society bears an image of extremely static entity in many publications. If cases of migration is mentioned anywhere, it is only in relation to urbanization. Rarely, government has escaped from giving scanty attention to labour migration in connection with agrarian sector. There has been a large group of landless labourers through out the 19^{th} century and were mainly from weaker, depressed, underprivileged section. Of

course, there has been a large controversy[1] pertaining to the extent of existence of agricultural labourers in pre-colonial and colonial period. At the dawn of independence Indian society was characterized not only by high per cent of landless agricultural labourers in its rural workforce but also by sizeable class of 'dwarf holding' peasants who sold their labour power, and the incidence of unemployment was considerable for these groups.

The labour mobility paradigm that emerged in the post-independence India under the influence of modernization and industrialization paradigm remained focused on the key transition of the villagers into permanent factory workers. In the process, it rarely ever looked at the persisting pattern of mobility and insecurity, which has induced the pattern of circular and short migration. Huge number of erudite macro/micro researches in rural areas vividly outlined several features such as backwardness of the area, population growth, unemployment and under employment, poverty, lack of irrigation, low level of technology and natural calamities are some of the ingredients which have acted as a catalyst for the source of supply of labour. The migration researches in India have not made any appreciable efforts in comprehending the reality at the context of changing agrarian structure. Emphasis is added to subjective factors associated with individual to migrate out guided by the pull factors. It is mostly the influence of modernization forces which was the major concern for the migration theorists to make out as the case for migration. They have rarely put their glance on rural out-migration, rural-rural migration, seasonal or causal migration at the macro angel taking into account

[1] There were clash of arguments pertaining to the existence of agricultural labour in colonial India. At the one extreme, S. J. Patel (1952) argues that, in the pre-nineteenth century India, there was no noticeably large class of agricultural labourers. The large scale of agricultural labourers represents a new form of social relationship that emerged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in India. He argues that marked increase in the pace of pauperization during colonial rule lead to the swelling of the ranks of the agricultural labourers. At the other extreme, Dharma Kumar argued that agricultural labourers were already large class at the advent of colonial rule having numerical preponderance not any less than comparable figure for the 19th & early 20th centuries. Utsa Patnaik (1983) argues that though pre colonial agrarian structure was characterized by a significant presence of landless labourers, it increased to a larger extent during the British era. It was due to faulty colonial policies.

the agrarian transformation. Rather, they are more committed in glorifying the 'labour commitment'[2] thesis and migration as 'equilibrating mechanism'[3].

Labour mobility and migration is a stark reality within the context of changing agrarian relationship. Labour dynamism is one of the byproduct of changing agrarian structure. At the advent of capitalism in agriculture, the commercialization of agriculture shattered the condition of peasantry rather than emancipating them. Peasant pauperization became a common phenomenon due to abrupt restructuring of agriculture from one of subsistence to that of production for world market. At the advent of green revolution, many traditional occupations became redundant and *jajmani* system disintegrated rapidly. Modernization of agriculture caused drastic change in the social relations of production leading to freeing of agricultural labourers from relations of patronage and institutionalized dependencies. De-patronization is being widely experienced in the farm-labour relationship (Breman 1985).

Increasing de-peasantisation leads to the swelling of agricultural labourers. The poor peasants, agricultural labourers after losing their small portion of land have either migrated to urban areas or come down to the level of wage earners. In Jan Breman's (1985, 1996) memorable phrase the 'wage hunter and gatherer' and 'footloose labourers' suddenly acquired visibility. Yet, by far the greater part of labour migration begins and ends with rural milieu. Intra-rural, seasonal circulation of unskilled labour and migration within rural milieu which are some stark reality may be consequent upon the changing agrarian relationships.

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[2] Labour commitment thesis posited that worker in the early stages of industrialization process were uncommitted to industrialization because of the rural and kinship nexus they maintained. It was thought that a mature industrialization required full commitment of workers as reflected in their internalization of work norms, discipline and complete severance of ties with land. Lack of commitment of labour was thought to be serious though not insurmountable barrier to industrialization. According to this thesis, industrialism and full labour commitment characterized developed industrial countries and the industrializing countries were in various state of transition towards this state. Labour migration studies in the 1950s and 1960s were heavily influence by this thesis. It ignores the rural migration in agrarian sector caused by stress.

[3] W. A. Lewis (1954) was the staunch advocate of equilibrating mechanism of migration. It argues that significant part of labour force could be drawn into modern urban industrial sector from the labour surplus traditional agricultural sector without incurring any loss to the latter. This model consider migration as an equilibrating mechanism which, through transfer of labour from the traditional labour surplus sector to the modern labour deficit sector, eventually brings about wage equality in two sectors. It justifies labour migration from functional point of view.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made in understanding the agrarian structure and the process of out migration broadly in India and more particularly in Orissa by applying historical-structural approach. As the intensity of exploitation and pattern of labour migration vary from epoch to epoch, labour out-migration is explained in colonial and post independent India (Orissa) and in feudal, semi-feudal and capitalist mode of production. In this chapter, a careful attention has been given on the evolution of agricultural labourers in India and Orissa. Perspectives on migration are explicitly elaborated, where emphasis is added to Marxist perspectives. In spite of the paucity of data on quantity of labour out-migration, its typology and causative factors are well explained.

4.1 Evolution of Agricultural Labourer:

Agricultural labourers constitute a very important component of the rural population in India. It is found from the history that there has been a large group of landless labourers throughout the nineteenth century and that they were mainly from the weaker, depressed, under-privileged sections of the Indian society. In spite of the paucity of data, from various records, it has been demonstrated that agricultural labourers existed during ancient and medieval period, apparently in the form of slavery and serfdom. Historians are generally in agreement that the peasant, as producer of surplus, emerged as a distinct socio-economic group in India during the agricultural revolution in the Indian civilization, which calibrated carbon dating now placed the 2600-1800 B.C. During this period, agricultural production, to some extent, depended upon the servile landless labourers (Chanana 1960, Kosambi 1970). In the simplified *Varna* stratification scheme, the deep division of the peasantry in to the free *Vis* and the servile *Dasyus,* who transmuted as *Vaisyas* and *Sudras,* form respectively the third and fourth Varnas is well reflected[4].

[4] Irfan Habib, 'The Peasant in Indian History', *Social Scientist*, Vol.11 (3), 1983.

There is a general agreement among the historians that certainly by Northern Black Polish phase (600 B.C. - 300 B.C.), the mass of *Sudra* population came to be employed as landless agricultural labourers. Even various Brahminical sources as well as Buddhist and Jain texts provide strong evidence to this effect. Enormous expansion of agriculture based on discoveries of new methods of cultivation, and vast increase of the number of crops, had a very important role to play in this process (Habib 1983, Jha 1997). Professor Habib argues that the consolidation of agricultural labourers as separate class took place during the first millennium A.D. and once these castes became established as labouring class, they remained durable feature of the Indian social structure till the recent past (Habib 1983).

From various sources of literature, it may be noticed that in most part of the country, these labourers operated within the framework of *Jajmani* system. Almost everywhere, the agricultural labourers were subject to a whole range of social disabilities based on the crucial differences in the forms and the context of employer labourer relationships in different regions. The peasantry, as a class, could not escape from the various forms of stratification and differentiation among themselves. They were characterized by a considerable degree of stratification and some segments were subject to various economic and extra-economic constraints. Most of the labour forces are from rural economy and majority of them were landless labourers.

4.1. a Colonial period:

Mostly, the economic historians believe that the class of landless agricultural labourer was originated during the British rule in India. The origin of agricultural labourer in large part in a process of peasant pauperization, in a situation of falling land-man ratio and insufficient growth of employment owing to the very low rate of industrialization in the colonial period, gave rise to acute underemployment[5]. Several factors like, improvement of transport and communication, establishment of railway, shifting of cultivation from subsistence crops to commercial crops, initiation of irrigation

[5] Utsa Patnaik, 'On the Evolution of the Class of Agricultural Labourers in India', *Social Scientist*, Vol.11 (7), 1983, July, pp.3-23.

facilities etc. contributed to the growth of capitalist form agriculture. This new form of agriculture also had huge demand on the supply of labour force. Some of the important facts can be explained below:

Firstly, during the British rule, there was an increase in the area under cultivation. Some initiatives were taken to clear the forests.

Secondly, the development of commercial crops as indigo, poppy, and jute and tea plantations which were either more labour-intensive, or were associated with processing activities requiring more labour, or were grown in the off-season, or in areas where no cultivation took place before.

Thirdly, the growth of mining, industry, towns and jute industry, which necessitated a transfer of population from village to towns.

Fourthly, increasing destruction of cottage industry, ruination of village economy during colonial regime, persistence of de-peasantisation, faulty land tenure system leading to landlessness caused the vast majority of agricultural labourers.

Fifthly, activities like road and rail building usually employed people on a seasonal *ad hoc* basis.

Lastly, the demand for labour outside India, for work in other parts of the British Empire- in Kenya, Srilanka, Malaysia, and West Indies and so on- increased the demand for labour force. These were mainly servile and indentured labourers during the British India.

However, there is clash of argument pertaining to the influence of colonial rule on the growth of class agricultural labour in Indian society. At the one extreme, S. J. Patel argues that, in the pre-nineteenth century India, there was no noticeably large class of agricultural labourers. Though there were domestic and menial servants, their numbers were small and they did not form a group whose major occupation was to work on the land of the others for compensation in kind or cash. The large scale of agricultural labourers represents a new form of social relationship that emerged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in India (Patel 1952). He argues that marked increase in the pace of pauperization during colonial rule led to the swelling of the ranks of the agricultural labourers.

At the other extreme, Dharma Kumar (1992) argued that agricultural labourers were already large class at the advent of colonial rule having numerical preponderance not any less than comparable figure for the 19th & early 20th centuries. Utsa Patnaik, maintaining a balance point, argues that though pre-colonial agrarian structure was characterized by a significant presence of landless labourers, it increased to a larger extent during the British era. The colonial policies like free import of cheap manufactures, heavy revenue burdens, rigid collection of cash, application of the laws of restraint of property and imprisonment defaulting debtors led to massive displacement of artisans on the one hand and pauperization of the larger section of the poorer peasantry into landlessness on the other (Patnaik 1983). For A.K Bagchi (1982), it is the integration of a traditional economy into the world capitalist network of production and exchange that must have accelerated the process of the growth of agricultural labourers.

4.1. b Post Independence Period:

At the dawn of independence, the Indian society was characterized not only by a high percentage of agricultural labourers in its rural work force but also by a sizeable class of 'dwarf holding' peasants, who sold their labour power, and the incidence of underemployment was considerable for both these groups[6]. The new production relations (property relations), created by the British revenue settlement policies, had some important consequences for the farm labourers, such as a slow trend towards casualisation, monetization of employer-employee relationships, etc. After independence, some initiatives were being taken by the state to abolish the feudal intermediary tenures, conferring of permanent rights of possession on certain categories of tenants and ceiling on individual land holdings. However, as Utsa Pattniak puts it, the strategy can be described as conservative land reform aimed at inducing landlords to convert themselves into capitalists, without seriously challenging their monopoly over land and other resources[7]. A number of conceptual, methodological and statistical differences have been pointed out in arriving at estimates of agricultural labour (or rural labour in general), and

[6] Praveen kumar Jha, *Agricultural labour in India*, New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House, 1997, p.12.
[7] U. Pattniak, 'Agrarian Sector in Independent India', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 16 (2), 1988.

in measuring employment/unemployment (Jha 1997). In spite of the difficulties encountered, it can be held that there was swelling of agricultural labour in post-independence India. Some of the causative factors are responsible for it.

(I)- Varieties of tenurial legislations and technical changes have pushed out many small peasants and tenants from self- employment into wage labour. The traditional pattern of share cropping tenancy has declined and owner-cultivation with hired labour has increased. The area under tenancy, according to the NSS estimates declined absolutely and in relative terms, from 20.34 per cent of the total operated area in 1953-54 to 10.57 per cent in 1971-72. The eviction of erstwhile tenants has contributed significantly in swelling the ranks of agricultural labourers in many parts of the country.

(II)- The change in occupation structure can be attributed to hosts of factors, including land reform measures, factious transfers, economic and demographic pressures through such mechanisms as sale-purchase, subdivision under inheritance laws etc. The proportion of marginal farmers (those who owned landless than one acre) in total landowning households went up sharply from 31.43 per cent to 43.99 per cent within two decades and the average area owned by them was almost halved (Jha 1997: 24).

(III)- In the 'green revolution' areas, apart from the push factors, rapid growth of agriculture led to an increase in demand for labour, at least during the early phase; thus the 'pull factor' is also supposed to have contributed significantly to the increase in the proportion of agricultural labourers in these areas.

(IV)- Demand for the products and services of traditional craftsmen and artisan in rural areas has gone down drastically. Many of these erstwhile self-employed in traditional occupation have joined the ranks of agricultural labourers.

(V)- Increasing importance of education during post-independence period and preferences for leisure activities accounted for the declining of the share of the family members working on their own farms, thus increasing the demand for hired labour (Jha 1997: 25).

Thus, the most pertinent fact of significant increase in the proportion of agricultural labourers in total workforce in almost every part of the country is beyond dispute. Moreover it is possible to argue that various factors at work in the Indian society

are such that agricultural labourers will continue to constitute a high, even rising share of total work force. However, the characteristics of the size and composition of the Indian agricultural labour can be explained in the following lines.

(a)- From the various government reports, it is clear that the number both in agriculture and non-agriculture is increasing at a faster rate than the growth of population. The number of agricultural households, as per the Rural Labour Enquiry (RLE), has increased from 15.3 million in 1964-65 to 33.3 millions in 1987-88 i.e. by almost 118 per cent, whereas the total number of rural households increased by 55 per cent during the same period (NCRL, 1991).

(b)- The rising trend in the wage-employed proportions of rural workers, reported in the 1960s by all major data sources, has continued in the 1970s and 1980s. The proportions of rural male wage labour to total male work force increased at the all India level from 34.1 per cent in 1972-73 to 41.4 per cent in 1987-88 (Jha 1997: 34).

(c)- The process of casualisation of labour is going unabated in rural India, as indicated by (i) - the rising proportions of casual labourers among rural labourers, among both males and females, (ii)- the increasing populations of casual wage labour in total wage labour (NCRL 1991).

(d)- The increase in landlessness in rural areas and the marginalization of small holdings are the obvious and most important reasons behind the increase in the size of agricultural labour force.

(e)- The past couple of decades have witnessed a significant increase in the magnitude of inter-state and intra-state migration of agricultural labourers.

4.2 Evolution of Agricultural Labourer in Orissa:

Orissan economy is characterized by backward agriculture. Out of the total rural poor families in Orissa, 87.36 per cent of rural poor families were agricultural labourers, marginal and small farmers (Govt. of India 2002: 248-249). The share of the agricultural labour force dependent on wage employment for most of its income has been rapidly rising in recent years in Orissa. Census and survey data suggest that the proportion of agricultural labourers in total workforce had increased from 15 per cent in 1961 to 28 per cent in 1971. It had witnessed a marginal decline to 27.8 per cent in 1981. Again it had

increased slightly to 28.85 per cent in 1991. But the overall picture of last two decades doesn't show any such swelling of agricultural labourer. Though it has also shown a depression, wage labour system is a prerequisite condition of capitalist farming[8]. Of the total agricultural workers in the state, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe workers constitute 83.63 per cent.

The genesis of agricultural labourers in Orissa can be attributed to several historical factors. The advent of British rule in India and specifically in Orissa brought a great transformation in the economic life of agricultural community. The Britishers were mainly a commercial group whose main interests were to exploit India in order to gratify their interests. This has apparently, adversely affected the agricultural and land revenue policy. As a result, a new class of parasite grew in Orissa which held under its control the available land. Thus, land became the monopoly of the rich and the rest of the society became mere tenants. This deplorable state of affairs continued till the 19th century and crippled the agricultural community as a whole.

Orissa has been continuously suffering from the curse of nature. Natural calamities, flood, famine were the common natural horrors experienced in Orissa, which directly or indirectly led to the swelling of agricultural labourers in Orissa. In 1803, 1806, 1808, 1809, 1813, 1817, 1830, 1837 and 1842 Orissa had suffered from severe droughts. Floods of severe magnitude were also experienced during 1815. In 1831, a great cyclone especially in Balasore was found. In the second part of nineteenth century, Orissa suffered due to repeated floods in 1851, 1853, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1862, 1868, 1874, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1885, 1892, 1895, 1896 and 1900. In 1866, 1872, 1874 and 1892 there were cyclones which had affected the agro-economic condition terribly[9]. In spite of such vagaries of nature, the Zamindars were never hesitating to collect revenue from the ryots. Even the peasant did not get any relief from them. Due to perpetual indebtedness, their condition deteriorated during the post calamities period.

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[8] J. K. Mohapatra, U. M. Das, 'Agrarian Transition and Social Development in Orissa', *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54 (2), April-June, 1993, pp. 292-310.

[9] S. N. Tripathy and K. C. Pradhan, '*Agricultural Labour in India*', New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 1996, p.10.

The Zamindars were hardly sympathetic to the peasants. It was severe in the case of absentee landlords who were mostly from Bengal. In spite of such calamities, Orissa had shown huge amount of rice exporting to Bengal. This accelerated the problem of food insecurity. The government had scant attention to such problem. Thus, it was obvious that the famine of 1866 was not due to natural causes but due to the callous attitude of Zamindars and governments (Sen 1981). To add to this problem, the Zamindars deliberately neglected cultivation teasing low assessment in land revenue.

There prevailed extreme poverty and destitution among a considerable portion of agricultural population throughout the colonial period. Their material conditions were extremely miserable, though some initiatives were taken for their development. It is aptly remarked that lack of interest to improve the socio- economic condition of Orissa and the unfavorable methods of land revenue administration were responsible to keep more than six lakh people of province either in slavish or semi-slavish condition.

High population growth had the consequence of swelling in agricultural labourers in Orissa. It led to increasing pressure on agriculture. The high growth of population had severe impact on the land. In the absence of alternative opportunity in the formal industrial sector, low growth of industrial development, these surplus populations were added to the agricultural labour class. In Orissa, during 1858 to 1905, the population grew about 50 per cent. It increased from 23,19,192 to 41,51,239 in 1901 during the period under review[10].

During the British colonial period, the village industry got a blow due to import of foreign products at cheaper rate and in abundant supply. It directly aggravated the concentration of people on land, in addition to high population growth. Once upon a time, cloth making was the principal occupation of Orissan population. Orissa has rich reputation abroad for its handicraft. Even female members of high class cultivators were engaged in making thread. But with increasing of foreign importation, it was forsaken

[10] ibid., p.11.

and relegated to lower classes. According to the census report of 1892, there were only 59,363 weavers in Cuttack, 56,767 in Balasore and about 19,500 in Puri. While the destruction of local industries compelled the masses to take agriculture as their main pursuit, unfavourable land revenue policy filled the cup of their misery[11].

The scarcity in food grain and rise in the prices of food hit hard the poor agricultural labourers in Orissa. This was due to the frequent crop failures on account of flood or drought. The census report of 1901 observed that, 'in a country like India, where two-third of people depended on agriculture, crop failure or natural calamities led to the peasant ruin'. The persons mainly affected by the famine were the landless labourers. During the crop failure, the peasants must be in the debt trap to meet their basic necessities. Sometimes the heavy and perpetual indebtedness forced the cultivators to sell their property to the moneylenders and landlords and became landless labourers. The perpetual scarcity forced many of them to leave for Calcutta in search of employment.

It is a matter of deep concern that the benefits of planned development have been acquired mostly by the rich farmers. As a result, there has been an enormous growth of marginal and small farmers and landless agricultural labourers. Agricultural labourers are mostly illiterate and un-organized. In Orissa, agricultural labour unions or labour cooperatives have rarely been found. Due to high illiteracy and unorganized nature, they were not in a position to resist injustice and the government also did not take any initiative for their upliftment. Most of the agricultural labourers are in the category of marginal and landless farmers. There exists unequal labour contracts and exchange leading to exploitation of small and marginal farmers in rural Orissa. Their living condition deteriorated due to the absence of rural training programmes. Sometimes, the labourers had complained of not getting the minimum wage. Even the female agricultural labourers were (are being) discriminated in matter of wage payment. The Minimum Wage Act, Inter-state Migrant Workmen Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Workmen Compensation Act and other labour laws are violated in case of agricultural labourers.

[11] ibid.

Therefore, there is the inclination of agricultural labourers towards out-migration to eke-out a living due to high incidence of unemployment and poverty.

4.2.a Agricultural Labour System in Orissa:

In the context of Indian economy, labour process and labour exchange systems have structurally different features. Depending on the structure of economy, the labour exchange process and production relations differ region-wise in various parts of the country. In the state of Orissa, agricultural labourers in various forms are in existence. Their conditions, size, manner of contracts etc. are closely interlinked with the custom, traditions, economic system and the geographical feature of that particular region. In Orissa, such labourers can be broadly divided into following categories.

Attached Labourer: Attached labourers in agricultural sector are more marked in the villages of Orissa as there is the possibility of assured means of employment to the rural labourers. Rural labourers who are attached to the landlords or big farmers on certain terms and conditions are known as attached labourers. They, by tradition, accept their date of joining or leaving out of the service on the occasion of *Doloyatra,* the day before *Holi.* Such attached labourers are appointed on certain conditions. The annual wage is fixed on the basis of contract depending upon efficiency of the individual. The mode of payment is either on the basis of kind or in cash. The annual wage generally paid to the agricultural attached labourers in Orissa ranges from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 6,000[12]. Initially, they get 25 per cent of their total wage, another 25 per cent during the transplantation and sowing period and the rest amount they get after harvesting or at the end of tenure. Sometimes, they get some extra benefits from the master like getting sweets, clothes, special payments during some festivals. Their re-new of job depends on their performance and motive of landlord. Instances of migration of such labourers were noticed due to heavy workload.

[12] S. N. Tripathy and K. C. Pradhan, op.cit., p.4.

Contract Labourers: Though attached labourers are appointed on the basis of contract, it is only found in agricultural sector. Whereas contract labourers are found both in agriculture and industrial sectors. Contractual labourers are unorganized, illiterate like the attached agricultural labourers. In agricultural sector, contracts labourers may be appointed for a period of 20 days or one month depending upon the nature of work. They are paid wage on the basis of their contract which is known as 'piece wage' or '*Gutta*' in the local terms. Such labourers are employed by landlords or big farmers during transplantation, sowing, harvesting, and earth works like reclamation of land. Such labourers usually work in group. Such contractual labourers perform hard work about 8 to 16 hours in a day, depending upon the nature of work as they are responsible to finish the work in time. Usually, there is a head man in that group, who is the key person responsible to both parties for the work to be done and for getting payment. He/she assumes the role of supervisor and for this he/she gets some extra commission. Sometimes, he/she becomes dishonest by extracting money from the fellow labourers towards his commission.

Seasonal Agricultural Labourers: Here, agricultural labourers are employed on seasonal basis. In most part of the year, except during transplantation and harvesting, the demand for labour remains low. During this period they remained unemployed. Thus during the transplantation period for two months (July- Aug) and harvesting period (Dec-Jan) rural labourers are employed in agricultural sector. For the rest period of 6 to 8 months, as they find no employment opportunity, then sit idle, unemployed and are in search of new avenues of employment. It is observed in the villages of Ganjam, Puri, Cuttack, Balasore, Kalahandi and Bolangir, a large scale of rural labourers are migrating to distant places in search of work. Such labourers may be termed as seasonal or casual labourers. A bulk portion of seasonal agricultural labourers in Orissa is in the form of *Dadan* labourers mostly employed in informal sector in UP, Assam, Nagaland and Kashmir etc.

Bonded Labour: Next to the form of seasonal labour was the practice of bonded labour known as '*Goti*' in the local terms. Here a labourer was pledged to his creditor or

master to be attached to him for a span of years or for his entire life, and his status was no better than the bonded slave retained in the service of his master till his life ended. For his work, he was given food and boarding facilities in his master's household, and some annual remuneration to keep him satisfied. Incase of death of '*Goti'* labourer, his son might be inducted into the master's service in the fulfillment of unredeemed pledge.

These are mostly from the lower strata of the class of landless labourers which constitute 20 to 30 per cent of rural population. Initially, in Orissa, this '*Goti*' system has been generally manifested among the tribes and lower caste people. The origin of debt bondage in Orissa could be traced back to the history of princely states in the early nineteenth century. Abject poverty and miserable economic condition of the tribal farmers impelled them to borrow from moneylenders. In the post-independence periods, landlords having established this supremacy over the administration, succeeded in keeping the slavery live. Inadequacy of worker's income to cover the living expense even at a subsistence level seems to be the inherent factors of indebtedness. Bonded labour mainly stems from the inability of the poor agricultural labourer to meet his inescapable social obligations from his meager economic resources. This consequently compels him to incur debts beyond his repaying capacity leading him to enter a state of never ending bondage or serfdom[13]. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act-1976 provides for the abolition of bonded labour. Accordingly it reduced the number of bonded labour in Orissa.

Beside the above forms of agricultural labourers, some peculiar form of agricultural labour systems are found in different regions of Orissa, more particularly in the south Orissa. Their peculiarity lies in the geographical location, social customs and racial composition and previous administrative setup during the princely states. These are as follows. ***The Vetty System of Agricultural labour***: in this system *Vethias* (those who perform *vetty* labour) were not professional labourers. The works performed by them were not recognized, hence, discouraged the formation of labour class. It prohibits the

[13] ibid., p.7.

aborigine to adopt their own avocations according to any programme. ***Bethi System:*** another evil practice which is more or less in the feudal economic systems. Like *Gothi* it was native to the soil of hilly districts of Koraput, Ganjam of south Orissa. ***Forced and Free labour System:*** was being resorted by certain government officials like rent collectors, *Naiks* or village headmen. In this system the labourers were engaged in the domestic purposes without any payment. On the occasion of some festivals like Car festival (Rath Yatra), some villagers were required to cut and carry timber from long distances without any wages (Tripathy 1996: 15). ***The Gudam System:*** is peculiar to Koraput district. Here, the officials make some advancement to the tribal agriculturists for various agricultural raw products. The advancement is made at very low prices. The labourer faces lot of problems to transport and gets nothing from this effort. These village men made profits themselves but did not pay the tribal labourers adequately. The labourers got a fraction of their wages and suffered a great hardship.

4.2. b Social Composition of Agricultural Labourers in Orissa:

As to the distribution of workers among different occupations, 1991 census reveals that high percentage (75.8) of workers are in primary sector, 7.5 per cent and 16.66 per cent are in secondary, and tertiary sectors respectively in Orissa. Agricultural labourers constitute 28.68 per cent of the total workers in the state. Leaving apart the agricultural labourers, as reported in the census, most of the marginal farmers also occasionally work as field workers. In Orissa, of the total holdings, 52.1 per cent form marginal farmers. If their number is added, the actual number of persons working as agricultural labourers in a year may be much larger. According to the 1991 census, there were in 29.73 lakh agricultural labourers in the state[14].

In 1981, of the total workers of 26,370,271, Scheduled Caste workers numbered 3,865,443 and Scheduled Tribe workers numbered 5,915,067. As percentage of total population of the Scheduled Caste, main workers and marginal workers formed 36.36 per cent and 5.65 per cent respectively. In case of Scheduled Tribes, main workers and

[14] Basudeb Sahoo, *Tribal Labour in India*, New Delhi: M. D. Publications, 1996, p. 87.

marginal workers formed respectively 39.78 per cent and 9.64 per cent of the total tribal population in 1981. Of the total workers belonging to the Scheduled Tribes, cultivators, agricultural labourers, worker belonging to household industry and other workers were 52.15 per cent, 36.31 per cent, 1.43 per cent and 10.21 per cent respectively in 1981. The corresponding ratios among the Scheduled Caste workers were 28.43 per cent, 47.40 per cent, 4.88 per cent and 18.79 per cent in that year. The statistics point out that ratio of non-workers to total population is the lowest in the case of tribal and that a very high percentage of the workers among tribal are cultivators and agricultural labourers. Both categories combined formed 86.36 per cent of total workers (Sahoo 1996: 77).

Scheduled Tribe workers in the state as per 1991 census were distributed as follows: cultivators formed 50.7 per cent, agricultural labourers 38.3 per cent, household industry 1.6 per cent and other workers 9.4 per cent. Scheduled Caste workers in 1991 census were found to be distributed as follows: cultivators forming 28.6 per cent, agricultural labourers 46.4 per cent, household industry 4.5 per cent and other workers 21.4 per cent. Compared to 1981 census the percentage of workers as cultivators has fallen, that of agricultural labourer has increased and that of other workers has declined in case of tribal (Sahoo 1996: 82).

In 1991, of the total workers, 91.48 per cent belonged to the primary sector. In 1981, total tribal agricultural labourers numbered 8, 59,480 in the state. They were distributed between tribal dominated districts as follows: Sambalpur 108,546, Sundergarha, 54,836, Mayurbhanj 151,421, Dhenkanal 39,739, Phulabni 29,447, Bolangir 40,770, Kalahandi 62,855, Koraput 177,331, Keonjhar 53,445 respectively.

In Orissa rural area of the total households, 32.4 per cent were self-sufficient employed in agriculture, 5.6 per cent self-employed in non-agriculture, 47.4 per cent agricultural labour, 8.9 per cent other labourers, 5.7 per cent others. The corresponding figures for Scheduled Castes were 16.3 per cent, 17.4 per cent, and 49.11 per cent and 6.3

per cent respectively and for other population these figures were 37.7 per cent in 1987-88[15].

These figures indicate: (1) the percentage of households or persons engaged in agriculture or as self-employed in case of STs is higher than that in case of SCs but lower than that of other population. The percentage in the field of 'others' than self-employed and regular labour is the lowest in case of STs. (2) The percentage usually employed in case of Scheduled Tribes is higher than scheduled caste and other population. (3) Over the years the percentage has declined.

So far as rural male and female participation rates in agricultural and non-agricultural works are concerned, it varies between different censuses. Male participation rates in agricultural work according to 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991 censuses were 60.1 per cent, 75.5 per cent, 44.92 per cent and 42.6 per cent respectively. The corresponding participation rates for females were 30.6 per cent, 8.7 per cent, 9.24 and 11.1 per cent respectively. As to the non-agricultural workers in rural area the male participations were 65.2 per cent in 1961, 12.6 per cent in 1971, 11.22 per cent in 1981 and 12 per cent in 1991 respectively. The corresponding figures for females were 30.6 per cent, 2.3 per cent, 11.85 per cent and 11.5 respectively[16].

4.3 Agricultural labour migration:

Migration from one area to another in search of improved livelihood is a key feature of human history. While some regions and sectors fall behind in their capacity to support populations, others move ahead and people migrate to access these emerging opportunities. Migration implies the phenomenon of flow of people over shorter or longer destination either for temporary or for permanent settlement. But there is considerable conceptual difficulty in defining migrants. Labour migration may be defined as a form of

[15] Basudev Sahoo, op.cit., p.16.
[16] ibid., p.31.

labour mobility towards districts or states or out-side where industries and employments are expanding.

Labour migration has been so profound in India since colonial period till date. History is also full of instances where capitalist enterprises used slave/coerced labour. If tobacco and cotton barons from South America did fatten black slave labour during the early 19th century, the organized recruitment of indentured labour from Chhotnagpur region for the British sugarcane and tea plantations, at around the same period, is the Indian counterpart experience of the use of un-free labourer in otherwise capitalist enterprises[17]. Of course, the intensity and nature of labour migration differs from epoch to epoch. Through out the nineteenth century the British India witnessed a formidably growing unemployment in the ranks of landless poor masses with the steady decline of traditional economy along with rapid growth of population. It was these destitute masses who migrated from India to overseas British colonies as indenture labour. Migration of labour was directed to the overseas dependencies, such as Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Fiji, South Africa, Mauritius, British Guiana and even colonies of Assam as a result of abolition of slave trade and slave system in 1807 and 1834 respectively. There were acute shortage of labourers in the British colonies and it was the Indian labourers who were sought to be introduced in the plantation of these colonies. Poverty stricken Indian labourers were exported to such colonies.

Available data indicates that during 1870s, more than half a million labourers-men, women and children collected from various parts of India were exported to British colonies. In the 1830s and 1840s, the recruiting ground was mainly the tribal areas. During the period between 1834 and 1959, as Kingsley Davis estimated 31,000,000 left India, which constituted little less than 11 per cent of the total population in 1900. More significantly, the migration during the period exhibited largely the cyclical nature. Gross emigration always exceeds net migration. Gross emigration out of Madras between 1881 and 1901 was about 5-6 times net migration; gross emigration to Burma between 1913

[17] Manjit Singh, 'Bonded Migrant Labour in Punjab Agriculture', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 32(11), 1995, pp.3390-92.

and 1929 was four times net migration. And gross emigration to Ceylon, Burma and Malaya between 1927 and 1935 ranged from 7 to 15 times net migration[18].

Colonial labour migration has been widely for the benefits it has delivered particularly to the workers and rural areas in general. The emigration has helped in (a)- reducing the population pressures; (b)- wage hike due to scarcity of labour supply; and (c)- freeing the emigrant and his family members from feudal ties etc.

Various research studies on migration focused on the push and pull factors in the explanation of it. A passive attention has been made to the agricultural labour migration in terms of rural-rural, seasonal or casual labour migration, though it dominates the migration thesis. Otherwise, they have neglected to study it in the context of changing agrarian relation, mode of production and social relations of production etc. Here in this section an analysis of hard core problem of labour migration in the agricultural sector is made broadly in India and more particularly in Orissa. Theoretical premise is developed to analyse the migration process in theoretical plane.

Some studies suggest that migration from rural to urban sector is mainly dominated by agricultural labourers (Kumar 1992), lower middle class and peasant economic background. These are mostly from the lower ladder of the social strata. Backwardness of agriculture accompanied by natural calamities shattered the economic condition of the peasantry. Decay of the influence of the *jajmani* relationship followed by the decline in the village handicrafts due to the penetration of machine products and the absence of alternative employment opportunities added much to the flow of out migration. The magnitude and rate of migration is directly related to the available opportunities elsewhere[19]. Decline of agricultural production, decay of patron-client relationship accompanied by the rising informal sector in the nearby areas motivates the labour migration in the absence of livelihood avenues in the native areas (Breman 1985).

[18] G. Omvedt, 'Migrtion in Colonial India: The Articulation of Feudalism and Capitalism by the Colonial State', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1980, Vol.7 (2), p.188.
[19] I.P. Desai, *The Pattern of Migration and Occupation in a South Gujarat Village*, Poona: Deccan College, 1964, p.150.

The acceleration of migration from rural areas is largely due to the backwardness of the concerned region, lack of irrigation facilities, dryness of land, low fertility and low productivity of land and casual failure of crops etc. Migration process gets momentum when there are growing landlessness, skewed land distribution i.e. a few people owning large acres of land while majority deprived of it, unemployment, underemployment and the growth of rural population in agricultural scenario. The more the individual is poor, landless and socio-economically deprived, the greater is the chance of his migration. Certainly low wage rate in rural areas is the prime mover of rural- urban migration.

However, there is temporal and spatial variation in the quantity and pattern of migration according to the prevailing mode of production. Usually migration process gets momentum in the capitalist mode of production rather than feudal and semi-feudal system. Though there are instances of migration in feudal or semi- feudal setup, it is constrained by extra-economic factors. It is explained in detail in the theoretical part of this section.

Caste constitutes one of the important dimensions determining the process of migration. In contrast to the popular view of higher propensity of migration among the higher caste than the lower caste, it can be argued that most of labour migrants are from lower caste. Due to tradition old socio-cultural discrimination, the lower castes prefer to migrate and to reside in the slum areas, to get rid of such atrocities.

The migration process has its impact on individuals, households and to the area of origin and destination. It has acted as a boon in reducing population pressure in rural areas and agriculture. Due to shortage of labour supply the wage has gone up in the village. Further, the seasonal migration squeezes the chances of employment avenues available to the reserve local labour force and adversely affects the local level labour organizations. It has helped in raising the per capita income and brought development in living condition of migrants. Certainly, migration has helped in "weakening the bonds of semi-feudal serfdom" (Patel 1952), or as Pattnaik (1972) argues, "migration probably did

more to modify the severe forms agrestic servitude". Nevertheless, the instance of exploitation of labourers by the middleman or contractor is a pertinent fact.

Migration of labour that started in India during the period of British rule was aimed at meeting the requirements of the capitalist development both in India and abroad. This system changed in the post-colonial period. Capitalist development in India got a filling under the system of planning introduced by the government of India in the fifties[20]. Capitalism widens its base towards the rural areas. As a result, a massive migration of labour took place in the urban modern enterprises and expanding provincial and central government establishments, largely located in the urban areas. This led to uneven development with some regions growing fast and others lagging behind[21].

The large scale migration of workers is related to uneven development between town and countryside, regions of a country, and between countries, but is undoubtedly also influenced by a whole rage of factors, including the social and political milieu and macro policies[22]. As regards labour circulation, NCRL (1996) provides a vivid account of labour mobility in response to uneven development between regions:

Migrant labourers from Maharastra and Rajasthan go to Gujurat to work in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors such as quarries, mines, brick kilns and construction. Labourers from Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu move to Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujurat. Oriya migrants go to Jammu and Kashmir for construction work, Punjab and Western UP for agricultural work, Delhi and Bombay to the construction and brick kiln sectors and Gujarat to the power loom small scale industries. The labourers from UP go to Punjab and Haryana to work in farms, quarries, construction and brick kilns. Seasonal workers from Gujurat are employed at the ship making works in

[20] Sucha Singh Gill, 'Migration of Labour in India', *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, Vol.41(4), 1998, pp. 616-624.
[21] ibid.
[22] Ravi Srivastav, 'Migration and the Labour Market in India', *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, Vol.41 (4), 1998, pp. 583-616.

Karnatak. Workers from Madhya Pradesh, largely from Rajpur, Rajgadh, Sarguja and Bilaspur districts, migrate to Orissa, Bihar, UP and West Bengal.

Rural to rural migration within India in the recent decades may be specifically seen to be a result of uneven capitalist penetration of agriculture leading to peaking of labour demand in certain seasons and resulting in the rise of mechanisms which is source of cheap labour over long distances. The development of capitalist agriculture in some regions on the one hand, and the stagnancy of dry land agriculture, floods or droughts, low impact of anti-poverty programmes in providing employment nearer homes all account of migration (NCRL 1991)[23].

With the expansion of intensive agricultural production in areas outside the green revolution belts, the demand for agricultural labour is being made by greater labour mobility and migrant labour from other areas. Agriculturally developed regions in West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh draw labourers from other districts within the same state or other states[24]. Manjit Singh in his study of migrant labour in Punjab has shown that employment of migrant bonded labour go hand in hand with the growth of capitalist agriculture[25]. Singh and Iyer (1985) in their study in Punjab found that the cancer of bonded labour to capitalist agriculture of Punjab had not been cured, as they believed since 1990-91. It had rather extended to those vulnerable rungs of rural Bihar which are worse than the tribal from south Bihar. Migrant labourers, on the one hand, were displacing local labour and started working even as attached labour; on the other; were being displaced by combine-harvesters in paddy harvesting-cum- threshing[26].

4. 3. a Perspectives on Labour Migration:

People move for different reasons. These differences affect the overall migration process. The condition under which migrants enter into a receiver population can have broad

[23] Ravi Srivastav, op.cit., pp. 603.
[24] ibid.
[25] Manjit Singh, 'Bonded Migrant Labour in Punjab Agriculture', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.32(11), 1995, pp.3390-92.
[26] Manjit Singh, op.cit., pp.518-519.

implication for all parties involved. The expression of *migration experience* refers to the fact that different causes of migration will produce different outcomes observable from a sociological perspective. It is in this context that an attempt is being made to explicate the leading theories of internal migration to clarify their underlying assumptions and key propositions. Here, concern has been given on the rural-out migration from agricultural sectors.

Although economist, sociologists, demographers and geographers have made numerous contributions to theories of migration, it can be broadly divided into two broad models i.e.

(a) - ***Agency model*** and (b) - ***Structure model*** to migration. Here, emphasis is added to the Marxist approach of structural model to analyze the rural out-migration at the changing agrarian context for the suitability of this research work.

Agency Model:

This is otherwise known as individual decision-making approach, which emphasizes the individual as decision maker on rational basis and falls within the neo-classical economic perspectives. The influential exponents of this model were Lewis (1954), and Hariss and Todaro (1970). **E. G. Ravenstein** is widely regarded as the earliest migration theorists. He, in his "laws of migration", argues that (1)-migrants move from area of low opportunity to area of high opportunity. (2)- The migration process is predominantly short distance, i.e. the volume of migration decreases with increase in distance. (3)- There are streams or currents, and counter-streams and counter-currents of migration. The rural to urban stream dominates the overall migration. (4)- Migration accelerates with growth in the means of transport and communication and expansion of trade and industry. (5)- Economic motives always predominate the matrix of factors for migration.

Building on Ravenstein's laws of migration, **Everett Lee** (1966) developed a general scheme into which various spatial movements can be placed. The 'push-pull' hypothesis is the central thrust of his approach. According to Lee, migration is the result of the inter play between the expulsive force at the area of origin and the attractive force at the place of destination. Factors affecting the decision to migration are associated with the (1) area of origin (push Factors), (2) area of destination (pull factor), (3) intervening obstacle and (4) personal

factor related with migration. There are also 'balancing factors' (zeros) in which the competing forces are more or less evenly balanced. These forces associated with the area of origin and areas of destination are, in their own way, governed by personal factors which affect the individual threshold and facilitate or retard migration. Lee's theories deal with migrant selectivity and push-pull factors.

For **M. P. Todaro** (1969, 1976), migration is the interplay between the costs of migration and the benefits of migration. If the migrants find that the opportunity at the given place will maximize his or her expected gains in terms of actual income, he/she decides to migrate. So, migration takes place in response to rural and urban differences in expected gains rather than in actual earnings. The central premise of Todaro's model is that the decision to migrate is taken by the people on the basis of their assessment of the opportunities available to them in rural and urban areas. In this model, there is also an element of subjectivity. There is always a basis of permanent income calculation in the mind of migrants. Harris-Todaro approach accepts the segregated nature of urban labour market and assumes the possibility of getting income and employment in the formal sector. This assumes that the unskilled migrants are first absorbed in the traditional sector and then progressively move to the modern sector.

W. A. Lewis (1954) developed the equilibrating approach to migration, where he emphasizes the contribution of labour mobility to capital formation in the cities. Migration has been viewed as being closely linked to the urban industrial growth and hence indispensable in the process of development. The whole argument of his thesis was that a significant part of the labour force could be drawn from the modern urban industrial sector from the labour surplus traditional agricultural sector without incurring any loss to the latter. This model considers migration as an equilibrating mechanism which, through transfer of labour from the traditional labour surplus sector to the modern labour deficit sector, eventually brings about wage equality in the two sectors. This model visualizes a dual economy, comprising a subsistence agricultural

sector characterized by under-employment and modern industrial sector characterized by full employment[27].

Hence, the assumption of 'neo-classical' theories as a whole (Lewis 1954, Ranis and Fei 1961, Harris implicit Todaro 1970, Todaro 1969, 1976,) can be explicitly presented here. (1)-The migration of people is caused by difference in wage rates between regions. (2)-Migration is made on the basis of individual's cost-benefit calculations. (3)- Migration will not occur in the absence of differences of earnings and employment rates between regions. (4)-Migration decisions stem from disequilibria or discontinuities between labour markets. (5)-The way for governments to control migration flows is to regulate or influence labour markets in the sending and or receiving regions (Kumar 2004).

Structure Model:

This model stresses the historical and structural factors as also the social, economic and political forces which affect the demand for labour. The labour migration today is viewed as essential for capitalist development as it provides them cheap labour. In this sense migration is analysed as a class issue as opposed to the individualistic based decision making system as advocated by the neo-classical perspective. The historical and structural factor views uneven development as the basic cause for stimulating migration[28].

Marxist perspective comes under the structural model and it emphasizes that historical, social and political forces act to determine the demand for labour. It argues that the uneven development of capitalism, both global and within the country, promotes labour mobility and it serves the purpose of accumulation of labour. It considers migration as class phenomenon and is based on survival and subsistence strategy. Capital accumulation being nothing but the accumulation of labour, it requires the availability of cheap and tractable labour wherever and whenever it needs. The capitalist system presupposes the complete separation of labourers from all the property and means by which they can realize their labour. Capitalism

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[27] S. K. Sashi Kumar, Theories of Internal Migration: A Critique, in K. G. Iyer (ed.), *'Distressed Migrant Labour in India: Key Human Rights'*, New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2004, p.35.

[28] K. G. Iyer, Veer Singh *et al*, Distressed Migration: Causes and Consequences, in K. G. Iyer (ed.), op.cit., p.86.

follows the laws of uneven development which necessitates migration of labour from areas which lag behind capitalist development.

Capitalism develops unevenly in agriculture with vengeance. Agriculture provides its own conditions for the uneven development of production along with its relative technological backwardness at any time in comparison with industry. Due to uneven development the demand and supply condition of labour differs from place to place. Accordingly the agricultural sector holds the latent and floating reserves of labour for industry, and it became the potential supplier of migrant labour for the capitalist farming in the advance agrarian sector. Here migration serves capital by providing cheap labour and it increases competition among the workers putting downward pressure on wage level of industrial worker.

Marxist approach logically understands the relevance of modes of production, its impact on peasant agricultural labour and labour out-migration in different historical epochs. The feudal forms of mode of exploitation amounted to the process of immobilization of the producers to a great extent. In feudal society, along with indebtedness and usury, coercion and paternalism were used to subordinate the peasant in feudal social formation. It intensifies peasant exploitation, dispossessing them from ownership of land or control of means of production. Here peasant was always bound in the bond of dependent insecurity and left at the landlord's good will. The role of central government remained passive and non-intervention. The possession of land would directly discourage permanent migration. Hence, the institutionalized mechanism of slavery and serfdom in fact restricted the mobility of the bigger section of peasant. It would be wrong to assume that there was hardly any migration in feudal setup. Most of the colonial migration in India was primarily the feudal product, though it was restricted by the extra-economic factors. Unlike capitalist setup, they were not free labourers.

In semi-feudal relations of production migration of labourers would be more than the purely feudal model. In semi-feudalism, the surplus is extracted in the form of feudal rent, and peasants retain the amount of surplus leftover after deduction of rent. The exploitation is more than the customary and paternalistic landlord-peasant relationship. Here peasant workers are relatively free from bondage, dependent insecurity and village. Small peasant produces

insufficient to meet their demands and have less attachment with land. This in fact induce greater propensity for migration.

At the commencement of capitalism in agriculture, there is the emergence of free labourers that are rarely attached with the customary and paternalistic landlord-peasant relationship. The rate of migration seems to increase phenomenally with commercialization of agriculture, which produces large scale rural proletariats who move from place to place in search of job. The small peasants owning small patches of land, being not tied with landlords, their potentiality for migration would increase favourable to seasonal migration. In a developed capitalist economy, the small peasant would unhesitantly sell their small economic plot and migrate to cities which would absorb them to industrial sector. It helps in intensifying class differentiation in rural areas.

4.4 Labour Migration in Orissa:

Labour Migration has been a stark reality in Orissa since the colonial period. Cumulative causes of defective agrarian system, unequal land ownership, striking poverty, perpetual indebtedness, and vagaries of monsoon, natural calamities, lack of industrial expansion and absence of alternative employment opportunities were responsible for the migration of labour. From various government reports and literature sources, it is revealed that migration was most pertinent in British Orissa and till date. The Royal Commission on Labour (RCL) has observed that Orissa labourers used to go to Rangoon, Assam, Bengal and Bombay since 1803 in order to work in plantations, earth work, dams, roads, railways, jute mills, textile mills etc. To eke out a living, the labourers of Orissa migrate to distant parts of the country being forced by natural calamities like famine and high pressure of population on land, absence of alternative employment opportunities etc. The exploitation by feudal landlords by the princely states of Orissa had worked as a push factor for such out migration[29].

[29] S. N. Tripathy and C. R. Dash, *Migrant Labour in India*, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 1997, p.3.

Instances of employed gang labourers consisted of ten or twenty labourers in the month of February, March and April is found in Cuttack district. These gangs came from outside the district mostly from Ganjam and were engaged from sinking swells or excavating tanks, land repairs or reclamation of waste lands or sand beds. They get very less amount of wage and do hard work for long hours.

Usually, agricultural occupations, caste system, attachment to village community and language barrier were detrimental to mobility of individual. In spite of that, there were instances of large scale out migration (emigration) of people from Orissa, more particularly from the coastal belt, to earn for their living. This migration was mostly periodic or temporary and was due to the agrarian distress, flood, famines and epidemics. The introduction of railways in Orissa from 1898 onwards provided better facilities for communication with the outside world than previously existed world, which stimulated in and out-migration.

Large numbers of people in British Orissa (especially from the coastal districts) were attracted to the sparsely inhabited feudatory states of Orissa, where much arable land was available. This occurred during the 1920s when the coastal districts were greatly affected by floods, epidemics and scarcities. The greater number of emigrants, however, went to other provinces particularly to Assam, Bengal, central provinces and Burma. A large number went to Calcutta and its neighborhood as domestic servant, watch men, industrial workers and labourers. Some are found as cultivators and field labourers in Sunderbans.

Three districts i.e., Ganjam, Balasore, Cuttack and Puri- a migration zone situated on the bay of Bengal, the coastal belt are (have been) in forefront of expelling enormous migrants un haltingly to Kashmir, Assam, Bengal and North East Frontier. The migrants are engaged mostly in mines, plantation economy, and construction while a few of them could manage to secure a better paid job in the jute industries of Calcutta. The recruiting agents never spared the tribal from the labour hunt. However, in the last two decades the direction of migration particularly from Ganjam districts has favourably been shifting

towards western small and medium scale textile industries of Bombay, Surat, and Ahmedabad[30]. Around 1840, internal migration to tea plantation of Assam was encouraged substantially. One estimate shows that nearly 17,150 labourers came to Assam from Orissa alone. Following the severe famine of 1896-97, the number of such emigrants to Assam went high. During this year as many as 1,044 were registered emigrants to Assam. In 1898 the number was 269 which slumped to 197 by 1899[31].

This emigration was mostly temporary or periodic. There were large-scale emigrations from Orissa divisions as soon as the failure of rice crop became manifest. The Government tried to alleviate the distress to some extent by undertaking famine relief measures like granting of land improvement loans on generous scale and under the agriculturalists loan act for purchase of seeds for the next crop. Nevertheless, the process was too cumbersome for the ordinary Oriya cultivators to take benefit of it and ultimately they went out to seek employment in Calcutta, Burma and other places wage earners. The emigrants went out after harvest and returned at the break of the monsoon bringing with them whatever they earned by their labour.

A large segment of migrant labourers in Orissa belong to the category of landless agricultural labourers, and very often from scheduled backward or tribal castes. In spite of possessing a little amount of land, they do not cultivate due to lack of resources or infrastructural facilities. Therefore, they are compelled to work as agricultural labourer in the land of big landlords of the same village or adjoining villages. The employment being seasonal and the wages being low, they find it hard to make both ends meet. This led them to be in the trap of indebtedness. Further, the social customs and obligations like, birth, marriages and death in the families compels them to resort the borrowing. At this critical time, they are allured by the *sardars* or *khatadars* the recruiting agents of brick-kiln owners or construction project contractors and finally migrated temporarily[32].

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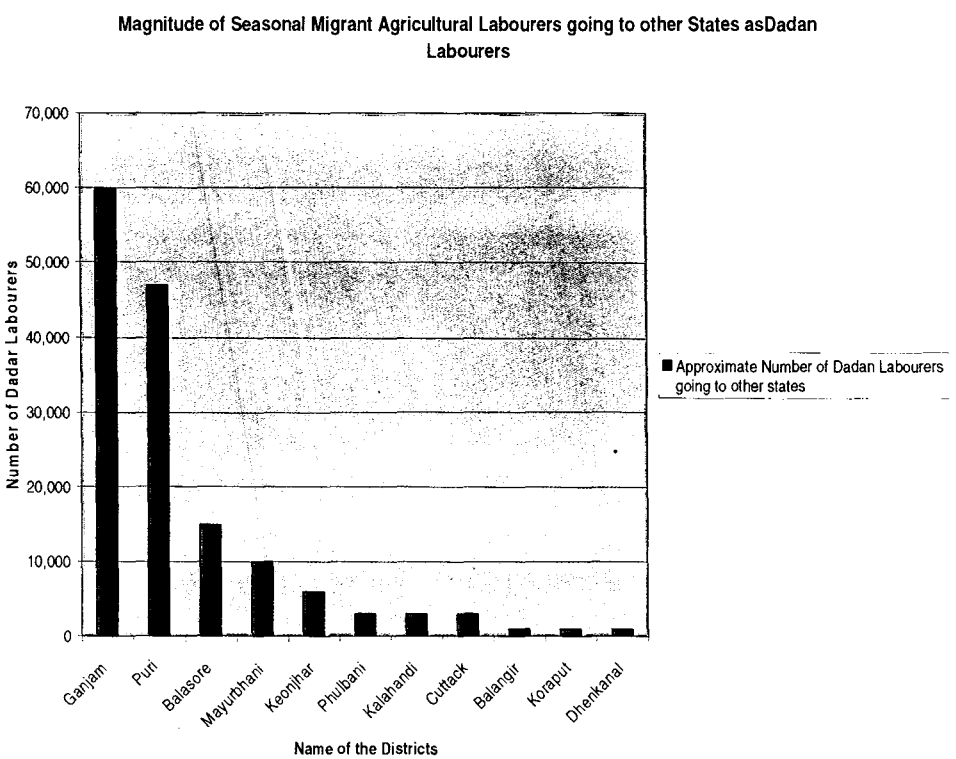
[30] Bishnu C. Barik, *Class Formation and Peasantry*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1988, p.71.
[31] ibid., p.60.
[32] S. N. Tripathy and C. R. Dash, op.cit., p.4.

Seasonal labourers or casual labourers employed mostly in construction works, Surat textile mills. A bulk portion of seasonal agricultural labourers in Orissa is in the form of Dadan labourers. Dadan labourers are mostly illiterate, simple, and energetic to perform strenuous works like digging canals, irrigation, project dam works, earth works, tunnels etc. They are employed in far of places in different private and Govt. projects. They are found employed in UP, Assam, Nagaland and Kashmir. These are recruited mostly from Ganjam and Puri districts and partly from Balasore, Cuttack, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Bolangir, Phulbani, Kalahandi districts. These are collected by contractor from rural villages alluring them to provide higher wages and benefits. They generally receive small advances from such labour contractors with the promise to provide service in the distant work site. The problem of Dadan Labourer migration can be shown in the following tables:

Table-4.a Magnitude of Seasonal Migrant Agricultural Labourers going to other States asDadan Labourers:

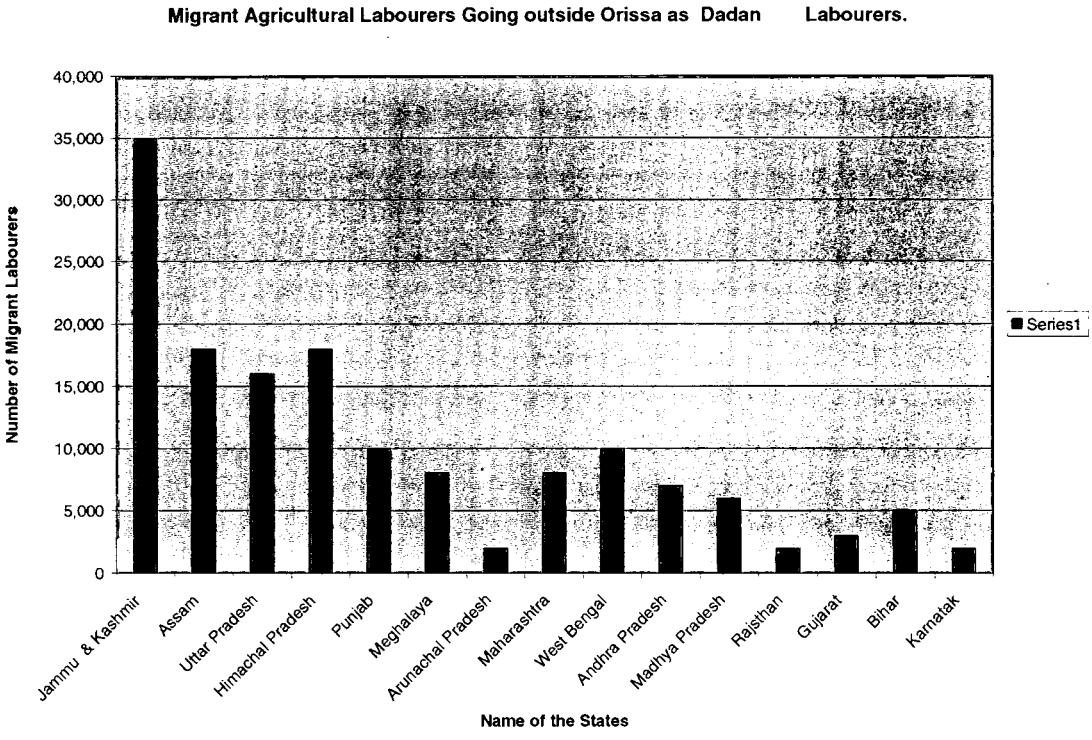
Name of the Districts from which drafted	Approximate Number of Dadan Labourers going to other states
Ganjam	60,000
Puri	47,000
Balasore	15,000
Mayurbhanj	10,000
Keonjhar	6,000
Phulbani	3,000
Kalahandi	3,000
Cuttack	3,000
Balangir	1,000
Koraput	1,000
Dhenkanal	1,000
Total	1,50,000



Source: Labour Directorate, Orissa, Bhubaneswar, 1977

Table: 4.b Migrant Agricultural Labourers Going outside Orissa as Dadan Labourers.

Name of the state to which Drafted	Approximate Number of Dadan Labourers drafted to the state
Jammu & Kashmir	35,000
Assam	18,000
Uttar Pradesh	16,000
Himachal Pradesh	18,000
Punjab	10,000
Meghalaya	8,000
Arunachal Pradesh	2,000
Maharashtra	8,000
West Bengal	10,000
Andhra Pradesh	7,000
Madhya Pradesh	6,000
Rajsthan	2,000
Gujarat	3,000
Bihar	5,000
Karnatak	2,000
Total	1,50,000



Source: Labour Directorate, Orissa, Bhubaneswar, 1977.

4.4.a Migration in Orissa in 1961, 1971 and 1981 census:

According to 1961 census which is based on birth place statistics, only 31.2 per cent of the total populations were migrants. Intra-district migrants constituted 81.33 per cent of the total migrating population of the state. Inter-state migrants constitute 23.83 per cent of the total migrants in the Sundergarh districts. The 1961 census reveals that 44.44 per cent of the total migrants were workers in Orissa. Cultivators represented 20.26 per cent (Sahoo 1996: 123.).

According to place of last residence which was the basis of 1971 census migration analysis, there were 6,858,495 migrants in Orissa representing 31.2 per cent of the total population. Of the total migrating population, 86.7 per cent were enumerated in rural areas and 13.3 per cent in urban areas. It is calculated that 17 per cent of the total male population and 45 per cent of the total female population of Orissa were migrants in 1971 (Sahoo 1996: 123).

The highest proportion of migrants to respective total population is recorded in Sundergarha (37.4 %), followed by Sambalpur district (36.6 %). Of the total migrant population, 79.52 per cent intra-districts movers, 12.07 per cent are inter-district and 7.54 are inter-state movers.

As per 1981 census Orissa's population stood at 2.63 crore of which those born in other states numbered 6.88 lakh. Total migrants classified by place of last residence (all duration) were enumerated at 82.63 lakh consisting of 21.81 lakh males and 60.8 lakh females.

4.4. b Major Types of Labour Migration in Orissa:

Various types of labour migration are found in India and more particularly in Orissa. It depends on the demand and supply of labour. Socio-economic setup of a particular society has its bearing on the emigration process. Ecological condition accompanied by communication facilities influence the migration pattern of a particular society. The phenomenon of migration has often been classified into various types on the basis of motivation, distance and time. Predominant types of labour migration found in Orissa can be classified in the following heads.

Rural-urban Migration: In this type of migration rural folk moves the urban centers and is predominant in less developed states. Here both push factors in rural areas and pull factor in urban areas generate migratory tendencies among the people. In rural Orissa appalling poverty, unbearable unemployment, low and uncertain wages, uneconomic land holding compel the people to migrate to urban areas. There are many instances of rural people in Orissa migrating to Surat, Calcutta, Kashmir, and Hyderabad etc. This type of migration is primarily male selective. According to the 1981 census, the number of total rural –urban migrants in India was 334 lakh males and 171 lakh females. The percentage of male rural-urban migrants citing employment as reason was highest in Orissa (69.78 %) against 47.62 per cent for the whole country. Of the total rural-urban migrants 88 per cent were within the state and 12 per cent from other states. The

important sectors where migrants are employed consist of cultivation, cattle rearing, fishing, crop processing, agro-processing industries, quarrying and construction.

Rural-rural Migration: This is the most important migration process in India, to which largest number of migrant included. This is primarily found in the agrarian society. This type of migration usually happens in response to changing pattern of employment potential of different area. Such migration originates from overcrowded areas of low agricultural productivity and is directed towards areas experiencing development of irrigation, reclamation of wasteland, intensification of agriculture and extension of farming into the upland areas and marginal lands. Rural-rural migrants as per 1981 census in the country numbered 51.9 lakh males and 11 lakh females. Of the total rural-rural migration in Orissa 97 per cent were within state and 3 per cent from other state.

Seasonal Migration: Seasonal migration is most prominent in the rural areas where agriculture is predominant form of livelihood. In most part of the year, except during sowing, transplantation and harvesting, the rural labourers are unemployed. They are employed in agricultural sector during transplantation period for two months (July-Aug.) and harvesting period (Dec.-Jan.). For rest period of 6 to 8 months, they are jobless. Hence, they migrate to distant places in search of job during this period temporarily. And again come back during the peak period of agricultural season. Seasonal migration has become an important livelihood strategy for many Oriyas. It is mainly for survival. Lakhs of people migrate to other states for working as wage labourers. The *Adivasis, Harijans* and backward class villagers are always struggling for their basic needs and are more prone to seasonal type of migration.

Inter-state migration: Inter-state labour circulation is one of the most stricking features of migration process in India. There are about 45 lakh inter-state migrants working for temporary periods in different sectors in the country, about 12 lakh inter-state migrant workers in agricultural sector. Brick kilns provide temporary employment to 10 lakh workers. Various construction works provide 20 lakh inter-state migrants. A

large number of inter state migrant labour belongs to Bihar, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh[33].

Besides the above major types of migration, other verities of migration are as follows. ***Casual Migration***: - this covered the minor movements of population between villages to village. Such movements did not appear in the census returns unless the village in question happened to lie on opposite sides of the line, which divided one district with another. Females usually figured in this type of migration due to the practice of inter-village marriage. ***Semi-permanent***: The natives of one place resided and earned their living in another place, but they often retained connection with their own homes, where they maintained their families and visited them from time to time, and returned in their old age. This category of migration comes under the semi-permanent type. ***Permanent***: This type of migration occurred due to the desire of the people to migrate from their overcrowded native place or to settle in an advantageous locality superior to their native place.

In Orissa, rural-rural, rural-urban and seasonal migrations are the predominant type of migration. Most of the migrants belong to the low caste and tribes. Basically they are from the poor backward region. Most of them are employed as agricultural wage labourers.

4.5 Why Labour Migration?

A dearth of studies covering wide spectrum of variables have tried to analyse the phenomena of migration process heavily based on the economic factor as the main criteria. They tried to link it to the 'rural-push'& 'urban-pull' theory. Such an angle of understanding the phenomenon only reveals some trends, simply at an impressionistic level. It hardly tries to understand the hard core of the problem of why there is migration from agricultural sector, in spite of its development. Hence it requires a thorough analysis of agrarian structure, mode of production and history at various time dimensions. In other words, the penetration of capitalist mode of production into the rural hinterlands, albeit

[33] Basudev Sahoo, op.cit, p.122.

slowly, i.e. commodity production and the use of developed sophisticated technology in agriculture creating unemployment and underemployment need to be brought into the framework of migration studies[34]. In this connection, here the focus will be on labour migration with special reference to changing agrarian structure.

There was drastic change in the zamindar-tenant relationship in Orissa during the British period. The tactical implementation of land revenue policy- the *Zamindari*, *Ryotwari* and *Inamdari*- followed by neglect of agricultural development with very slow intensification of cash crop production, coupled with fastly growing population pressure, led decrease in the size of holdings and the increasing rural indebtedness, caused fast land transfers from the hands of the poor peasants to feudal lords. Moreover, the burden of hostile ecology perpetuated the poor economic condition of peasants to some extent. As a consequence the peasants groaned under severe ruthless exploitation[35].

As discussed earlier, most of the parts of coastal Orissa suffered from natural calamities like flood, drought, cyclone, epidemic diseases etc. either frequently or in alternative years. In a permanently agrarian economy a bad harvest affected the subsistence pattern of the depending population. And when there was fall in prices of food grains it further deteriorated the economy of both agrarian populations. As a result, the trading of both agricultural and non-agricultural goods remained slow. The wages of both skilled and non-skilled labourers, therefore, could not increase in such period of economic depression. The fall of prices reduced the purchasing power of the agrarian population and it affected the trading of the non-agricultural goods. And the non-agricultural population who depended upon agricultural populations for trading of their goods also suffered economic losses. Therefore, the demand of labour for both agriculturists and non-agriculturists also decreased. In this condition, the wages remained low or stagnant. This atmosphere of depression in rural economy obviously encouraged migration.

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[34]B. C. Barik., op.cit., p.9.
[35] ibid., p.53.

The negative impact of famine on a predominantly agricultural economy included the reduction of human labour due to starvation deaths and cattle mortality due to shortage of fodder. Temporary emigration of landless labourers to places outside of the province in search of employment was general and more during agrarian distress. Even, there were also of aboriginal (*Santhals* and other tribes) into the coastal districts from the neighboring feudatory states. The tribes being of good physique and hard working were much sought labourers in factories, canal and bridge construction works.

When the rainfall was scarce, seedings were laid waste, cornfields were cracked up in the blazing heat and all high land was parched too dry to yield any crop. Such years were often marked by migration from village to towns. Cattle wealth being decimated for lack of straw and the fear of paying rent often drove the small farmers away from their settlements in search of some gainful trade elsewhere. Only emigration would have brought relief against such a natural calamity[36].

Due to perpetual indebtedness, large number of peasants entered into the land market. As consequence of the deteriorating income and asset distribution, large number of small and marginal farmers sold their land. Losing land is losing livelihood for the peasants. Hence, migration is the only alternative to them. Although they mostly worked as unskilled workers, whose wages were low, they managed to remit a part of their earnings for home to stabilize their small farms and made their lands less prone to being transferred. In fact, there was a significant decline in sales of land after 1920.

Village handicrafts get shattered due to the penetration of market forces into the nerves of village social milieu. It aggravated the condition of artisans very fast, who hardly compete with the ultra machine products. Even if the service castes faced acute starvation when the traditional security of dependency on the relationship of patron-client and *Jajmani* system started withering. In spite of possessing a small patch of land, it is insufficient for them to meet the family requirements. Now-a-days, they had to

[36] S. C. Padhy and A. S. Rani, op.cit., p.125.

completely depend upon mobile living outside the village. In the present context, such servicing caste groups are rarely found, and if found, not pursuing their caste occupation.

Occupational change over the past two generation of the ego and his son is most profound. Agriculture has undergone revolutionary changes over the generations. Agriculture was the mainstay during ego's grand father generation and gradually lowered down during ego's father and sharpened at the ego's generation. Consequently, it has produced a large scale alienated surplus labourers ready for urban employment[37]. It shows that one can easily notice the increasing pauperization of peasantry which is gradually taking a definite shape with the strong inroads of development of capitalism in agriculture. No more caste profession constitutes as palatable mainstay of artisans and servicing castes as earlier.

Control of land is another economic yardstick to gauge the propensity of migration from rural areas. In Orissa, there is skewed distribution of land ownership. That means the flow of migration would be more among the lower and middle land ownership group than the higher. Statistically the association between land and migration is very significant. B. C. Barik[38] in his study of some villages in Ganjam district of Orissa revealed that 86 per cent of migration has occurred from small land holding sizes who substantiate income largely from agricultural wage and send one or more family members out side the village for survival. Moreover, inter-village migration pattern shows that it is widespread and dominant among the small land holding sizes and nearly half of the migrants are from high land holding sizes between 2-5 acres and more. This shows that diverse production organization in agriculture, the growth of capitalism along with the increasing number of capricious labour, high intensity of production participation by females and increasing pauperization of peasantry help to escalate a large number of small peasants and landless labourers.

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[37]B. C. Barik, op.cit., p. 179.
[38]ibid., p.174.

Various studies[39] on peasant out-migration in various countries have revealed that the increasing class differentiation among the peasants has notably increased the volume of migration of middle peasants. It has been explained that this group exhibits a sense of decremental deprivation and always showed the tendency of migrating out than sink into the class of rural proletariat. To quote Lenin, "in 19th century Russia, it was mainly the peasants in medium circumstances who are living the area of emigration and mainly the extreme groups who are remaining at home"[40]. Sluggish industrialization, unevenly integrated with agriculture succeeded in disintegrating agriculture through de-peasantisation and proletarianisation, there by created a chunk of agricultural proletariat ready for urban employment.

However, it will be futile attempt to explain migration in India and more particularly in Orissa merely in terms of expansion of capitalism in agriculture with a consequent growth of free labour and in terms of demographic expansion. Most of the colonial migration bears the feudal overtone. The emigration from feudal belt was augmented at the instances of colonial authority to meet the chronic labour shortage in the plantation territories and partly depended on the tyranny and oppression committed by the landlords on the peasants. Colonial migrants are not necessarily 'free' wage labour who readily sold their labour power. However, there were some indirect mechanisms in operation to restrict the mobility. Migration process was more augmented during the capitalist transition. It gave rise to free wage labourer. In comparison to other parts, most of the tracts of coastal belt could get the touch of capitalism partially. Hence, most of the migrations were from coastal part of Orissa. Sometimes it is called as the migration zone.

Most of the small farmers and marginal farmers are not in possession of basic agricultural implements due to their poor economic condition. In times of agricultural operation they borrow bullocks and wooden ploughs from the big landlords and of the nearby villages on the verbal contract of repayment through three times manual works.

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[39] See: M. Lipton, *'Migration from Rural Areas of Poor Countries: The Impact of Rural Productivity and Income Distribution, IBRD*, 1976. V. I. Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia,* Moscow: International Publishers, 1960.

[40] V. I. Lenin, op.cit.

This unequal labour contract and exchange leads to the exploitation of small and marginal farmers in Orissa. In view of these problems, most of the marginal agricultural labourers were expressing their preferences to migrate other distant places in search of employment with better prospects of wages.

Industrial expansion in Orissa is very meager. Orissa's share of industrial production in India was 1.6 per cent while the gross per capita out put in industry of Orissa in 1977-78 was Rs.241.18 compared to Rs.612.64 for the whole country. Even though the exploitation of minerals continues to increase, the conditions of the minors and the people of the mines region remain unabated. In such a paradoxical situation the slow and negligible expansion of industries, petty production which does not generate much surplus, the lack of employment generation further aggravated the socio-economic condition of the peasantry[41]. Thus it directly or indirectly helps in out-migration of peasants and agricultural labourers towards far of places.

Low income groups have the highest inclination to migrate. Agricultural and landless labourers were paid wages below the legal minimum wages. Further, they are discriminated against the female labourers; which continued unabated. Even in case of released bonded labourers, money lenders having bribed the officers, bring pressures on the borrower to repay the loan with interest rate. Malpractice with regard to distribution of loan among the landless is wide spread. Again, middleman and labour contractors also play a vital role in exploiting the labourers.

Hence, there is relationship between migration and exploitation. The emigration is overwhelmingly concentrated in the exploited class followed by middle peasants in the agrarian structure. Here it can be asserted that the flow of urban ward migration will continue in parallel with the increasing labour exploitation in the village agrarian structure.

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[41] B. C. Barik, 'Agricultutral Economy of Orissa: Facts and Realities', *Social Change*, Vol.19 (1), 1989, March, pp.59-67.

The principal factors for labour migration from rural to urban areas are:

(I) Lack of employment and lower wage rate in rural sector.

(II) Comparatively higher scope of employment in urban territory, construction or service sector with a relatively higher wage rate, supplied by contractors or concerned employer than the wage offered by medium or large land owners in rural areas.

This may be due to the fact that labour supply is comparatively higher in rural sector than in urban sector. The landless and marginal farmers migrate to urban sector in order to meet the higher expenses due to price hike which they confront in rural sector. NCRL (1991) puts the onus of rural migration on the conditions of the migrants in their source areas and characterizes migration as essentially a distress phenomenon for survival or subsistence. The Commission distinguishes between the two concepts of migration for survival and migration for subsistence. According to the commission, migration for survival denotes extreme economic and often social hardships faced by labourers in rural India and is undertaken mostly by landless and land-poor, unskilled and illiterate labourers. Migration for subsistence denotes to somewhat a better positions of rural labourers because of seasonal employment and poverty within the local socio-economic and ecological context. Seasonal migration is mostly involuntary and for survival[42].

The incidence of trekking of labour from rural Orissa has increased phenomenally since last decades. One fourth of such migration has taken place during 1960-70s. More than half of the migration occurred during last two decade. During the given period, rapid industrialization and urbanization has generated vast employment opportunities and attracted the ever growing surplus population in agriculture. Thereby, it increased the flow of rural-urban migration. One of the pertinent facts is that the migration process of colonial era is distinguishable from the present context. During colonial period, migration operated at the interest of colonial capital and the labourers recruited were not free-

[42] Ravi Srivastav, op.cit., pp. 604.

labourers who willingly submitted labour power to the colonial market. On the contrary, the present migration is due to changing agrarian structure, increasing capitalist expansion in agriculture, growth of informal sector, perpetual exploitation at the semi-feudal setup, low wage rate in rural areas, increasing indebtedness, loss of livelihood, decay of non-farm employment, low agricultural production etc. Here the migrants necessarily constitute free-labourers whose decision of migrating out and choice of destination is largely dictated by personal will that is conditioned by the situation of the given society. The whole point of argument can be explained in one line that increasing de-peasantisation of agricultural labourers leads out-migration in rural Orissa.

Conclusion:

The above explanations bring into light that owing to historical causes, Orissa remained exploited and underdeveloped for a long time. The condition of peasants in Orissa came down to deplorable situation at the advent of British rule. The faulty agricultural and land revenue policy of Britishers created a new parasite class who monopolizes the land. Factors like backwardness of agriculture, the increasing dependence of the people on agriculture, complete neglect of industrialization, excessive land revenue, the exploitation of poor peasants by the zamindars and moneylenders reduced the people of Orissa to extreme poverty. The land alienation, indebtedness, lack of irrigation and callous attitude of the government, recurring drought and failure of crops, exploitation tribal and weaker sections all contributed to the emergence of landless agricultural labour in Orissa. The census report has shown the tendency of rising agricultural labourers in Orissa. As per the latest data of 1991 census, it constitutes 28.85 per cent of the total workforce in Orissa. Most of the agricultural labourers are in the category of landless and marginal farmers. They are largely from the backward castes and the tribal groups. Of the total agricultural workers in the state, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe workers constitute 83.63 per cent. Various categories like attached labourers, contract labourers and seasonal agricultural labourers are most prevalent in Orissa. Besides this some local categories of agricultural labour like the *Vetty* system, *Bethi* system and *Gudam* systems are found in most part of south Orissa.

Due to perpetual exploitation of peasant by the feudal landlord, continuous fall in the debt trap and losing their only source of land, they migrate to distant places for earning at the absence of alternative opportunities in their native place. In British Orissa most of the peasants migrate to distant places as indentured labourers. Often Orissa is called as the source of Dadan labourers. Incessant natural calamities, decline of village industries, decay of patron-client relationship, increasing pressure on land left a vast number of peasants under utter destitution and penury. However, migration in colonial Orissa was mainly meant for the colonial capital service. But at the advent of capitalism in agriculture, these labourers became free from the feudal bondage. Their labour became a commodity in the labour market, and the selling of it gives them earnings. Of course, capitalism could not penetrate into Orissan agriculture absolutely, only few tracts of coastal belt could get the touch of partial capitalism. These are mostly Ganjam, Cuttack, Balasore, Puri, which are otherwise considered as migration zone in Orissa. Labour out-migration is also apparent in most of the semi-feudal tracts of Orissa. Here, it can be asserted that labour out-migration in Orissa is due to uneven development, increasing pressure on agriculture and de-peasantisation of peasantry.

Chapter: V

Conclusion

The present study attempts to understand, 'how agrarian structure has its bearing on labour out-migration in rural area'. The focal point of this study is the changing agrarian relationship and its relation to the agricultural labour migration. What is argued here is that the incidence of migration of labour from village/rural region is largely governed by several structural conditions along with historical antecedents. Migrant is not necessarily guided by his individual motive to migrate out; rather it is conditioned by the structural situation of that given area. Having this premise, this study demonstrates that there is dialectical relationship between agrarian relationship, pattern of exploitation and labour circulation. It also made a systematic attempt to explain the agrarian structure in India and Orissa more comprehensively at a chronological manner, i.e. pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period. This study also explains the labour migration process in Orissa in context specific, i.e. in feudal, semi-feudal and capitalist mode of relationships.

This concluding chapter briefly reviews some of the key points to which sociology and social-anthropology may contribute by making practical efforts in understanding peasant society and peasant mobility at the changing global context. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the important findings of earlier discussions of the study. The second section deals with the suggestive measures to deal with migration problem.

Important findings:

Agrarian society is in constant flux due to various exogenous and endogenous factors. The momentum of change in the agrarian relations is accelerated by rapid development in industrial sector. Agrarian structure during pre-colonial period was characterized by self-possessing, self-working and self-sufficient village communities. In pre-historic period land was common property. On the eve of British conquest, money economy and merchant capital had grown in India. The peasant position reduced to

extremely deplorable condition due to faulty land revenue policy of British at different settlement, i.e. permanent settlement (*Zamindari* System), *Ryotwari* and *Mahalwari*. Peasant became a puppet at the hand of feudal lord. Land gained the characteristics of commodity and entered into the land market. The poor peasants to meet their needs sold the occupied land to moneylenders or feudal lords and added themselves to the landless labourers. The monetization of rural economy brought about huge changes in the age old village economy and social milieu. This leads to commercialization of agriculture which required the cultivation of cash crops. Here peasants produce for global market not for his subsistence. Indian handicrafts were replaced by the import of manufactured goods from England and brought a radical transformation in India's foreign trade. Factors, like heavy revenue demand, usury rate of interest, perpetual indebtedness, neglect of modernization of agriculture, absentee landlordism, decline of cottage industries, rising landlessness and natural calamities swelled the agricultural labour class.

The post-independent India made various agrarian reform measures to reorganize the rural economy. Land reform programmes were adopted to redistribute land having the idea of 'land to tillers'. It could not achieve the stated intention. Rather, it favoured the erstwhile landlord creating 'sectoral or sectional reforms'. Due to various loopholes of this programme, the hiatus between poor peasants and landlord increased. Community Development Programme (CDP) and green revolution could not achieve the desired goal. All sections of farmers could not access the gain of green revolution. Poor peasants, associated with handicaps under the existing agrarian structure along with limited material development could not participate in the modern technologised production process. It doubled the number of landless labourers. The small cultivators were dispossessed entirely of their land and traditional means of self employment, and pushed into wage labour. It has quickened the polarization of rural area and destroyed the patron-client relationship and decay of *jajmani* system. Emergence of landless agricultural labourers is the product of this capitalist model of development in agriculture. While there was depression of peasantry under semi-feudalism, disintegration of peasantry marked the development of capitalism in agriculture.

The agrarian economy in Orissa is backward one. Agriculture is the principal occupation for small peasant families since 19th century till date. The agrarian structure in colonial Orissa was 'feudal and semi-feudal', although peasant proprietorship constituted a sizable segment of the agrarian economy. The varied pattern of agrarian relationships and revenue systems prevalent in different parts of Orissa can be traced back to their origin, namely perspective regions to which they belonged before being amalgamated into a single state. Revenue law and land right pattern is not uniform throughout Orissa. The peasants of Puri had little commonality with peasants of Ganjam and the peasants of Balasore would have little similarity with peasants of Sambalpur. It is because they experienced different revenue systems governed by anomalous rules of revenue administration. Due to the part of 'divide and rule policy' of British, Orissa was scattered into various provinces. It had three broad types of land tenure systems i.e. the *Zamindari,* the *Ryotwari* and the *Mahalwari* system. Under colonial policy, the peasant economy of Orissa suffered terribly. The self-sufficient village economy collapsed.

The peasants in Orissa under colonial administration were in a constant process of pauperization. Cases like illegal exaction of peasant, poor economic condition, rising indebtedness made them insecure. The emergence of land market and the destruction of diversified production threatened the basis of rural peasant economy. The commercialization of agriculture under colonial mode of production did not improve the living standard of masses. Due to marketability of land, they lost their whole holding to fulfill the debt obligation making them landless labourers. Often they migrate to the nearby towns because of no alternatives in native areas.

The picture of agrarian structure in Orissa clearly indicates the continued domination of feudal/semi-feudal relations of production. Middle farmers are mostly unequipped with any types of capitalist mode of production. Rather, they are attached to the semi-feudalistic pattern. The phenomenon of under development is precisely a matter of 'dualistic economy'. This was due to the hybrid structure comprising partly of capitalist system and partly of penetrating features of previously existing feudal system.

The capitalization of relations of production is not experienced in Orissan agrarian structure. Only few pockets of coastal belt could get the touch of capitalist development partially. In Orissa, there is partial transition of mode of production towards capitalism reflecting semi-feudalistic elements. It can be asserted that it has taken the road of capitalist development minus capitalist infrastructure.

In Orissa, there is skewed distribution of land area with its concentration in the hands of a few big farmers, though the percentage of area operated by large farmers shows a declining trend during the period 1961-1991. Orissa belong to a category of high tenancy states in India. In 1991 the percentage of area leased-in to area operated of Orissa was 9.5 per cent, which was greater than the all India average of 8.3 per cent. The major manifestation of tenancy in Orissa is share cropping and lease-in is more practiced by marginal and small holdings in comparison to large farmers. The most important reason for leasing-in by majority of tenants is non-availability of alternative job opportunity. Because of inadequate job opportunity in the non-farm sector, the landless and small farmers are leasing-in land to earn their subsistence. Here crop production is mostly for consumption. Subsistence tenancy is more widespread than commercial or capitalist tenancy. Here peasants suffered a lot due to the prevalence of non-legalized leasing-in by small peasants with high rent, no security of tenure and absence of cost sharing have been detrimental to agricultural growth in the state. Tenancy contracts observed in Orissa are illegal, oral and informal and unrecorded. Tenancy is legally forbidden under some unusual circumstances. The land reform programme in Orissa could not succeed to provide distributive justice due to lack political will and entrenched vested interest of bureaucracy and biasness towards landlords.

Over the years the percentage dependent on agriculture is steadily increasing with dismal performance of Orissan agriculture. For instance working population in agriculture was 70.33 per cent in 1951, 73.83 per cent, 77.44 per cent, 74.65 per cent and 80 per cent in the year of 1961, 1971, 1981, and 1991 respectively. About 73 per cent of main workers are engaged in agriculture as cultivators and agricultural labourers. Most of the agricultural labourers are from scheduled caste and scheduled tribes.

During colonial period, the people from British Orissa migrated abroad as indentured labour. They were the un-free labour used to serve the purpose of colonial capital. The change in 'zamindar-tenant' relationship during British rule, faulty land revenue policy, lack of initiatives in agricultural development, slow intensification of cash crop production, coupled with increasing population pressure, led to a decrease in the size of holdings and the increasing rural indebtedness caused fast land transfers from the hands of poor peasants to feudal lords. Severe natural calamities, failure of crops and the fall in prices of crops led the poor peasants at the door of utter poverty. The atmosphere of rural economy encouraged the migration in British Orissa.

The entrance of peasants to land market, made them alienable from their only source of land. The service caste groups lost their relevance at the decay of *jajmani* relationship or patron-client relationship followed by the decay of village handicrafts. Caste professions are no more strictly followed by its members. Diverse production organization in agriculture, accompanied by the growth of capitalism and increasing pauperization of peasantry helped to escalate a large number of small peasants and landless labourers. Agriculture has undergone revolutionary changes over the generations producing a large scale alienated labour ready for urban employment.

The regional imbalance and incidence of migration is clearly indicated. The study demonstrates that the domination of semi-feudal and capitalist relation of production have some definite bearings on the pattern of migration. It seems that the phenomenal increase of migration of small peasants and farm labourers from the Ryotwari belt is necessarily the product of agricultural capitalism. Here the labourers who have been consistently migrating is not voluntary but out of some emerging structural condition in agriculture. In fact the feudal structure has been restricting the flow of migration. It should be kept in mind that during the British regime, the authority could not dare to recruit labourers from Zamindari tracts, as it lost governance to the independent Zamindars through the system of fixed land tax. Further, the Ryotwari tract, remaining under the direct control of colonial authority, used it as a reserve army of labour force.

These labourers worked not for their interest but sold their labour power as commodity in the interest of colonial capital.

The capitalist expansion in agriculture creates differentiation among the peasantry in few tracts of coastal belt. Such increasing differentiation among the peasants has notably increased the volume of migration among the middle peasants. These groups rather than sinking into rural proletariat group choose for migrating out. Here they are the free labourers unlike the labourers in the feudal society. The flow of migration is marked among the lower and middle landownership group than the higher landowners. Labour exploitation in the village agrarian structure is directly related to migration. Unequal labour contract, low wage in rural area and low income develops the inclination to migrate. Pauperization of peasantry in agriculture creates a staggering situation, where labourers had to take a decision either to migrate, being transformed into an independent labourer- a free labourer- or to turn into a bonded or semi-bonded labourer elsewhere in agriculture. In Orissa most of the migrants are from the backward caste and tribal groups.

In a paradoxical situation of sluggish industrialization, lack of employment generation, migration is the only option left for peasants. In the dual economy like ours, neither we give due emphasis on industrialization nor to the development of agriculture; in this intertwined situation the rural labour force has to dwell between the rural and industrial sector. Thus in this situation migration is apparent from the villages where the labourers enjoy comparatively more freedom to leave the village, to meet the increasing demand of industry. At this crucial juncture, migrant is completely lost, as he can not end up himself as an industrial working class nor he can be a permanent member to his own community. Hence, here is the emergence of 'footloose labour' (Breman: 1996).

Suggestive Measures:

The previous chapters have shown the plight of agricultural labourers, living condition of the migrants and the circumstances under which they migrate. Here, a normative attempt is made to suggest the measures for the amelioration of the migration

problem to fulfill the obligatory commitment of the present research work. The suggestive measures that should be taken into consideration are as follows.

(I)- Agricultural labourers are un-organized, scattered and illiterate. At the absence of awareness and union, they lost the bargaining power and suffered from ruthless exploitation either in the place of destination or in the native place. Hence the need of the hour is to organize agricultural labourers by forming Agricultural Labour Union.

(II)- In most of the cases there is the violation of Minimum Wage Act. The Minimum Wage Act should be strictly implemented. A proper and suitable minimum wage is to be fixed region-wise, keeping in view the price hikes and other situation. The fixation of wage is to be revised from time to time with strict enforcement.

(III)- Various employment generating programmes of the government like National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREG), Rural Manpower Programme, Food for Work Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) etc. should be implemented in a time bound approach.

(IV)- Credit should be provided to the small farmers and agricultural labourers by the local rural banks. To minimize the indebtedness and worsening conditions, financial institutions should be set up to serve the consumption as well as production needs of poverty stricken people.

(V)- Infrastructural development in agriculture needs to be given due consideration by policy makers. Land Development Programme, improvement of technology, dry-land target-oriented approach, widening the market for agricultural goods for remunerative prices, change in crop pattern and water management for improving the living standard through productivity should be implemented with a participatory approach.

(VI)- Due to deteriorating land-man ratio, it is essential to divert surplus labour from agriculture to other sector to enhance the labour productivity.

(VII)- New crop insurance schemes, comprehensive central wage policy for agricultural labour, supplying equipments for modernization of agriculture etc. will go a long way in meeting the problems of agricultural labourers.

(VIII)- The rural power structure and rural labour relations are to be changed along with appropriate legislations. The tenurial security is to be guaranteed with view of preventing the eviction of small and marginal farmers.

(IX)- Literacy level and social awareness needs to be developed to fetch themselves from exploitation.

(X)-Voluntary agencies of various governmental or Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) must play a pivotal role in mobilizing local resources and articulating peoples needs and co-ordination of various developmental programme. Formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in rural area can add a lot in improving the labour condition in rural areas.

In a nutshell, the whole assertion is that, there is a direct or indirect relation among agrarian structure, de-peasantisation and labour migration. Structural conditions, prevailing mode and relations of production, historical antecedents of a given agrarian society either retard or facilitate the process of labour circulation. Peasant pauperization, its extent and nature, vary from period to period with regional variation. Of course, its patterns are often changed by the exogenous factor or intervention of alien power. In course of time, a society moves from the simple, undifferentiated to complex differentiated structure governed by heterogeneous factors. The depiction of village community in pre-colonial India as politically autonomous, economically self-sufficient, and more or less static community gradually started losing at the commencement of colonial administration. The rise of predominantly landless category of labourers which were attributed until recently to the changes in the local community under colonial rule can be further attributed to several factors like decay of domestic industries, decline of patron-client relationship in *Jajmani* system, commodification of land, monetization of the economy, pauperization, increasing pressure on agriculture and the stagnation of agriculture etc. This was further accentuated by the capitalist development of agriculture in post-independence period, by an unprecedented differentiation among the peasantry. At the absence of alternatives, they opt for migrating out. However, the extent and pattern of migration are not necessarily same in every time in every society. While feudalistic set-up retards migration due to various extra-economic factors, semi-feudalistic and

capitalist setup adds fuel to the migration process. Unlike colonial period, emergence of free labourer marked the new trend of labour migration. Of course, here the labour migration is not necessarily guided by the sweet will of migrants, rather due to emerging structural strain, deprivation because of increasing de-peasantisation, pauperization, and change in the demand and supply of labour in current labour market at the context of changing agrarian structure. Changing pattern of labour relationship and out-migration in the rural area that can be attributed to the changing agrarian relations, need a due consideration from the agrarian sociologists.

APPENDIX

Table:I

Distribution of Number and Area of operational holdings in Orissa by major size classes for All Social Groups,1990-91 and 1995-96.

Sl. No	Size Classes	No.Of Holdings (In Lakh)		Percent-age Change	Area Operated (In Lakh) Ha		Percent-age Change
		1990-91	1995-96		1990-91	1995-96	
1	Marginal	20.81	21.45	3.07	10.28	10.64	3.50
2	Small	10.21	11.06	8.32	4.06	15.22	2.75
3	Semi - Medium	5.85	5.44	-7.00	15.39	14.51	-5.72
4	Medium	1.82	1.56	-16.06	9.94	8.64	-1.31
5	Large	0.15	0.15	-	2.41	2.43	.83
6	All Size Classes	38.84	39.66	2.11	52.08	51.44	-1.22

Source: http//:www.ws.ori.nic.in (site visited on 25.07.2007).

Table:II

Change in percentages of tenant Holdings and Area Leased in by Categories of Operational Holding.

Category	percentage of tenant Holding		percentage of area leased-in	
	1981-82 (37^{th})	1991-92 (48^{th})	1981-82 (37^{th})	1991-92 (48^{th})
Marginal	15.34	14.23	13.83	11.45
Small	20.52	22.79	8.84	14.35
Semi-medium	21.13	16.32	7.56	7.97
Medium	12.61	9.03	2.98	2.98
Large	11.27	4.62	26.93	0.26
All sizes	17.35	16.37	9.92	9.48

Source: N.S.S. Report 37^{th} Round (1981-82), 48^{th} Round (1991-92).

Table:III

Distribution of Number of operational holdings by tenure & tenancy status in Orissa by major size classes for All Social Groups, 1995-96 .

Sl No	Size Classes	Total number of operational holdings	Wholly owned &self operatedholdings	Wholly leased in holdings	Wholly otherwise operated holdings	Partly owned, Partly leased in & Partly otherwise Operated holdings
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Marginal	2145245	1881147	52412	25626	186060
	%	100.00	87.69	2.44	1.20	8.67
2	Small	1106337	888143	15524	7253	195417
	%	100.00	80.28	1.40	0.66	17.66
3	Semi Medium	543791	447621	5128	2232	88810
	%	100.00	82.32	0.94	0.41	16.33
4	Medium	155921	137810	436	285	17390
	%	100.00	88.39	0.28	0.18	11.15
5	Large	15195	13879	34	9	1273
	%	100.00	91.34	0.22	0.06	8.38
6	All Size Classes	3966489	3368600	73534	35405	488950
	%	100.00	84.93	1.85	0.89	12.33
7	1990-91	3947947	3679108	10492	22196	236151
	%	100.00	93.19	0.27	0.56	5.98

Source: http//:www.ws.ori.nic.in (site visited on 25.07.2007)

Table:IV
Change in Percentage Distribution of Leased-in Area by Term of Lease

Terms of lease	1971-72 (26th)	1981-82 (37th)	1991-92 (48th)
Fixed money	7.6	5.1	19.7
Fixed produce	13.6	8.1	4.7
Share of produce	41.6	42.0	50.9
Others	37.2	44.8	24.7
All terms	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: N.S.S. Report 37th Round (1981-82), 48th Round (1991-92).

Table: V
Percentage Distribution of Lessor and Lessee Households and Leased-in and Leased-out Area by Size Class of Land Ownership Holdings in Rural Orissa

Size class of ownership holdings (ha.)	Percentage of total Lessor Households	Percentage of Total Tenant Households	Percentage of Total Leased-in Area	Percentage of Total Leased-out Area
Less than 1.01	63.96	89.21	89.76	29.40
1.01-2.00	25.96	6.42	5.61	51.18
2.01-4.00	7.01	3.56	4.16	11.51
4.01-10.00	2.39	0.81	0.47	3.53
Above 10.00	0.69	0.00	0.00	4.39
All Sizes	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources: N. S. S. Report 48th Round (1991-92).

Table: VI

Distribution of Main Workers in different districts of Orissa. (1991 Census Provisional)

Sr No.	Name of the District	Distribution of Main Workers			Other Workers
		Cultivators	Agriculture Laboureres	Hosehold Industry Workers	
1	Balasore	385909	181537	14314	167567
2	Bolangir	291960	191313	26851	89400
3	Cuttack	597815	337390	47419	479238
4	Dhenkanal	241498	182686	26239	145161
5	Ganjam	363624	309017	32649	228823
6	Gajapati	97472	67625	2599	24761
7	Kalahandi	277379	230617	18103	72559
8	Keonjhar	207907	109096	11758	106506
9	Koraput	196347	124063	6066	77233
10	Mayurbhanj	335661	221290	38373	98206
11	Malkanagiri	116405	25925	1695	14630
12	Nowarangapur	171805	118719	7883	33100
13	Phulbani	163281	113382	11157	44363
14	Puri	392529	231833	35560	369236
15	Rayagada	118337	123252	4474	51098
16	Sambalpur	401126	313096	59688	216593
17	Sundargarha	197082	92614	12872	20529
	ORISSA	**4556737**	**2973455**	**357272**	**2418763**

Source: Statistical Outline of Orissa, 1993, Direct Rate of Economics and Statistics, Orissa Bhubaneswar, pp. 26-27.

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