

**FAMINE IN GANJAM DISTRICT, 1888-89:
A STUDY OF SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSIONS**

*Dissertation submitted to the
Jawaharlal Nehru University in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the award of
the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

SANTANU KUMAR DAS

**CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067
INDIA**

1995



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067


CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES


21 July 1995

Certificate

Certified that the dissertation entitled **Famine in Ganjam District, 1888-89 :A Study of Socio-Cultural Dimensions** submitted by **Santanu Kumar Das** is in partial fulfilment of the **Master of Philosophy** degree of this University. This is an original work and has not been submitted for any other degree to this or any other University to the best of our knowledge.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


Prof. K.N. Panikkar
(Supervisor)


Prof. B.D. Chattopadhyaya
(Chairperson)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been completed without the ceaseless consolation, priceless advice and comments of my supervisor Professor K.N. Panikkar. I am ever grateful to him.

I express my indebtedness to my teachers in the centre for historical studies especially M.J. Siddiqui, N. Bhattacharya, A.Mukherjee, S.Saberwal for their encouragement and inspiration.

I wish to thank the efficient staff of the National Archives of India, the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, J.N.U. Library, University of Delhi Library in Delhi as well as the Orissa State Archives and Utkal University Library in Bhubaneswar for providing me research facilities.

I am thankful to the Indian Council of Historical Research for its financial assistance for this work. My friends Sushil, Sohaib, Vijay, Mahendra, Umakanta, Suryabhanu, Rajee, Ritu & Queeny have stimulated my knowledge through discussion and criticism as well as invaluable help.

The inspiration and support of my parents, elder brothers and bhabis all through my life is often fondly remembered.

My thanks go to Shri Vishwanatham for typing out the work and to Sanjay Photostat for giving the dissertation in final shape.

Jawaharlal Nehru University,
New Delhi-110067.

21st July 1995.



SANTANU KUMAR DAS.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page No.</i>
	<i>Abbreviation</i>
	<i>i-ii</i>
	<i>Introduction</i>
	<i>1-17</i>
<i>Chapter I</i>	<i>Ganjam and Its Major Famine (1888-89): A Brief Profile</i>
	<i>18-49</i>
<i>Chapter II</i>	<i>Popular Perception of Famine: A Critical Approach</i>
	<i>50-71</i>
<i>Chapter III</i>	<i>Famine Situation: Socio- Cultural Perspectives</i>
	<i>72-111</i>
<i>Chapter IV</i>	<i>The Forms of Survival: A Historical Dimension</i>
	<i>112-155</i>
<i>Chapter V</i>	<i>The Rural Poor in Moral Economy</i>
	<i>156-189</i>
	<i>Conclusion</i>
	<i>190-194</i>
	<i>Bibliography</i>
	<i>195-205</i>

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	American Anthropologist
APSR	American Political Science Review
AQ	Anthropological Quarterly
ARA	Annual Review of Anthropology
CIS	Contributions to Indian Sociology
CJE	Cambridge Journal of Economics
CSSH	Comparative Studies in Society and History
EDCC	Economic Development and Cultural Change
EPW	Economic and Political Weekly
FAD	Food Availability Decline
FPNO	Famine Proceeding Number
IESHR	Indian Economic and Social History Review
IHR	Indian Historical Review
IJIR	Indian Journal of Industrial Relations
IM	Indian Mirror
IRSH	International Review of Social History
JAS	Journal of Asian Studies
JASB	Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal
JIH	Journal of Indian History
JPS	Journal of Peasant Studies
JRAI	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute
JSAS	Journal of South Asian Studies
LNO	Latter Number
MAS	Modern Asian Studies

MI	Man in India
MM	Madras Mail
NAI	National Archives of India
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
NNPM	Native News Papers of Madras
OHCP	Orissa History Congress Proceeding
OHRJ	Orissa Historical Research Journal
OSA	Orissa State Archives
PP	Past and Present
SH	Sambalpur Hiteisini
SIHCP	South India History Congress Proceedings
SWJA	South-Western Journal of Anthropology
UD	Utakal Dipika

INTRODUCTION

Inspite of huge technological progress attained in the present century, even today in the contemporary world, we find ample instances of famines especially in underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Examples of Ethiopia, Somalia, in the recent past raised a lot of public concern. These all make study of famine - its causal and consequential dimensions - very relevant.

Famine is the ultimate manifestation of starvation of the poor. In simple terms, it is a catastrophe of prolonged dearth of food grains associated with mass starvation, human suffering and deaths.¹ In the words of M. Alamgir famine is defined as:

a general state of prolonged food grain intake deficiency per capita, giving rise to a number of accompanying substates (symptoms) involving individuals and the community that ultimately lead, directly or indirectly, to excess deaths in a region or in a country as a whole - migration, crime, disease, loss of body weight, changes in nutritional status, eating of alternative "famine foods", mental disorientation, "wandering", uprooting of families, separation of families, transfer of assets, breakdown of traditional

-
1. For an useful analysis of definitions, see M. Alamgir, Famine in South Asia : Political Economy of Mass Starvation, O.G.H., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1980, pp.5-7; Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 6., 1931; International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 5., 1968.

social bonds and death.²

The second half of 19th century, on the one hand witnessed the end of famines in Europe and on the other, experienced an extreme gravity of famines in the third world countries. Why it had been geographically regionalized and provincialized? Was it a stigma of cultural *obscurantism* or a mark of *backwardness*? Without exception, India had been subjected to the twin problems of droughts and famines. It makes it a matter of grave concern not only due to the uneven distribution of the burden of suffering among different regions and different classes but also due to its distressing long-term consequences - the degradation of the socio-cultural ethos, the ruination of the prevalent economic system and self-reliance.

DEBATES ON FAMINE

Multi-disciplinary debates have taken place in regard to the causes and consequences of famine. The existing literature emphasizes two major trends in the domain of political economy of food crisis in the colonial India.

2. Ibid., p.7.

The writings of the imperialists³ hypothesize that natural factors including the population growth were the fundamental causes for the incidence of famine in India whereas the writers of the nationalist school⁴ accept it as a "man-made" tragedy caused by the structural mechanism of British rule.

In the words of W.W.Hunter "Famine in India is caused by natural scarcity, resulting from the deficiency of the crops, and more or less severe in proportion as the crops have been more or less completely destroyed."⁵ Similarly, the Famine Commission Report states that "the distress was due to failure of crops consequent on deficient or unseasonable rainfall".⁶ M.B.McAlpin, who has studied Western India famines, explains famines in terms of natural calamity, especially drought. To quote her: "the severe famines at the end of the 19th century were associated with

3. W.W.Hunter, The Annals of Rural Bengal, London, 1868. T.J. Maltby The Ganjam District Manual, Madras, 1882; M.B. McAlpin, Subject to Famine: Food Crisis and Economic Change in Western India, 1860 - 1920, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1983; Report of the Indian Famine Commission, Simla, 1898
4. R.C. Dutt, Open letter to Lord Curzon and Speeches and Papers, Gian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1986 B.M.Bhatia, Famines in India : A Study in some Aspects of the Economic History of India, 1860 - 1965, A.P.H. Bombay, 1967; Dadabhai Naoroji, Poverty and Un-British Rule in India, 1962 and his other works.
5. Hunter, op.cit, p.50.
6. Report of the Famine Commission, P.5.

a period of extraordinary dryness in Bombay Presidency. The repeated years of drought appear to have exhausted the resources of cultivators".⁷ It is an undeniable fact that it was the monsoon failure which caused the disruption in the normal processes of food production. If the paucity of rainfall was the root cause, what about the supposed contribution of the developmental processes of irrigation and industry? And why only food production became subject to the vagaries of nature i.e. rain fall and why not commercial crops? If there was a unified and improved transport system, and superstructure in shape of the British administration, then why British India experienced a series of famines of such great intensity. If the colonial state aimed at benefiting its subjects or its followed policy of benevolence, why did the export of food grains continued even from the famine stricken areas. These questions naturally strikes one's mind. The failure of rainfall, therefore, was not the only cause from a long term perspective though it may be an immediate cause of famine.

To understand the complexity of these problems four major and related issues - land revenue, commercialization of agriculture, economic drain and the construction of railways, can be highlighted. In analysing these issues,

7. McAlpin, op.cit., P.218.

the nationalist historians claim that the incidence of famines was the direct consequence of British rule whereas the other school contradicts and rejects them.

R.C. Dutt is of the view that the frequent famines were the result of the unbearable burden of the land revenue which did impoverish and indebt the Indian cultivators.⁸ He further pointed out that the collection of revenue was increasing tremendously not only because of the imposition of revenue in newly introduced cultivated areas but also due to the enhanced resettlements.⁹ These points are disputed by McAlpin due to the paucity of empirical evidences of the collection of revenue that is how it was increasing as fast as or faster or slower than cultivation expanded. She argues that Dutt has failed to understand the possibility of location and technology. However, she has tried to show by employing ample data that the real value of the revenue collection was declining in terms of the number of maunds of Jowar that had to be sold, what she calls "a strong upward trend" in the price of food

8. Dutt, Open letter to Curzon, p.18.

9. Dutt's liberal attitude towards permanent settlement suffers from invalidity that the fixation of the amount of the land revenue was only way to eliminate poverty and would lead to the development of agriculture. If it is so, what about the Bengal famine of 1896-7., Economic History of India, vol.2., p.36.

grains.¹⁰ She has also claimed that there was a substantial development in the case of agriculturists e.g. increase in carts, wells, agricultural cattles and superior houses in Bombay Presidency.¹¹

The second important issue is the commercial revolution. The nationalists like B.M. Bhatia argue that the commercialization of agriculture brought about a significant change in the structural pattern of cultivation and trade which caused a sharp decline in the food supply and stocks as less land was cultivated with food grains.¹² As Bhatia's analysis excludes data, McAlpin claims with enough evidence that Western India farmers planted not fewer areas of food grains before 1900, when India was witnessing more famines. She argues that about 80% of lands were covered with food grains (Jowar, Bajra and Pulses etc) and cultivated acreage per capita, saw no decline as a whole. If famines occurred, it was due to the population growth and incidence of droughts.¹³

It has been suggested that the commercial revolution

10. McAlpin, op.cit., pp. 198-202.

11. Ibid, pp.198-202.

12. Bhatia, op.cit.

13. McAlpin, op.cit., pp.144-48.

not only ruined the indigenous industries and trade putting rural masses in chronic poverty and over-dependence of agriculture but also generated a high disparity by only benefiting the rich commercial classes.¹⁴ Refuting the above view, McAlpin argues that there were developmental trends in Bombay between 1860 - 1920 except some setbacks caused by bad climate. The better market, construction of railways, rising prices of exportables and the shift in the pattern of cultivation provided not only seasonal and longer employment to the agriculturists but also increased the demand of agricultural products. Thus, she claims that Bombay became the second largest city in South Asia by 1921.¹⁵

Thirdly, it is argued that the construction of railways contributed nothing for mitigating the subsistence problems rather it aggravated the famine situation. As the cultivators were bound to sell their food stuffs to get rid of the over-burdened revenue, Dutt states that it was the railways which facilitated to export the food grains very effectively, even to Europe.¹⁶ I. Habib says that the food grains availability declined as fast as the railway network

14. Bhatia, op.cit., p.15

15. McAlpin, op.cit., pp. 157-159.

16. Dutt, Economic History of India, vol.2, p. 262

expanded in India.¹⁷ Rejecting the above arguments, McAlpin demonstrates that the construction of railway helped immensely by providing adequate food stuffs to the famine stricken areas. And this was the extension of internal trade which provided an alternative market with less transport cost to the farmers to sell their surplus produce and provided an opportunity to export and reduce their burden of tax - e.g. the Southern Maratha Railway and Rail borne trade.¹⁸

The last but not the least important issue is the economic drain related to revenue and food crisis. Dadabhai Naoroji is the founder of this theory and who made it as the major theme of the economic critique of colonial India. Dutt argues that when India failed to meet the demand of heavy drain in different ways, She met it with the food export.¹⁹ Here, Dutt's argument fails as it only provides the figure of the value of grain exported but does not show the ratio of food grain that was being exported to the total volume of grain produced or to the per capita needs of the population, pointed out by McAlpin.²⁰

17. I. Habib, "Colonization of the Indian Economy, 1757-1900", S.S., 3, 1975, p.43.

18. McAlpin, op.cit., pp. 175

19. Dutt, Economic History of India, vol.2, p.263

20. McAlpin, op.cit., p.193.

McAlpin disputes the view that famines were unprecedented in frequency and severity in the later half of the 19th century. Comparing two famines of 1630 - 2 and 1899 - 1901 claims that the pre-colonial famines were not less intense than the colonial famines, as the 1630-2 famine experienced selling of children, large scale migration, cannibalism and high mortality.²¹ This comparison can be understood in terms of anachronism of history as they took place in different centuries. Here we can point out that ~~here~~ she has failed to appreciate the improvement in the relief distribution in colonial period, though she herself talks of it. We could say that she has ignored the fact that there were many instances of famines which were not declared by the Government - e.g. the year of 1877-78 which claimed 30,981 in Ganjam.²²

However, the data based unique analysis of McAlpin seems to be very sound to claim that the famine in colonial India was a climatic problem and not a man-made one. But the emphasis on the role of nature has been belittled two decades before her study. This can be exemplified by the arguments of Bhatia who has disputed this theory of famine and claimed that the famine came to an end as a natural calamity and became a social problem of the poor since the

21. McAlpin, op.cit., p.196.

22. L.No. 1544, 19 Feb 1890: op.cit.,

industrial and commercial revolution occurred in Europe. He further argues that the rich nations or even rich sections of the poor nations were not affected by famine.²³ As she has pointed out that these famines "were, and have remained, a touchstone both for anti-imperialist rhetoric and for interpretations of the economic history of the Nineteenth century"²⁴, it is clear to say that she has invalidated the economic history of Modern India that the impoverishment and unemployment problem did not occur. D. Arnold comments in this regard that "if Dutt's Economic History was a piece of anti-imperialist rhetoric or polemic, McAlpin's famine history is an essay in praise of agrarian capitalism."²⁵ Similarly, A. Rangasami concludes that "this is a falsification of the history of the period."²⁶

To make our argument more sound, a statement by one of the British officials can be taken into account - e.g. S.L. Maddox, the settlement Officer of Bengal Presidency wrote in the context of Orissa Division that "the people had been driven to desperation by over-assessment and mismanagement

23. Bhatia, op.cit., pp. 1-2

24. McAlpin, op.cit., p.3.

25. D. Arnold, "The Book Review", J.P.S., 12, (4), 1985, p. 133.

26. A. Rangasami, "McAlpin Capers", E.P.W., Sept. 1, 1984, p. 1524.

and in 1817 the country broke out in rebellion and the revenue system was temporarily disorganized."²⁷

Indeed the central argument of McAlpin about the so called positive impact of colonial rule is not exceptional rather she provides a detailed reinterpretation of the 19th century Indian economic history.²⁸ The main shortcoming in her thesis is that she has studied the study (documents) of the institutions of British rule. If she had concentrated on the character of the institutions and its policies towards the colonies, she perhaps would have arrived at different conclusions.

As McAlpin claims that food availability did not decline, the debate of A. Sen and his critics becomes relevant in this context. She talks about the improvement of internal transport system which allowed easy grain mobility in support of her argument. But Sen's thesis shows that even with no food availability decline (FAD), the failure of exchange entitlement can cause famine. Sen emphasizes the paradox of simultaneous food sufficiency and

27. S.L.Maddox, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of the Province of Orissa, 1890-1900, Bengal, vol.1, p. 163.

28. It was M.D. Morris, who first produced a controversial article as a contrast to the economic history of Modern India, "Towards a Reinterpretation of Nineteenth century Indian Economic History", J.E.H., Vol.XXIII, 4, 1963.

starvation death. Basically, he argues that famine can occur even without food availability decline (FAD) what he calls "failure of exchange entitlement"²⁹ Does it provide an alternative approach to make intelligible the problems of famine? If it is so, what about Bhatia's argument who wrote in 1963 that "in modern famines food grain may be available at all times in the market but prices are so high that poor people cannot purchase it."³⁰ U. Patnaik, who is critical of Sen, comments that "the idea of exchange entitlements, although advanced by its author, as a wholly new concept, it is not different in its essence from purchasing power in broadest sense".³¹ Sen provides rather, a good structure to explain who, when and why people starve in terms of legitimization of ownership and purchasing power in a market economy. U. Patnaik comments that "Sen adopts a definition of FAD exclusively in terms of random weather-induced downward fluctuation; in all his case studies, a period of two to three years at most, is considered and the attempt is to show that no decline in

29. A. Sen, "Famine as a Failure of Exchange Entitlement", E.P.W., Aug. 1976, p.1273, and Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation, OUP, Delhi, 1986.

30. Bhatia, op.cit., p.1.

31. U. Patnaik, "Food Availability and Famine : A Longer View," J.P.S., 19(1), 1991, p.2. We have several more critics of Sen like A.Mitra, "The meaning of meaning", E.P.W. 27 (March) 1982; P.Nolan, "The Causation and Prevention of Famines: A Critique of A.K.Sen," J.P.S., 21(1) 1993.

production and availability occurred or that if any decline did take place, it was too small to explain the subsequent famine."³² She further argues that Sen's "excessive narrow conception" dismisses the problems of longer term economic and social forces which had a conspicuous role even historically in substituting cash crops for food stuffs in third world countries under coercion of metropolitan demand. This structural mechanism led to secular, long term trends of decline per head food availability.³³

P.R. Greenough opines famine as a collapse of rural patron's resources within the frame work of "moral economy". This moral economy arguments make the theory of Sen "one sided".³⁴ Greenough has exemplified the values of moral economy at three levels within the Bengali cultural estimation. They were considered as *Annadata* what Greenough calls the "destined provider of subsistence", Deity, King and Master whose moral obligation to provide substantial help to their subjects at the time of Crisis. Among them the conspicuous role was played by the King who

32. Ibid., p.3.

33. Ibid.

34. P.R.Greenough, "Indian Famines and Peasant Victims : The Case of Bengal in 1943-4" M.A.S., 14(2) 1980, p.207.

was basically a landlord.³⁵ James Scott talks about how the notion of "shared poverty" and "mutual assistance" worked in South east Asia. He explains it in perspectives of "Patron-client relationship".³⁶ Similarly, we have in India "Jajmani system" in which the Jajman (Patron) has to provide subsistence to his Kamins on moral grounds.³⁷

What we have explained in this discussion of historiography is the different ways famine have been dealt with over the years. It demonstrates how the causes and nature of famine from rather simplistic understanding like natural disaster or food shortage through export of food grains by the imperialists and early nationalists have been discussed to much more complex and qualified methods through Sen and Greenough. But what is interesting to know is that though the natural disaster and food shortage arguments no longer exist in scholarly discussion, still they remain in tact as a part of the debate. Thus what is needed to be studied is that the issues and problems of famine in the context of its complexities like cultural,

35. Ibid, p. 220; Greenough, Prosperity and Misery in Modern Bengal : The Famine of 1943-4, OUP, Oxford, 1982, pp. 19, 29-40, 43.

36. J.C. Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant : Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia, YUP, New Haven, 1976, p.27.

37. T.O. Beidelman, A Comparative Analysis of the Jajmani System, A.A.S., New York, 1959, pp. 6-7; D.F. Pocock, "Notes on Jajmani Systems" C.I.S., 4, (Dec) 1962, p. 85.

caste ties and at the same time the basic factors of food scarcity and natural disaster.

There are no dearth of researches on famine of the later half of the 19th century, may be due to better availability of sources, but famine studies have been made adequately in economic perspectives. From the socio-cultural point of view famine has not received much attention. Hence we would attempt to study the socio-cultural aspects of famine especially the role of its values and institutions. This will explain the diverse aspects of human existence and experiences notably the subordinate classes - their material conditions, socio-cultural ideas and beliefs. Scholars are handicapped to understand these aspects of common people or subordinate social groups due to lack of source materials - popular beliefs and religion. In our opinion, the greatest research lacuna is the non-availability of local knowledge to view famines from the perspectives of the victims.

The present enquiry focuses on the socio-cultural aspects of famine with special reference to Ganjam district (1888-89) This work will highlight the important issues which intensified the famine situation other than the aspects of food availability. Emphasizing the survival strategies of victims and its strong bearing on the society, it would enquire into why certain sections of

society were more vulnerable to famine. We would like to mention here that this research does not cover the basic effects of British rule.

The first chapter introduces the geographical limits of our case study, drainage system, and climatic conditions. The structural pattern of cultivation and occupations of Ganjam people have been also added. It would integrate the issues like rainfall, exports and high price rise to explain the occurrence of famine.

The popular Perceptions regarding three inter-related phenomena i.e., the causation of famine the agricultural production, and incidence of rainfall are discussed in the second chapter. It also includes the linkages of these beliefs and practices with the prevailing notion of caste and religion.

In the third chapter, how Principles of caste system precluded numerous people to eat cooked food at the relief kitchen and to join in the relief work. This caste prejudices not only caused societal problems like social discrimination and subordination, but also numerous deaths. The govt. measures in regard to the distribution of relief and its attitude towards the manifestation on caste principle are also analysed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter discusses the forms of survival of famine victims to question the widely believed assumption that the victims are passive. This would focus on private charity, acceptance of inedibles, cannibalism, food riots, migration and conversion of religion as means of survival.

In the last chapter, we endeavour to look into the character of the social institutions which were supposed to provide the subsistence to the vulnerable groups at the time of crisis. The emphasis is given on issues to explain who were affected by famine, when and why.

CHAPTER I

GANJAM AND ITS MAJOR FAMINE (1888-89) : A BRIEF PROFILE

In this chapter we would introduce the area study and its topographic features like location, drainage system and climatic conditions. The demographic composition will also be emphasized. Then we would explain the linkages of rainfall, export of food grains and price rise to understand their role for the outbreak of famine.

Topographic and Demographic Features

Ganjam district constituted the southern part of the Oriya speaking heartland. Prior to 1936, it was an integral part of the Madras Presidency. Ganjam was the northern district lying between $18^{\circ} 12' 45''$ and $20^{\circ} 25' 40''$ north latitude and east longitude $83^{\circ} 33' 20''$ and $85^{\circ} 15''$. It was bounded on the north by Cuttack and Puri of the Bengal Presidency, east by the Bay of Bengal, south and west by the Vizagapatam district.¹

Geographically, Ganjam can be divided into two distinct natural regions - the hill tracts (Malliahs) and the plains. The western and north-western parts of Ganjam

1. L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890 : op.cit.; See also Maltby, op.cit., p.1; Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, Madras, 1, 1985, p.194; Imperial Gazetteer of India, p.206-7, XII, 1908, p.142.

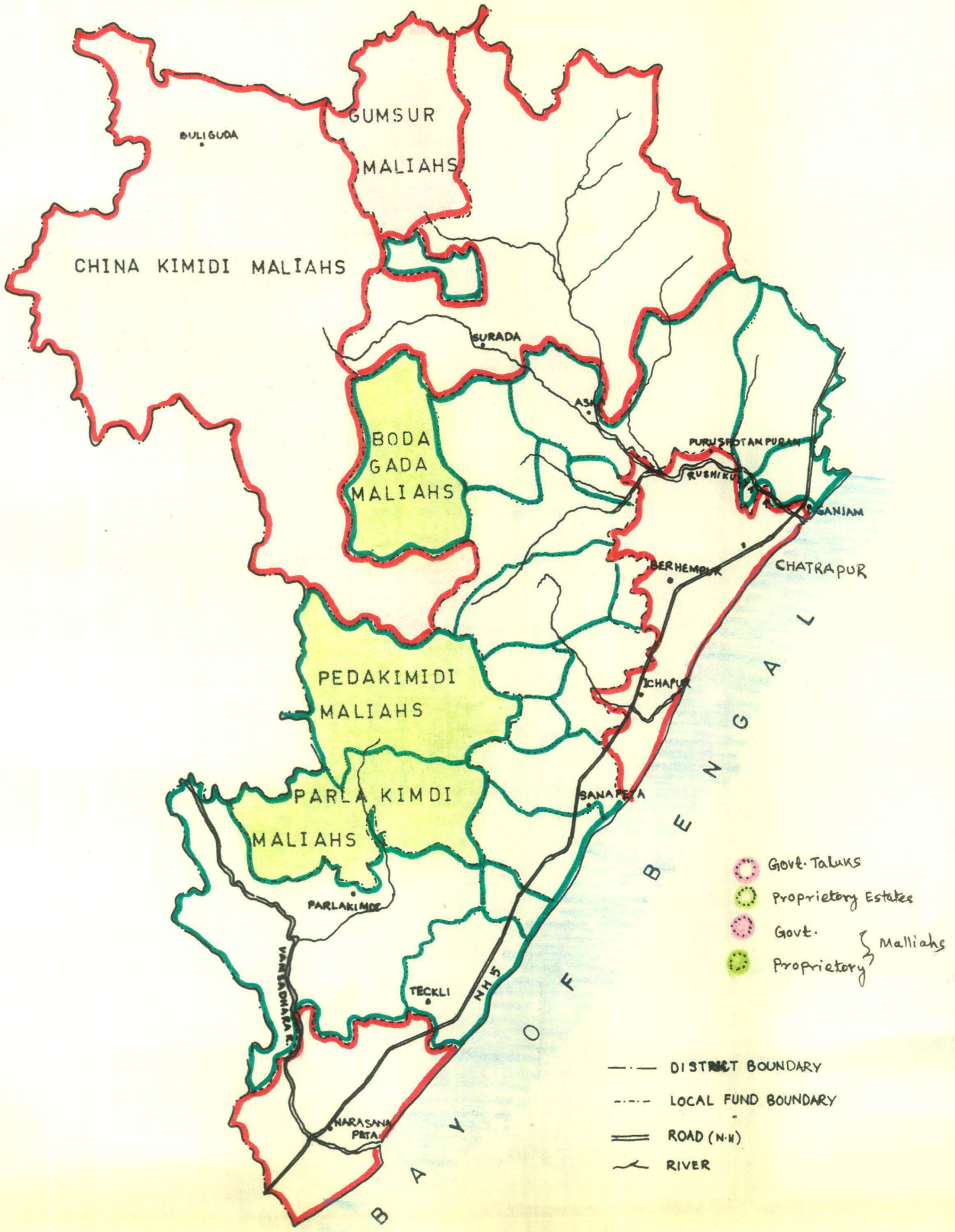
is occupied by hill tracts. The coastal plain runs along the eastern ghats in a south west and north east direction. For administrative convenience, it was divided into five sub-divisions i.e., Baliguda, Chatrapur, Chicacole, Berhampore and Goomsur. Baliguda subdivision comprised of only Agency taluqs of Baliguda, Ramagiri and Udaygiri, while Chatrapur consisted of completely plain taluqs - Chatrapur, Ganjam and Perushottapur, Parlakimedi in Chicacole sub-division, Sompeta in Berhampur sub-division and Surada in Goomsur sub-division were partially plain. The other taluqs, Chicacole, Narasannapeta & Tekali of Chicacole sub-division; Berhampore and Ichapuram of Berhampore sub-division; and Goomsur and Aska of Goomsur sub-division were plain areas².

The major rivers in Ganjam such as the Rushikulya, the Vamsadhara and the Langulya or Nagavali were utilised for irrigation purposes. None of the rivers were used for navigation except some wood rafts. The other rivers were the Godahodo, the Bahuda, the Mahendra tanaya. The hills being so near the coast, the rivers were liable to sudden floods as large rivers were left unbridged, but they seldom did any damage.³

2. Imperial Gazeteer of Madras, p.206-7.

3. Maltby, op.cit., p.2.

MAP OF GANJAM DISTRICT



SOURCE: Maltby, *op. cit.*

The climatic condition of Ganjam was pleasant. Usually, the rain fall was considerable, being the greatest in the Agency tracts, where it averaged 55 inches. The average annual rainfall was about 43-4 inches. The South-West monsoon arrives about the 15th June and lasts until October, while the northeast monsoon is less pronounced in its character. April and May are the two hottest months of the year whereas December and January are the coldest ones⁴.

The pattern of agricultural cultivation in Ganjam was predominantly of subsistence types. Basically, two types of crops were prevalent - wet and dry crops. The black soil was the most suitable for wet crops such as paddy and sugarcane. The paddy crops were cultivated mostly in plain areas. The profitable crop was sugarcane which was costly and required one-third more water than rice. It was cultivated in the north of Aska, Goomsur, Surada, Dharakot, Atagada and in the Parlakimedi Estate in the South.

The dry crops were cultivated on sandy lands, especially in the hilly tracts. The difficulty in paddy cultivation in the malliahs was due to unsuitable lands which failed to store rainwater because of the slopes. They were ragi, cumbu, cholam, chamalu, millet, turmeric

4. Ibid, op.cit. pp.199-200,3; Imperial Gazetteer of Madras, p.196.

etc. Chamalu was the principal dry crop of the hilly areas. Red gram was called hill doll, grown in these areas. The pulses grown were horse gram, blackgram and redgram. Oil seeds, cotton and tobacco were also grown. There was hardly second sort of paddy cultivation called Dalwa paddy, owing to the lack of irrigation system. This paddy took a lesser time to ripen than the big paddy⁵.

The total area of Ganjam in 1881 was 8,311 sq.miles, of which 5,205 sq.miles were in the Agency. But the population rate in the hilly tracts was very low e.g. 246,303 people in 1881 out of 1,749,609⁶. The total population increased over three decades from 1,520,088 in 1871 to 1,749,609 in 1881, 1,896,803 in 1891 to 2,010,256 in 1901. However, the decennial increase of population declined remarkably due to the outbreak of famine. The decennial increase was 15.09% during 1871-81 which declined to 8.41% and 5.98% during 1881-91 and 1891-1901 respectively. The following table display these facts.



-
5. For details about agricultural pattern and crops see Maltby, pp.231-2,237,91.
 6. Census Report of Madras, 1881, pp.195-6.

DISS
363.80954
D2604 Fa



TH5468

31 N89K-M88²¹

TH-5468

POPULATION OF GANJAM: 1871-1901

Year	Plain	Agency	Total	% increase
1871	1,520,088	..
1881	1,503,301	246,303	1,749,609	15.09%
1891	1,589,477	307,326	1,896,843	8.41%
1901	1,689,142	321,114	2,010,256	5.98%

Source: Madras Dist. Gazetters, Statistical Appendix for Ganjam, Madras, 1905, p.3.

The Telugu speaking people mainly lived in the southern part and the Oriyas lived in the northern part of Ganjam. The following table shows that most of the people spoke Oriya and Telugu. The Oriya speaking people comprised of 44.44% whereas 39.60% people spoke Telugu. The tribal population which comprised of 15% of the total population belonged to Khond and Savara tribes.

POPULATION ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE IN 1881

Language	No. of Persons	Percentage
Oriya	777,558	44.44
Telugu	692,931	39.60
Khond	164,232	9.38
Savara	97,468	5.57
Others	17,415	0.99

Source: Census Report of Madras, 1881, p.198.

Ganjam district was predominated by Hindus. In 1871 the Hindu population comprised of 99.58% which declined marginally to 99.52% in 1881 and increased slightly to 99.55% in 1891. There was no change in religious composition. The minorities like Muhammadans, Christians etc., comprised less than one per cent of the population. However, there was little increase in Christian population during these two decades. The following table explains the above facts.

POPULATION ACCORDING TO RELIGION - 1871 - 91

Religion	1871		1881		1891	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
Hindus	1,513,673	99.58	1,741,174	99.52	1,888,424	99.55
Muhammadans	4,826	0.32	6,073	0.35	5,514	0.29
Christians	1,043	0.07	1,551	0.09	2,813	0.15
Jains and Buddhists	45	..	270	0.01	--	--
Others	501	0.03	536	0.03	52	0.02
Total	1,520,088	100.00	1,7349,601	100.00	1,896,803	100.00

Source: Compiled from Census Reports, 1881 and 1891.

The caste-wise population as given in the table below shows that the Vellaras - (agriculturists) constituted 27.41% of the population. The second major group was that

the 'Pariahs' who comprised 11.76% of the population. The brahmins comprising 7.58% of the population occupied the third position. The rest of the population comprised of various other social groups and castes.

Consecutive Number	Group Head of Caste	Population	Percentage
I	Brahmans (Priests)	127,869	7.58
II	Kshatriyas (Warriors)	4,143	0.25
III	Shetties (Traders)	23,683	1.41
IV	Vellalars (Agriculturists)	461,995	27.41
V	Idaiyars (Shepherds)	56,567	3.36
VI	Kammalars (Artisans)	44,970	2.66
VII	Kanakkan (Writers)	25,665	1.53
VIII	Kaikalar (weavers)	38,104	2.25
IX	Vanniyar (Laborers and Cultivators)	42,712	2.54
X	Kushavan (Potters)	15,660	.93
XI	Satani (Mixed castes)	29,670	1.75
XII	Shembadavan (Fishermen)	41,856	2.48
XIII	Shanan (Toddy-drawers)	44,467	2.64
XIV	Ambattan (Barbers)	25,206	1.49
XV	Vanan (Washermen)	40,462	2.39
XVI	Others	459,755	27.27
XVII	Pariahs	198,179	11.76
XVIII	Caste Not Stated	4,874	0.29
XIX	Caste Return apparently erroneously made in the Census Schedules	224	0.01
	Total	1,686,061	100

Source: Census report of Madras, 1881, p. 199

The following table of occupational structure shows that the most of the population depended on agriculture (32.5%). The occupations like professional, domestic, commercial and industrial occupied a very less percentage of population. So, the dependency ratio was very high i.e. 53% in Ganjam. Agricultural activity was predominant i.e. 60.35% of the total work force. Next to agriculture, industrial activity occupied 19.14% of the total work force. The professional, domestic and commercial occupied 3.17%, 2.35% and 2.28% respectively of the work force.

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE IN GANMJAM in 1881

Class	Population	Percentage of total Population	Percentage of working population
Professional	29,843	1.71	3.17
Domestic	22,133	1.26	2.35
Commercial	21,523	1.23	2.28
Agricultural	568,843	32.51	60.35
Industrial	180,382	10.31	19.14
Indefinite & Non-Productive	926,880	53.00	12.71
Total	1,749,604	100.00	100.00

Source: Census Report of Madras, 1881, pp. 200-1

It has been suggested by Maltby that bulk of the population did not have the means of clothing themselves.

It was fortunate that the climate was in their favour for the greater part of the year. The houses of the ryots were usually mud huts with a thatched roof, the walls of which were formed of wooden lattice work plastered over with wet clay or mud. They were rarely built of bricks and tiles. The accommodation consisted of badly ventilated two or three rooms while the entrance or front part was reserved as a stall for cattle. They had no substantial furniture apart from some cheap utensils and sleeping cots (khoto). Earthen pots either red or black (Handi) were usually found. Some bell metal cups and vessels (Kongsa and Tattiya) were used for drinking, one or two brass pots for storing water and a large bamboo cradle for storing the household rice or paddy (luduro).⁷

Thus, it can be suggested that Ganjam district was prone to be affected by famine. The colonial rule with high rates of land revenue⁸, and laissez faire policy, intensified famine situation in Ganjam.

7. Maltby, op.cit., pp.205-6.

8. Three types of land revenue system existed in Ganjam i) Ryotwari or individual holdings ii) Kosht Guta, i.e. village system of joint rent and responsibility iii) Mustajari, or the renting out system. The first two systems were chiefly confined to the Government Taluks, whilst the Mustajari system prevailed in the Zamindari lands. (Maltby, op.cit. p. 241.)

The famines in Ganjam was not at all an unusual phenomenon. We have no dearth of evidences that famines occurred in 1790-92, 1799-1801, 1836-39, 1865-66, 1888-89 and 1896-97.⁹ Among the last three famines which took place after the famous declaration of Queen Victoria, the famine of 1865-66 seems to be the distressing and desolating one, as it claimed more human life than 1888-89 famine. The famine of 1866 was confined to a limited extent but was more intense having exceedingly high price rise than 1888-89. It may be due to the cut in the import of food-grains from Orissa Division owing to its own severity of famine. The relief measures were also provided late and were not systematically executed. 1866 famine affected 600,000 people whereas 1,100,000 people were affected by 1888-89 famine.¹⁰ According to the report of Famine Commission, the famine of 1888-89 was one of the gravest famines in India between 1880-97.¹¹ It was also referred as Ganjam famine, though it occurred in Bihar and tributary states of Orissa too. It is precisely, no other region was affected in the same manner.

9. Imperial Gazatteer of India, p. 153; Imperial Gazetteer of Madras, p. 206; Maltby, op.cit., p. 247.

10. L. No. 1544, 19 February 1890: op.cit.

11. Famine Commission Report, p. 5.

Famine of 1888-89

M. Alamgir has rightly pointed out that "India was visited more frequently by famines of greater intensity and wider coverage in the colonial epoch as compared with earlier periods".¹² If drought was the immediate cause for the outbreak of famine, it was impossible to avoid it, but immediate and adequate relief measures could have reduced the excess mortality of famine victims. Why did it happen that there were extremely high death rate in the famine year and what did the colonial government do? Did the government demonstrate its indifferent attitude or insensitivity towards the distressed people? Or was it just the lack of effectiveness on the part of the administration? If the government was not responsible, who was?

The loss of life, the affected area, and population are important ingredients in famine studies. They not only reveal the nature and the magnitude of the distress but also expose the Government policies and its attitude. The famine year of 1888-89 claimed 38,463 lives from all causes and 24,422 excluding cholera, according to Famine proceedings, whereas the account of W. Digby depicts the

12. Quoted in M. Alamgir, op.cit. p. 58.

figure as 1.5 lakhs¹³. The area affected was 2,500 sq.miles out of 8,311sq.miles and population of 1,100,000 out of 1,749,604 were affected by famine. To be specific, a small portion of the Malliahs estimated at 300sq.miles, out of 5,205sq.miles and population of about 10,000 out of 246,303 was affected¹⁴. The mortality was chiefly amongst the lower caste people - e.g., bouris, panos and dandasis. The well-to-do families also suffered from high mortality¹⁵. The following table demonstrates that the similar years witnessed excess mortality compared to the normal years. The total deaths in similar periods in 1865-66, 1877-78, 1888-89 were 56,262, 30,981, and 38,463 respectively. The average number of recorded deaths per annum in the Ganjam for the ten years, ending the 30th Sept., 1888 was 19,000 from all causes, and 18,400 excluding cholera¹⁶. It has stated that the epidemy was first noticed amongst emigrants and then among town people¹⁷.

13. W. Digby, Prosperous British India, 1901, p. 129.

14. L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890 :op.cit.

15. General Medical Report, 1890 :op.cit.

16. See Famine Commission Report, p.17

17. General Medical Report, 26 Dec. 1889 : op.cit.

Mortality in Ganjam

1877-78 to 1888-89 and 1865-66 (Oct. to Sept.)

Years	Cholera	Small-Pox	Fevers	Bowel Complaints	Other Causes	Total
1877-78	10,398	740	15,141	584	4,118	30,981
1878-79	132	1,378	11,785	403	3,022	16,620
1879-80	273	3,275	11,588	317	3,426	18,879
1880-81	393	3,211	14,851	356	3,828	22,639
1881-82	1,314	3,299	13,985	431	4,195	23,224
1882-83	251	910	12,781	358	4,013	18,343
1883-84	85	400	12,358	456	3,873	17,172
1884-85	4,231	538	12,435	647	4,201	22,054
1885-86	427	823	10,757	541	3,870	16,418
1886-87	178	710	14,995	404	3,455	19,742
1887-88	562	2,322	13,816	434	2,752	19,586
1888-89	14,041	4,680	14,181	527	5,034	38,463
1865-66	25,854	4,330	26,078	56,262

Source - L.No. 1544, 19 Feb. 1890., op.cit.

What is worth noticing is that Cholera was the main cause of death in the years of famine namely, 1865-66, 1877-78 and 1888-89; the losses being 25,854, 10,398 and 14,041 respectively. The Collector acknowledged that the numbers credited to Cholera increased due to the outbreak of famine. The Surgeon R. Pemberton, Acting District Surgeon anticipated that the incidence of high rate of Cholera was due to the scarcity of food grains and proper

water supply.¹⁸ It has been mentioned that the epidemic made its appearance around 11th of April at a place called Tharinammakonda near Purushottapur, where a large number of people assemble for a native festival yearly. It further spread to every part of the district.¹⁹ One point to be noted is that we have not mentioned how many people died due to starvation only. In fact, it is difficult to make a distinction between death due to starvation and due to diseases. It may not only be a direct result of the calamity but mostly be a result of increased incidences of diseases, reduction of vitality and consequential fall in resistance, especially caused by the extreme deficiency and impurity of the water supply and the poor standard of living.

So far as the mortality registration is concerned, it was found that the death statistics were inaccurate. Pointing out the faulty registration of death rates, the Collector remarked that the major problem was with the registering officers (Karnams) in Zamindary estates. They paid little attention to death registration and they were subject to practically no control.²⁰ Mr. Horne reported with experimentation that the figures stated were far less

18. General Medical Report, 26 December, 1889, op.cit.

19. Ibid.

20. L.No. 1544, 19th February 1890: op.cit.

than actual figures. He experimented it through three of his famine officers. Examining 8 villages, Mr. Elphinstone found 49 deaths, whereas recorded death number was 23. In 9 villages, examined by Mr. Lever, 29 deaths were reported and he ascertained that the number was 40. Mr. Story examined 8 villages and the death cases increased from 36 to 40.²¹

Did caste system play any role in the incorrect registration of death rates? If no, how could one explain the arguments of the Collector of Ganjam that the village officials belonging to higher caste neglected the lower castes. He further stated that they have been so neglected that it was shameful to express it but this was only one instance of the callousness of village officials in the time of famine.²² In addition, the Collector wrote that the figure of mortality was untrue and uncertain as it relied on village officials.

It is proclaimed by the Famine Commission Report and the official explanations that the major cause of famine was the failure of rainfall. The year of 1888 received an irregular and scanty rainfall of 26.19 inches against the average yearly rainfall of 40 inches. Compared to the year

21. Cited in Ibid.

22. M.M. 29 August, 1889, p.4.

of 1865-66, the Orissa famine year saw 25.93 inches of rainfall. Compared to other previous years, this famine year was the worst. In 1865, 1877, 1888, the north-east monsoon almost failed and the rainfall between Oct. and Dec. was .77, 2.1 and 7.84 inches respectively. The north-east monsoon in 1888-89 took place between the 29th Oct., and the 9th November.

Table to follow

MONTHLY RAINFALL IN GANJAM DISTRICT (in inches)

Months	1877-8	1878-9	1879-80	1880-1	1881-2	1882-3	1883-4	1884-5	1885-6	1886-7	1887-8	1888-9	1865-6
Apl.	2.6	3	1.1	1.81	.6	1.5	.8	.8	.7	.12	.5	.25	1.85
May	7.9	26	2.8	2.7	1.4	3.5	1.8	1.3	2.7	3.38	1.82	.37	2.90
June	3.3	1.4	9.7	9.7	8.3	2.5	9.5	5.2	2.5	4.64	5.99	2.37	4.70
July	3.6	6.7	6.7	10.01	6.2	8.3	9.2	6.9	6.7	8.77	8.19	3.28	3.80
Aug.	4.8	12.8	8.6	10.4	7.1	7.2	9.9	5.2	6.2	10.15	9.46	7.42	5.97
Sept.	6.4	6.9	6.8	8.1	6.0	7.3	5.3	11.8	4.4	11.12	5.19	4.48	4.92
Oct.	2.0	12.9	4.6	9.7	7.6	4.4	5.9	4.9	4.9	15.71	7.12	1.92	.45
Nov.	.1	5.6	3.3	3.3	1.4	3.8	2.2	0.7	7.2	5.55	1.87	5.83	.32
Dec.	-	13.0	1.0	.1	.3	.6	1.2	.3	3.3	4.52	-	.09	-
Jan.	-	-	.2	-	.5	.1	-	1.4	.1	.04	.29	-	-
Feb.	.1		1.1	-	.1	.6	.6	4.8	-	-	.67	.02	.97
Mar.	.6	.9	.1	1.8	.2	1.6	.1	.8	1.7	.89	1.2	.06	.5
Total	31.4	63.1	46	57.0	39.7	41.4	46.1	39.47	40.4	64.92	41.22	26.19	25.93

Source: L.No. 1544, 19 Feb. 1890, op.cit

One important observation can be made that Indian agricultural operation needed timely and adequate rainfall, as there were hardly any irrigation projects. The cultivation commences in June, but this should be preceded by a good shower in May, to enable the cultivator to plough his lands, which unfortunately did not happen in Ganjam. One can cite the year of 1886 which saw the rainfall of 64.92 inches but was an average year owing to the excessive rainfall in October and November whilst the year of 1878 with 63.1 inches was a good year.

If the failure of rainfall took place frequently during the British rule, why did it happen? This question is generally overlooked; some sources suggest that the gradual destruction of forests might have led to the decline and deterioration of rainfall and soil productivity. Secondly, it can be due to the construction of railways and steamers.²³ It could also be possible that the conversion of forest lands into cultivated lands was one of the factors. A newspaper editor remarked that he knew "from the shastras and by experience that heavy rainfalls occur in those parts of the country, where forests are not cut down".²⁴

23. Swadesabhimani (NNPM), 18 Aug. 1890; also Swadeshi (NNPM), 20 Jan. 1877.

24. Swadeshi, 20 January 1877.

If the failure of rainfall was the main cause of the outbreak of famine, what about the strict adherence of free trade policy of colonial government? And if the Government was concerned about its benevolence, or the welfare of its subjects why did government allow the laissez faire policy to be continued which led to the export of food grains from Ganjam. There was a heavy export of foodgrains of 96,769 Cwts. in the previous year of famine (1887-8), though it was an average year. Even in the year of famine, there was export of 456 cwts of food grains, though the government was informed about the grave situation. One point that has to be emphasised is that Ganjam was an entrepot in grain. It was not because of its high productivity in agricultural output rather it was because of the salt trade with the Orissa Division and the Central Provinces.

Table to follow

Table

Export of Foodgrains in Ganjam

Years	Cwts	Value Rs.	Seasons *
1877-78	65,622	2,82,663	Very unfavourable
1878-79	177,566	6,55,144	Good
1879-80	424,108	12,70,281	Favourable
1880-81	950,172	23,75,655	Do
1881-82	407,320	10,04,918	Unfavourable
1882-83	697,668	17,55,474	Do
1883-84	561,826	18,62,522	Favourable
1884-85	41,7401	1,44,359	Very unfavourable
1885-86	1,627	6,432	Bad
1886-87	89,562	2,51,050	Average
1887-88	96,769	2,76,199	Do
1888-89	456	1,296	Very bad

* Since no figures for total production were available, we have used the categorisation of good/average etc. as agricultural production given in source.

Source- L. No. 1544, 19 Feb. 1890 Op.Cit.

The table reveals that government was hardly concerned with good or bad harvests. It continued to export depending upon the availability of the quantity of foodgrains. Ganjam was suffering from foodgrain crisis since 1881-82 except 1883-84. What has to be understood is that the state of harvest was not a sufficient condition, to be considered as famine year or for the need of State intervention. How was Government responsible for aggravation of famine owing to over exportation? For example, the year of 1877-78, which was a very unfavourable

season, saw the exportation of foodgrains of 65,622 Cwts. to the famine stricken areas of South India (Madras).

Why did the price rise take place? We find that in the case of Ganjam, the tendency of price rise was the consequence of the decline in food availability which was the outcome of the simultaneous incidence of marked low agricultural production and exportation of food grains. The following table shows that how famine took place owing to a distinct character of price value compared to the normal times. The price started increasing steadily from July 1888 from 17.8 seers of rice and 26.6 seers of ragi per rupee. It got remarkably augmented from Oct. (11.3 of rice and 21.5 of ragi) till the new harvest except Nov. & Dec. The decline in Nov and Dec. was due to the moderate rainfall. Here it can be argued that there was a link between price rise and drought. The price rise and the unemployment problem in agricultural operation led to the incidences of grain riots and robberies.²⁵

Table to Follow

25. MPAR, 1888, p.3; M.M., 16 Nov.1888, p.3; L.NO. 1544, 19 Feb. 1890; op.cit.

Numbered

Number of Seers of Rice and Ragi Available per Rupee in Ganjam, 1884-85 to 1889-90

Months	Rice						Ragi					
	1884 -85	1885 -86	1886 -87	1887 -88	1888 -89	1889 -90	1884 -85	1885 -86	1886 -87	1887 -88	1888 -89	1889 -90
April	20.1	15.5	14.2	19.5	18.7	11.4	36.1	28.4	27.9	33.4	31.1	18.8
May	19.3	15.4	14.3	18.4	18.9	11.1	36.1	29.1	27.6	32.5	30.8	17.4
June	18.6	15.7	14.2	19.0	18.5	10.3	34.2	27.4	27.5	31.3	29.0	15.9
July	18.5	16.0	14.2	18.8	17.8	10.3	33.0	27.2	27.4	31.2	26.6	16.3
August	15.2	15.1	13.8	16.0	10.5	24.6	27.3	28.2	28.5	24.0	24.0	18.3
Sept- ember	15.0	14.3	14.6	18.9	14.5	11.2	27.4	27.4	29.6	30.9	24.2	24.7
Octo- ber	15.7	13.1	15.0	18.9	11.3	11.9	31.4	26.7	35.1	31.5	21.5	30.5
Novem- ber	16.2	13.3	15.1	18.5	12.6	11.5	31.9	26.4	34.3	31.2	22.8	27.5
Decem- ber	16.9	13.6	15.1	18.6	12.4	15.3	30.4	27.8	34.3	31.7	22.1	27.1
Janu- ary	17.0	14.1	17.3	19.0	11.6	15.3	30.1	28.1	34.3	31.4	19.2	25.8
Febru- ary	16.5	14.2	17.9	18.0	11.3	16.4	30.2	27.6	34.4	31.2	18.0	25.6
March	15.9	13.8	18.1	19.7	11.2	16.4	28.6	27.4	34.4	31.5	18.8	25.3

If the factors like the failure of rainfall, the price rise, low export rate of foodgrains, grain riots and robberies were not the indicators of the outbreak of famine what could be the other index of famine? So far as the Indian Famine Code is concerned, there was a scarcity rate in Madras Presidency which was also applied to Ganjam. The scarcity rates were 11.20 seers of rice and 16.60 seers of ragi per rupee. Price of rice touched the scarcity rate from October until the next harvest, except November and December, 1888, where as ragi did not touch the scarcity rate when people were dying significantly. What is curious to know is that if ragi was the staple grain in Ganjam why did not it touch the scarcity rate? It seems that either the Government was incorrect in considering ragi as the staple grain or the scarcity rate was defective or its wrong application without taking into account the conditions and limitations of the district. The crux of the whole problem was the government's consideration of ragi as the staple grain of Ganjam. Why did the government adopt such an irresponsible step though it was known to them that rice was the usual food. Precisely, it was because of the deliberate colonial policy as the Government was more concerned about the cost dynamics of foodgrains than the dietary habits of the

victims. If it was not so, how can one explain the Madras Government order of 12th December 1888 that ragi being the cheapest foodgrain in ordinary use in the district should be regarded as the standard grain.²⁶

Now let us study the awareness of the local administration of Ganjam and its measures as well as the Madras Government's responses to the distressed situation. It is indeed true that the Collector was fully aware of the situation and had informed the Madras Government about the extreme scarcity of water, the acute problems of agricultural operations and price rise in successive weekly telegrams. He even personally informed Mr. Wilson, a member of the Board of Revenue that "I entertained grave apprehensions regarding the season which could not be otherwise than a disastrous one". Information from his subordinates indicated that similar situation prevailed elsewhere in Ganjam. For example, Mr. Bell, the Acting Sr. Asst. Collector, having inspected the Berhampore Division between Berhampur and Haripore wrote that irrigated lands were mostly doing fairly well though rainfed lands were hopeless. The manager of the Kallikot and Atagada estates informed on 19th October 1888, that the

26. L.No. 274, 9 Sept. 1890: op.cit.

dry cultivation was not extensive owing to inability or apathy on the part of ryots but the ragi, gingelli and chamalu had yielded an average yield. About 3/4ths of the irrigated highlands had suffered total loss and that about 50% of irrigated low lands might be saved if there were a heavy rainfall within a week. The General Dy. Collector reported on 17 Oct., about Goomsur Division that almost all rain-fed paddy had failed, that irrigated paddy was suffering and large areas had been left as wasteland. The early ragi had yielded from 4 to 8 annas crop and the latter ragi was withering. The crops on rainfed lands to a great extent and on channelfed lands to some extent were lost in Chicacole division, as stated by the Principal Asst. Collector. Thus, almost all the Government officials were aware of the impending distress.

The Collector recommended the reopening of Rushikulya Works, grant of advances to weavers, importation of grain by Government, exemption of import duties on foodgrains, strengthening the Magistracy and Police and improving telegraphic communication at Aska, Gopalpur and Chatrapur. Nothing however, was done before Mr. Garstin's investigation and the Madras Government awaited Mr. Garstin's views before passing any order. Now, what has to be emphasized here is that the outbreak of rainfall

which played a crucial role in falsifying all the statements of the Collector. The sudden cyclonic rainfall between 29th October and 7th November, dramatically altered the whole situation. Mr. Garstin arrived on 4th November at Gopalpur and found a very different aspect to what it had done a fortnight previously. The rice crops assumed a green aspect and everywhere grass was growing and the ryots and their labourers were busy ploughing and sowing the late dry crops. His observation led him to arrive at the following conclusion :

In my opinion, there is no famine, that is, no general failure of food-supply. There is distress owing to high prices and failure of crops, and this will probably increase. Estimate average yield rice crop on irrigated land six annas out of sixteen. Have started Rushikulya works as ordinary Public Works Deptt. Work; upto 24th only 2,522 labourers....Collector was issued instructions to prepare registers for village relief. Weavers in some distress for want work; if price rice rise to scarcity rate, expedient make them advances".²⁷

It may be mentioned here that he found several cases of persons emaciated from starvation and made special provisions for them by providing reliefs, that too within the narrowest possible limits, only to homeless wanderers,

27. L.No. 1544, 19 Feb. 1890; op.cit.

and beggars etc.

No substantial contribution was made until the arrival of Lord Connemara except some measures taken by Collector. Lord Connemara arrived in Ganjam on June 1st and arrived at the following conclusion :

I consider it is a very fortunate circumstance that I went to Ganjam, as I was able to satisfy myself by personal observation that a large amount of distress amounting to starvation existed, and that the most urgent orders and the most prompt action were required if many lives were not to be lost by the most lingering and dreadful of all deaths.²⁸

His immediate recognition of the existence of famine promptly abolished the fatal restrictions on scarcity rates, opened many kitchens, started the distribution of reliefs, strengthened the staffs constituting the relief circles, issued advances to the weavers and imported seed grains for ryots. Prior to his approach, the administration of relief was narrowly confined to a smaller area. The Government relief was distributed under the following heads:-

- (i) Relief works - Professional Agency and Civil Agency;
- (ii) Gratuitous Relief - Money doles, cooked food and raw grain

28. Ibid.

- (iii) Advances to weavers and cultivators
- (iv) Remission and postponement of revenue collection.

As per the following table, the total number of recipients of money and grain were 862432 when the relief in terms of money and raw grains started it was very less, as it was given to only emaciated people. For example, in Nov. 1888 only 1748 people benefited whereas it went on increasing in each month. We find that in June there was a remarkable enhancement of relief, as famine was finally recognised. With the improvement of famine situation, the relief was stopped. However, 42,941 people were covered by the relief programme. Government also provided cooked food at the common kitchen to the victims with effect from June till October 1889. In June only 4,874 people were fed and the highest figure was in August i.e., 53,718. However, the change in the famine situation led to the decline from Sept. and completely stopped from Nov. 1889. The total number of people fed in the kitchen was 1,49,450. As a part of the relief measure, work was provided to the capable persons through two agencies i.e., professional and civil agency. It started in Dec. 1888 with 16,642 and continued to increase remarkably till June. We find the decline in relief work from July due to the commencement of agricultural production.

NUMBER OF RELIEF RECIPIENTS IN GANJAM FAMINE-1888-9

Months	Professional Agency	Civil Agency	Recipients of money or raw-grains	Recipients of cooked food
Nov.	-	-	1,748	-
Dec.	16,642	-	8,834	-
Jan.	107,936	-	4,132	-
Feb.	313221	-	1,983	-
March	560,067	944	5,908	-
Apl.	424,649	1,884	19,426	-
May	363,812	21,166	9,459	-
June	383,476	46,114	68,831	4,874
July	174,436	32,233	219,761	35,278
Aug.	208,561	26,270	313,420	53,718
Sept.	242,406	26,680	165,989	40,146
Oct.	161,165	25,703	42,941	15,434
Nov.	61,627	7,375	-	-
Total	3017998	162,099	862,432	149,450

Source : L.No.274,9 Sept. 1890 : Op.Cit., Appendix.

The report on kitchens opened during the famine period for the purpose of feeding people, shows that in Ganjam 87 kitchens were opened. The kitchen register revealed that there were 31,877 people who were fed in the kitchen and 10,365 people were discharged after having gained their

previous health. What is important to know is that there were 3,343 people who were refused food in the kitchen and ultimately sent to do the relief work. It may be because of their good health or absence of any emaciation in them. It has been also mentioned that the total number of persons who left on their own accord were 8,596, it may be those people who refused to accept food owing to their caste prejudices.

NUMBER OF COOKED FOOD RECIPIENTS, 1888-89				
Period	Number of Kitchens	Persons Fed	Persons Discharged After having Gained Strength	Persons Sent to Work
4-5 Months	12	7,907	2195	1,193
3-4 Months	10	3,960	1018	871
2-3 Months	30	9,516	3504	810
1-2 Months	27	9,005	3508	449
Less Than One Month	8	1,489	140	20
Total	87	31,877	10,365	3343

Source: L.No. 1544, 19, Feb. 1890; op.cit.

The identification of the prevalent distress in Ganjam was very late. If more lives were to be saved the relief distribution should have started earlier. The existence of

famine was declared on June 22nd, when the situation was recovering. The period of scarcity continued for 13 months from Oct. 1888 to Oct. 1889. The following table claims that the peak period of famine was for three months (April to June). The tremendous deterioration of famine situation commenced from April and declined remarkably from July. The death rates in April, May, June and July were 5,328; 5,846; 4,846; 3,641 respectively. This also explains that how a specific time plays an important role in the distribution of relief.

Numbers of Deaths from Different Causes, 1889

Months	Cholera	Small-Pox	Malaria Fevers	Total
January	28	546	1,037	1611
February	58	606	743	1407
March	113	688	1,048	1849
April	3,367	881	1,080	5328
May	4,209	338	1,299	5846
June	3,218	412	1,216	4846
July	2,040	232	1,369	3641
August	701	170	2,037	2908
September	54	76	1,744	1874
October	25	54	953	1032
Total	13,813	4,003	12,526	30342

Source: Medical Report on Ganjam famine, 26 December, 1889: op.cit.

The various issues raised during the course of analysis make it discernible that the famine of 1888-89 was the culmination of two contrasting phenomena -- the erratic monsoon on which cultivation depended and the calculative administrative policies. The colonial rule whose main thrust was exploitation had made the common man miserable. Lack of irrigational projects and various other factors like export of rice, high price rise of food grains and wrong reading on the part of the authority regarding the actual condition, etc. all coalesced together which brought about the famine. Let us turn our attention to the socio-cultural perception of common people about agricultural production and rainfall which are closely related to famine and how far these perceptions aggravated the famine situation.

CHAPTER II

POPULAR PERCEPTION OF FAMINE: A CRITICAL APPROACH

The role of rituals can be analysed in the concrete context of maintenance and change of social structure as perceived along a temporal dimension. Rituals are a part of culture, the latter being defined as a complex system of beliefs, values empirical and non-empirical possessions by human beings as members of society. Rituals relate to the existential conditions (i.e. day-to-day activities of group life) on the one hand and the normative factors (i.e. the group-based expectations regarding social and supra-social life) on the other. Rituals are a set of activities conducted by the members of a group in the context of attainment of certain socially valued objects or state of affairs.

And when we shift our attentions to the negative role played by rituals the following generalizations can be conceived of without going deep into the controversies that have emerged out of the polemics of intellectual discourse. The practice of officiating the rituals has given rise to the growth of an elite group of priests and similar professionals having command over scarce resources in a society which has aversion to any attempt for a change. These groups act as a barrier on the way of development of a new

social order based on effective use of material resources and developing body of scientific knowledge. The groups act as the carrier of the dead burden of ignorance and, at times, inhuman conceptions of human life.

The undue importance on practices is one of the main reasons for the lack of incentive for rationalization of world-view of the group members. The traditionalistic type of authority, which is characterized by domination of ritualistic beliefs and practices is in sharp contrast to rational-legal authority, the type based on rule of law and on rational calculation of means and ends. Rational-legal authority envisages a world-view related to scientific temper and rational outlook. An atmosphere which lacks a scientific spirit provides a fertile ground for superstition and die-hard beliefs to take a firm root in social psyche. This chapter discusses at some length some of the rituals associated with famine, agricultural production and rain making. The second part of the chapter makes an attempt to show how these beliefs aggravated the famine situations and how far famine of 1888-89 shattered the unflinching faith people had on these practices.

UNDERSTANDING FAMINE

To begin with, famine is worshipped as a "deity" in Latin American countries, like Nicaragua and Mexico.¹ Ramayan also talks of famine in South Asia.² Famine has been referred in Hindu myths and legends as the source of severe trials for kings, sages and common people. It is also perceived as a cataclysm which would end one of the corrupt Ages like Kali and would lead to the emergence of a new era.³ Hindus in Coimbatore were said to attribute their distress to the displeasure of the local goddess.⁴ London Missionary Society in Salem in 1877 wrote that there were ~~Several~~ opinions prevalent, but they all attributed it to some kind of sin.⁵ A newspaper writer of Malayalam provided a moral statement that "famine and Pestilence are sent as a

1. The Deities, visitot in Nicaragua and Apizteotl in Mexico; cited in B. Currey and G. Hugo, eds., Famine: As a Geographical Phenomenon, DRPC, Reidel Publishing Company, Holland, 1984, p.1.
2. The Ramayan, Ayodhyakanda, Ch.100 p.374; Cited in Currey and Hugo, op. cit., p.1.
3. W. D. O'Flaherty, The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology, Berkeley, 1976 pp.35-40, 291-5; Cited in D. Arnold, 'Famine in Peasant Consciousness and Peasant Action: Madras 1876-78', in R. Guha, ed., Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society, OUP, Oxford, vol, III, 1984 p.67.
4. Ibid. p.70.
5. Ibid. pp.70-71.

punishment for our sins and the deity has shown his goodness in substituting this punishment for that of death, which could take away the opportunity of repentance."⁶ Famine was also accepted as "dharma" of the deity especially the village goddess who aimed at spreading diseases and affliction. The satisfaction of goddess could be possible only through offerings, sacrifices and performance of special ceremonies within their socio-cultural paradigm and acknowledgement of extreme subordination to the superordinate deity. The natural disasters were interpreted in terms of religious importance to give them a meaningful and intelligible to context.⁷

The people of Ganjam (especially tribals like the Khonds) perceived famine as a punishment attributed by the Mother Earth Goddess owing to their sins.⁸

In Madras, some villagers perceived famine as a divine causation owing to the changes and innovations in technology, ecology, and administration associated with

6. Malayalam, Native Newspaper of Madras (NNPM), 15 April 1877, p.8.

7. Arnold, 'Peasant Consciousness', p.71.

8. T.J.Maltby, op.cit. pp.75-6.

British rule.⁹ The earliest oral histories tell us that Pandora let famine contain the evils associated with technological development in the western world.¹⁰

BELIEFS ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

We have extensive evidence of festivals and ceremonies observed in a meaningful way all over the world in regard to good future prospects of agricultural production. In the Arthashastra, Kautilya recommended that there should not be any sowing, if there is no appropriate Mantra.¹¹ Even the Atharvaveda instructed to read a mantra, at the time of sowing seeds: "Raise thyself up, grow thick by thy own might, O Grain! Burst every vessel! The lightening in the heaven shall not destroy thee!"¹²

In South Africa the Sumba women will not hoe their lands, if their dance has not been held. It is a belief that if they do not pay respect to their spirits, they will

9. Arnold, 'Peasant Consciousness' p.71.

10. Interpretation and translation of the introduction of Hesiod's works and Days by Wayene Bledsoe, cited in Currey & Hugo, op. cit., p.1.

11. R.P. Chanda, Indo-Aryan Races, Rajsahi, 1916, p.133; cited in Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., p.270.

12. Sacred Books of the East, ed., F. Max Muller, p.xiii, 141; cited in Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., p.271.

have no good crops.¹³ Similarly in Ancient Mexico all agricultural operations are associated with ceremonies and incantations to the goddess of fertility.¹⁴ The Santals in India celebrate the Hariar Sim festival in the month of Sawan (July-August), when the transplantaion of paddy seedlings starts with the monsoon rains. As they say that it is for paddy to grow green.¹⁵

We have evidences of barbarous rite of human sacrifice existed not only in Ganjam but also in all hill-tracts of Orissa and Bihar, prior to 1888-89. The performances of human sacrifices were called as Meriah¹⁶ pertaining to the agricultural operation and good health. This rite prevailed to the north of the Mahanadi in Dasapala, Bead, and Sonpur and South of that river in the Goomsur and Chinnakimedi Malliahs and in Jeypore right way up to Bastar. The Meriah rites were performed by the Khonds who believed in `Tari

13. Bri ffault, op. cit P.3 cited in Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., pp.269-70.

14. Ibid.

15. JASB, XIX, 1952, p.7; cited in Chattopadhyaya, op.cit., p.270.

16. Maltby states that the records of the Meriah Agency appear to be destroyed as he has failed to find it either at India Office in London, or in India, Ganjam District Manual, Madras, 1882, p. 192.

Pennu', the earth goddess.¹⁷ She was the supreme goddess in the pantheon of Khonds which consisted of 84 deities, W.W.Hunter states that "She is the Supreme deity of the race, the solemn symbol of the productivity of nature and her worship united the whole Khond race by a nexus of blood into a race".¹⁸ This Meriah custom was usually taking place in Pausa Purnima¹⁹ (i.e. after the harvest) every year to satisfy the anger of earth goddess which would ensure good health and especially good crops. Special sacrifices were taking place at the time of crisis like famine or disease.²⁰

17. Ibid, p. 83; Maltby has pointed out that female infanticide was existing in some tracts wherever Meriah was unknown — Pondraholo and some parts of Surada Malliah. The khonds who involved in female infanticide believed in "Boora Pennu" (Sun God) who was antagonistic to the "Tari Pennu". There is an episode how this kind of human sacrifice came into existence, please see, pp.76-8.
18. W.W. Hunter, Orissa History, vol. 2, London, 1872, p. 95.
19. P.K. Mishra, The Political Unrest in Orissa in 19th Century: Anti-British, Anti-feudal and Agrarian rising. Calcutta, Punthi Pustak, 1983, p. 69.
20. Maltby, op.cit, pp. 74-5; The Savaras in Ganjam did not involve in human sacrifices rather performed animal sacrifices. They had three goddesses, namely, Julva Gangi, and Jommo who claimed the sacrifice of animals of goats, a pig and a fowl respectively. They used tom-tom at the time of celebration and the Jani (the worshipper) had to dance before the goddess. This was probably taking place in the belief to ensure good crops and health.

The victims were non-Khonds and those who did not believe in 'Tari Pennu'. This appears to bring about harmony than act as an elaborate ritual. They were supplied by the Panos either by purchase or by barter or by kidnapping. Even the Panos sold their kids occasionally for their purpose.²¹ There was no bar of sex or age or caste, but the grown males were the most esteemed and they were most expensive. They costed about 60 to 200 rupees and were sold by their parents or by their near relatives.²² As the victims were purchased not at a time, they were kept in the house of the village Chief and were treated as consecrated beings with reverence.

The mode of the performances of human rites varied from place to place but it accompanied the worst forms of torture until death. Now let us study how the performances of human rite was taking place in Ganjam on the day of Pausa Purnima. A month prior to the day of sacrifice, there was much feasting, intoxication and dancing round the victim who was adorned with garlands. On the day prior to the sacrifice he was intoxicated with "Solopo" (Sago palm juice fermented), toddy, and among some tribes made to sit at the

21. Ibid, p. 75.

22. Ibid, p. 83.

bottom of a post on the top of which was an effigy of a peacock, and at the foot of which a brass effigy of the same bird was buried. The assembled Khonds addressed the Earth goddess by proclaiming that "O God, we sacrifice to you, give us good crops and seasons and health" whereas the victim was told that "We have brought you with a price, not seized you, and we now sacrifice you according to custom. No sin rests on us".²³

On the following day the victim was again intoxicated with toddy, and anointed with oil. Each individual touched the anointed part and wiped the oil on his own head. They then proceeded in procession around the village and its boundaries bearing the victim who was preceded by music and a long pole, at the top of which was attached tufts of peacock's feathers. On returning to the post, which was always placed near the village deity, represented by three stones they proceeded to dig a pit, and after having killed a hog in sacrifice, the blood was allowed to flow into the pit. The victim, who was usually in a state of senseless intoxication, was then seized by five or six persons, thrown into the pit, and his face kept pressed in the earth until suffocated in the bloody mire. When the victim was supposed

23. Ibid, p. 84.

to be dead, the Jani or Priest cuts a bit of flesh from the body and buried it with ceremony near the brass effigy of the peacock and village idol, as an offering to the earth. The cut pieces of flesh were carried to their own villages and buried with great solemnity in the boundaries of the villages or fields or before the village idols. After the sacrifice of the human being, a calf was brought to the same post and was left after cutting its feet. On the next day the females were dressed and armed like. They sang and danced with drinks around the post. The calf was finally killed and eaten and the Jani was dismissed with a present in the form of rice and a hog or calf.²⁴

Similarly, Captain MacVicar in his report dated 6th April, 1851 describes the mode of performing the sacrifice in Maji Desho, the area in between Bead and Patna:²⁵

We have the first ploughing day and harvesting day in India which exist till today. One religious ceremony takes place in Bengal, called *Amvuvaci* at the time of the first showers of monsoon. It is perceived that Mother Earth prepared herself for being fertilised by menstruating and the time has come for ploughing, sowing and other farm

24. Ibid, p. 84-5.

25. See for detail, Maltby, op.cit., p. 85.

work.²⁶ Malabar cultivators in India use to sacrifice a fowl to the God Mallan before starting the annual sowing.²⁷

In many parts of Orissa a ceremony called Akshaya Trutiya is held before the first sowing. The ceremony involves a ritual on the ploughing field which aims at propitiating Mother Earth for a good harvest.

RAINMAKING CEREMONIES

The Monsoon occupies an important place in the psyche as on it depends the life of Indians. The importance of rain is, therefore, reflected in many ceremonies that aim at propitiating the raingod for good shower.

These religious rituals and ceremonies were observed in churches, temples and mosques and in different places in different manners, as they perceived that all the controlling elements were in the hands of god. In England (1315) a priest was ordered to perform rites in barefoot procession accompanying by the ringing of bells and chanting of the litany, to encourage people to acknowledge for *their sins* and appease the indignation of God for alms giving and

26. Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., p.306.

27. Arnold, Famine, p.75.

other charitable works.²⁸ W.R. Aykroyd remarks that the ancient Hindu scriptures do not mention famine but they talk of many droughts and rain making prayers. The following has been extracted from the Veda: "Lord of the field, we will cultivate the land with thee! Bestow on us pure and copious rain even as cows give us milk."²⁹

Simultaneously there are also some ceremonies to draw the sympathetic attitude of rain god. For example, idols are washed and this water is poured in the fields. Tom-toms are beaten loudly to stimulate the thunder clouds that would bring the rain. Children specially girls are involved in it, they danced and whirled with their loosened hair.³⁰ Similarly, we find some sort of religious ceremonies performed by the priests (brahmins) in India. For example, in Puri District one religious ceremony took place on 10 November 1988, when rain failed. This ceremony started with certain mantras on an auspicious day and continued for eleven days. What is to be noted here is that the rainfall

28. I. Kershaw, 'The Great Famine and Agrarian Crisis in England 1315-1327', Past & Present, 1973, p.7; cited in Arnold, Famine, p.76.

29. Aykroyd, op.cit. p.48.

30. J. Abbott, The Keys of Power: A Study of Indian Ritual and Belief, London, 1932, pp.342, 347-8; cited in Arnold, 'Peasant Consciousness', pp.72-3.

started simultaneously when ceremony began and found plenty of rainfall at the completion of the ritual ceremony. The expenses were met upon the collective collection of all people.³¹

Another sort of practices were prevailing in Gujarat, e.g. the Bhil tribals suspected bania traders, thinking that they must have stopped the rain to increase the price of their commercial goods. So, they made the Banias to hold a water pot on their heads at which they fired arrows until the pot broke. Similarly in some places old women were accused of being Gujarat witches who drove away the rain clouds.³²

Let us examine how the extensive role played by the women in the rain making ceremonies. In the Caucasian province of Georgia marriageable girls are yoked in couples with an ox-yoke, a priest holds the reins, and thus harnessed they wade through rivers, puddles and marshes praying, screaming, weeping and laughing.³³ In Serbia, a girl in the state of nudity and draped with flowers, dances at

31. Utkal Dipika (Oriya Weekly Newspaper), 10 Nov. 1988, p.341.

32. Arnold, Famine, p.77.

33. J.G. Frazer (ed.), The Golden Bough, London, 1949, p.71; in Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., pp.291-2.

every house of which the water comes and pours upon her a jar of water while her companions sing rain songs.³⁴ In Uttar Pradesh, during the Gorakhpur famine of 1873-74 women couples in the state of nudity started dragging the plough in the fields at night.³⁵ In Mirzapur, when drought occurred "three women from a cultivators' family stripped themselves stark naked, all male folks having been excluded from that place before hand. Then two of these nude women were yoked like oxen to a plough; while the third held the handle of the plough with her hands. Thereafter they began to imitate the action of the ploughing."³⁶ Similarly, in North Bengal there is a custom that the women folk of the Rajbamsis or Kochs strip themselves stark naked and dance before the image of their rain god in that state of nudity, if there occurs a drought.³⁷ During the famine of 1951 in Madhya Pradesh Rajmohini, a Gond women had a dream in which a saint appeared and consoled her that if they lead a pious life the plight of people would be put to an end. Then she

34. W. Crooke, Popular Religion & Folklore of Northern India, Westminster, 1896, p.39; cited in Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., p.292.

35. JASB, Vol.XII, 1952, p.921; cited in Chattopadhyaya, op.cit., p.291.

36. Quoted in Ibid.

37. Cited in Ibid.

fasted for 21 days and saw the rainfall.³⁸ One story states that the seduction of a saintly boy called Rushyashringa by beautiful maidens of the famine stricken Anga, led to the rainfall in the kingdom. This is called fertility rite.³⁹ Evidently the idea behind all these is to infuse into nature the fertile energy in her and in the female sex.

In Bellary women tied an alive female frog to winnowing fan and almost covered it with the sacred leaves of the margosa tree and marched in a procession accompanying children in singing: "Mother frog should have her bath. The tanks are all full. Give water, O Rain God!" And the procession was being stopped at every houses for a woman to pour turmeric water on the frog.⁴⁰ Somewhere else the frog was suspended or tortured to believe that its pitiful cries would move the god, Indra.⁴¹

We find evidences of rain making ceremonies in the form of special human sacrifices that happened before 1888-9 in

38. K.S. Singh, "Famine, Nationalism and Social Change: The Indian Scenario," IHR, 14 (1-2) 1987-88, p.189.

39. Ibid. pp.187-8.

40. S.T. Moses, 'Frog Folklore', OJMS, 30:(1), 1939, pp.17-19; cited in Arnold, 'Peasant Consciousness', p.72.

41. Ibid.

Ganjam. Its pattern is as follows: ten or twelve days before the appointed time, the victim's hair, till then left unshaven, was cut off and the priest would express the intended celebration of the rite before the assembled people. Three days before the sacrifice, all people indulged in every form of wild riot and gross excesses. The first day and night were spent feasting and dancing whereas the victim was kept fasting. Next day the victim was carefully bathed, clothed with a new garment and led to a village procession with music and dancing. Then the victim was seated at the Meriah grove, which maintained a short distance from every village and was anointed with oil, ghee and turmeric. Finally, he was adorned with flowers and worshipped throughout the day in the same posture. At night the involved people indulged in the same pattern of feasting and dancing. On the last day in the morning, the victim was given a little milk. Then the victim was taken to the place where the sacrifice used to take place. The bones of the arms and legs were broken on any show of resistance, but generally he was intoxicated with opium. First, the Jani had to wound the Meriah with his axe and the whole crowd started stripping the flesh from his bones, leaving untouched the head and the intestine. The left over was burnt the next day and the ashes scattered over the fields. The flesh was buried in the favourite fields. This was the way to conduct

the worship of the Earth goddess. What is important to know is that they had a belief that the fall of rain would be proportional to the number of tears he shed.⁴²

Madras Mail has suggested similar pattern of human sacrifices that were taking place prior to 1888-89 in Ganjam.⁴³

What did the government (the state) or the local zamindars do, when there was a collective recognition of the threatening crisis of famine, or drought, and how did they respond to it? Did the peasants have any expectation from them or not? If yes, how did they share in the special ceremonies? We have some evidences of the action of

42. The whole episode has been interpreted by Maltby, pp. 79-82.

43. M.M. 9 July, 1889, p.4; this was known to the government by the G.E. Russel, Special Commissioner of Goomsur, when the rain failed in 1836 and Khonds started performing their customary rite. Lieutenant Hill estimated at the New Moon feast on 8th Jan., 1841 about 240 Meriahs had been sacrificed. It ultimately led to the appointment of Captain Macpherson to suppress this barbarous rites, under Act of XXI of 1945. It has been pointed out that a large number of Meriah victims were rescued by the Meriah Agency Officers. Colonel Campbell rescued 1506 Meriah victims of which 717 were males and 789 females between 1837 and 1854. Human sacrifice hardly took place after 1861 and in 1880 an attempt was made and it was nearly successful in the Kuttiya country of the neighbouring district of Vizagapa tam. Maltby, op.cit., pp. 83, 199, 90.

compliance with the expectations of peasants - in December 1811, the collector of Tirunelveli paid 600 "chucrums" for rain making ceremonies in the principal temple of the district.⁵⁸ Similarly Cuddapah's Collector paid 150 star "pagodas" for the same.⁵⁹ Now, the question arises that how the East India Company being a Christian government provided this amount of wealth and did they have any advantageous motive behind it? It has been pointed out that the main aim was to inspire the people to proceed with the confidence and to convince that the government was with full sympathy at the time of crisis.⁶⁰ Was it really true? What about the exploitation? These were considered as "responsibility" and they were not recognized by the colonial state since 1870.⁶¹

We find an important feature in many of the ritual practices, that is the active and exclusive participation of women. One explanation could be that the natural fertility of land has been equated with the human fertility, Moses explains how these rituals were being done with active

58. Ibid., p.73.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid. p.74.

61. Ibid.,.

participation of female species like women and female frog as a ironic celebration in view of the drought. To quote Chattopadhyaya, "the productive activity of nature is related to and is even virtually dependent on the human reproductive functions or more particularly, the reproductive function of women."⁶² The manifestation of the idea of female fertility is explained by Briffault that "the assimilation of the fruit bearing soil to the child bearing women is universal."⁶³ Certain cults are found in the ancient period tracing agriculture, e.g., the cult of Dionysos. The rites associated with dionysos became not only significant, but also indispensable to the successful cultivation in certain countries, e.g., Boeotia. And the rites were celebrated exclusively by women.⁶⁴ Briffault argues that the whole rites related to dionysos was a women's religion by citing Italy, where this ancient Dionysos religion existed.⁶⁵ Arnold has explained it in terms of "mock ploughing" ceremonies ~~were~~ held by women instead of men. The reversal of normal sex roles also

62. Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., p.286.

63. Quoted in Ibid.

64. Mahabharat, vol.iii, p.123; cited in Chattopadhyaya, op cit, p.274.

65. Briffault, op. cit., p.128; cited in Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., p.274.

reflects the female fertility. The tribal societies had no such characteristics. The role of women in the rain making ceremonies had no special significance ~~in~~ other societies.

Did caste play any role in the rain making ceremonies? Indeed not, as it is seen as a threat to the whole village, the villagers perceived that the response has to come from the villagers as a whole irrespective of caste differences. Moses states that all the agrarian castes from the leading peasant castes down to the malas including untouchable labourers were involved in the rain ceremonies. He also further informs that it took place in several districts in Madras - Bellary, Kurnool and Cuddapah.⁶⁶ Utkal Dipika also reported that the rainmaking ceremonies that occurred in Puri district had no caste dimension.⁶⁷

However these rituals and ceremonies reinforces and perpetuates a hierarchical social structure based on birth. The role of brabmins in these rituals and their vested interest is too well known. In this way caste acted as a barrier in developing a rational outlook.

66. Cited in Arnold, "Peasant Consciousness," p.72.

67. U.D., 10 Nov. 1888, p. 341.

The blind adherence to these irrational ideas and practices had debilitating effect on the famine situation. These rituals undoubtedly had certain social relevance but it turned people away from looking at the main issues. The importance rather absolute faith on the efficacy of such rituals made people to retreat to themselves. Had there been a scientific outlook instead of clinging to superstitious beliefs, the people could have struck at the real cause of woe. The preventive measure could have taken the form of bringing into authority's attention for relief measures to ward off the situation arose out of lack of rainfall. However over-bearing influence of these irrational beliefs can also be explained as a product of socio-cultural backwardness to which colonial structure contributed a lot. The role of these beliefs in increasing the causality was well recognised by the affected people. Famine exposed the traditional beliefs of villagers, as their gods failed to come to their rescue. Revered Edwin Lewis informed that local weavers who were hardhit due to the decline of market became anti-god as in the time of their crisis god did not come to their help. Lewis further pointed out that this was for the first time he heard that

the Hindus abused their gods for their sufferings.⁶⁸ It was also reported by some missionaries who witnessed the 1876-78 famine that villagers were puzzled at the unresponsiveness of the God.⁶⁹

68. Arnold, "Peasant Consciousness", P. 74.

69. Ibid.

CHAPTER III

FAMINE SITUATION: SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

For studying famine with a socio-cultural perspective, it is necessary to take into account the nature of the caste system prevalent in India. The caste prejudice not only led to starvation and death but also generated societal problems like social discrimination and subordination. It has been suggested that the manifestation of caste prejudices took place in two ways: objection to the distribution of gratuitous relief especially cooked food and the refusal to join in the relief work.¹

This enquiry will focus on issues and problems pertaining to the caste prejudices which took place in colonial India especially in Ganjam. What did the government do to sort out these problems? How was the caste prejudices reflected in the famine proceedings and anthropological literature. We would discuss in the next section the debates among the government officials, whether the culprits who allowed family members to starve should be punished or all famine victims should be forced to come to the kitchen. This will also explain what the government

1. Mohanty, "Orissa famine of 1866", p.62; Arnold, "Peasant consciousness", p.107.

officials debated about the forms of gratuitous relief, especially what was the best way to save the lives of famine victims. The last section will analyse the importance of religion in the relief measures of government who happened to be Christian. Did famine help in exacerbating the process of social reformation movement as it was on?

FAMINE RELIEF AND CASTE IMPLICATIONS

Did the Ganjam famine of 1888-89 reflect caste prejudices? Indeed, caste prejudices were constantly occurring during the famine period. The manifestation of caste principles influenced the scheme of gratuitous relief, especially in the distribution of cooked food.² C.A. Galton, Secretary to the government of Madras commented that "the people of the affected area are for the most part Uriyas, a race of poor physique but stronger prejudices than the Telugus", and "their violent prejudices against accepting relief in the form of cooked food even when cooked by Brahmins".³ "A more bigoted and unenlightened race of

-
2. Letter No.E.547, 27 Sept. 1889. From Collector of Ganjam to Secretary to the Government of Madras (GOM); Famine Proceeding No.3, Jan. 1890; L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890, From Collector of Ganjam to Secy. to the GOM; F.P.No.39, Nov. 1891.
 3. L.No.486, 12 June 1889, from Secy. to the Govt. of Fort. St. George to Secy., GOI: F.P.No.15 Oct. 1889.

people than Uriyas", Mr. Foster, Acting Senior Asst. Collector, remarked, "it would be difficult to find, and to reason away or even to attempt to ascertain the reason for their prejudices and prepossessions is an impossible task".⁴

What is significant is that the objection to accept cooked food at the public kitchen was irrespective of caste or social position. The cooked food was not only opposed by the caste people but the lower castes (untouchables) also refused to go to the kitchen. Mr. Horsfall, the Collector reported that in the southern half of the district inhabited by people of the Telugu race, there was little difficulty in inducing them to come to the kitchen. But in the case of Oriyas, who resided in northern part, it was reversal, not the caste people alone, rather "all classes regardless of caste" objected to this form of relief. The attendance at kitchens/chatram was never satisfactory.⁵ This peculiarity created a distinct situation in Ganjam.

Did the Ganjamese experience any sort of social problems during the earlier famines? If not, why they were reluctant to go to the kitchen or why they were afraid of the rigidity of caste system? This was because the people

4. L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890; op. cit.

5. Ibid.

of Ganjam who ate food at the relief kitchen during the famine of 1866 not only acquired a lower social status but were also awarded an abusive character what is called "chotro-kiya".⁶ In fact, the famine of 1866 in Ganjam had a long-term social consequence by making the society more rigid and more complex for the first time in the socio-cultural history of Ganjam. Thus, it did spread the seeds of panic in the minds of famine victims in Ganjam that such degradation would ensue direct consequences.

In this regard Mr. Foster wrote that "the word 'Chotrokiya' (one who eats in a chattram) is an epithet which has a most opprobrious significance and a sufficient reason for enduring any extremities rather than give a handle for that epithet."⁷ In explaining the problems that why higher caste people refused to attend the kitchens or could not be induced to do so, the Collector remarked that "all who did so in the famine of 1866 were outcasted, and rather than incur their penalty the Uriya castemen will starve to death."⁸ The General Deputy Collector provided a similar analysis pertaining to the lower caste people that

6. Ibid.

7. Quoted in Ibid.

8. Ibid.

"those even low castes who were fed in the Government kitchens in 1866 were ex-communicated and received the abominable epithet of Chotrokiya."⁹

Before studying the reasons why the refusal of cooked food took place regardless of caste in Ganjam, it is noteworthy to begin with the measures adopted by the government to mitigate these problems. Government established separate kitchens for higher castes and lower castes in Ganjam. Special cook arrangement was made for caste kitchen and that too belonging to a Brahmin caste.¹⁰ Separation was maintained in the establishment of kitchens, even one mile distance in some Cases e.g., Berhampore kitchen.¹¹ David Arnold has pointed out that there was separate eating and sleeping areas for different communities in Madras during the famine of 1876-8.¹²

One important point has to be enquired into is whether voluntary acceptance of cooked food took place in Ganjam

9. Ibid.

10. Letter No.109-198 F, 28 Oct. 1889, GOI; Order of GOM: F.P.No.39, Nov. 1891.

11. L.No.23, 31 Aug. 1889, from Acting Dy. Sanitary Commissioner to Chief Secy. to the GOM: F.P.No.7, Jan. 1890; F.P. No.39, Nov. 1891.

12. Arnold, 'Peasant Consciousness', p.108.

before the establishment of separate kitchens? It is no doubt that people ate cooked food voluntarily at the kitchen. But it is not sure whether only lower caste people were coming to the kitchen or caste people and lower caste people were coming together without any hesitation. We have no evidence of higher caste who came to eat at the kitchen. That's why the term, caste people has been used.

In explaining the problem of kitchens, R. Pemberton, the Surgeon reported that the kitchen for lower caste was established in the backyard of one of the houses and were fed in only one house in Boirani. Whereas these caste people received their meals in one of the rooms of the house, which was dark, badly ventilated and overcrowded.

The preparation of food was made in a large room.¹³ C.J. McAlly, Acting Deputy Sanitary Commissioner of Madras, informed at the time of his inspection that in Chicacole kitchen there were separate enclosures for Pariahs, caste-people and Muhammadans. A good number of the later including young and old women were present.¹⁴ Again he -----

13. Medical Report, 26 Dec. 1889: F.P.No.39 Nov. 1891.

14. L.No.23, 31 Aug. 1889, from Acting Dy. Sanitary Commissioner to Chief Secy. to the GOM: F.P.No.7, Jan. 1890 and also in F.P. No.39, Nov. 1891.

reported that the kitchens for Pariahs and for caste people were separate and about a mile from each other in Berhampore. Attached to the latter, a kitchen was there for Muhammadans, but he found no one coming to it.¹⁵

In Ichapur kitchen, there were two kitchens for lower castes and caste people, reported by A.J. Forbes, Assistant Collector of Ganjam. The Kitchen's Register in the month of August revealed that 82 adults and 70 children were fed in the caste section at both meals whereas the Pariah section had 148 and 168 respectively.¹⁶ The General Deputy Collector of Ganjam recorded in his inspection Diary (1st October 1889) that there were 144 people on the register in the Mujjagoda Kitchen in Goomsur but actually only 100 fed in the morning in two sections. The following table shows that caste section had 30 people whereas the Pariah section had 70 people.¹⁷

15. Ibid.

16. L.No.350, 16 Oct. 1889, From Asstt Collector of Ganjam to Senior Asstt Collector of Ganjam: F.P.N.13, Jan. 1890.

17. L.No.71, 5 Oct. 1889, Inspection Diary of the General Dy. Collector on Special Famine Duty in Goomsur: F.P.No.9, Jan. 1890.

	Men	Women	Children	Total
CASTE SECTION:				
Kumbarros, Gowdas & Khonds	4	9	17	30
PARIAH SECTION:				
Dumbos, Panos & Haddis	4	24	42	70

Mr. Carr, Additional Special Assistant Collector remarked that though it has been successful in establishing caste kitchen in Dharaka estate, but enquiry showed that not a single caste person ate in this kitchen except some orphans.¹⁸

If the government officials did understand that combined kitchen was a problem for caste people in view of caste scruples, then how did the establishment of separate kitchens affect or help the lower castes? It did not help the lower caste people those who did not wish to accept the cooked food, then, what did the government do? The means of threats and persuasions were applied to the lower castes which hardly worked, but compulsion worked to a large extent. Mr. Horsfall, the Collector, brought the lower caste people of Purushottapur and surrounding villages into the kitchen with force. He also put 60 Bouris into the kitchen, who were wandering in a street. What is worth

18. L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890; op. cit.

noting is that it saw a gradual increase, e.g., the next day bours were 150 in numbers. They were satisfied with the food and arrangements and had no objection.¹⁹ The lower caste people like panos at Russelkonda demanded money doles raising the caste difficulties but Horsfall brought them into the kitchen forcefully.²⁰ Madras Mail has mentioned that Mr. Horsfall made compulsory, as a rule, the substitution of cooked food from moneydoles in the case of lower castes.²¹

In some cases, no endeavour worked, as people who were brought into the kitchen forcibly left the kitchen. It also happened that some villages were deserted on hearing the arrival of Collector, notably Surada.²² One of the circle inspectors of Surada informed that the kitchen never proved a successful one.²³

What happened to those who avoided the kitchen food owing to the caste prejudices and what sort of means they

19. M.M., 6 Sept. 1889, p.5; L.No.855, 19 Oct. 1889; op.cit.

20. M.M., 6 Sept. 1889, p.5.

21. Ibid.

22. L.No.855, 19 Oct. 1889: op.cit.

23. L.No.785, 13 Oct. 1889, From Add. Spl. Asstt Collector of Ganjam to Collector of Ganjam.

adopted to survive may now be discussed. Undoubtedly, a large number of people died out of starvation and desperation. It also led to social discrimination and subordination within the family members:

T.J. Maltby, the compiler of the Ganjam District Manual was of the view in the context of 1865-66 famine that the reluctance of better classes to take relief in the shape of cooked food was sadly apparent in the famine and there is no doubt that a great many held out to their death.²⁴ It has been suggested that due to the fear of caste, people in 1866 did not go to the nearest kitchen to take their food rather preferred to go to a far off kitchen which led to their death on the way.²⁵ We have remarkable instances of abandonong wife and children. The General Deputy Collector of Chatrapur, Mr. Vekatasastrigaru recorded in his report that at Sikula a young girl of 16 years was suffering from starvation, though she was receiving money-doles since two months. The enquiry showed that her husband was taking away her money doles. What is curious to know is that her mother in-law mortgaged the only cloth she had worn and left her naked. It was -----

24. Maltby, op.cit, p.250; L.No. 486, 12 June 1889:
op.cit.

25. Singh, "Famine and Social Change", p.200.

fortunate that she was visited by him and his comments follows: "When I went to see the girl, I feel ashamed and aggrieved to report that I found her naked living skeleton. Moreover, the mother-in-law began to abuse me mercilessly for asking her to show me the girl as she belongs to Uriya Brahmin caste."²⁶ Ultimately, the girl got a cloth and her husband's name was put in the relief list. Again, he found in the same village children were being discriminated by their parents. In his words: "at Sikula, I found 2 children (who have been on our list from the beginning) quite famine stricken, and on enquiries learnt that their parents do not take care of them and eat away their doles. I ordered the Karnam to be present daily at their meals and see that they are properly fed."²⁷ Similarly, the district Surgeon noticed that some children of Panos at Surada were very much emaciated and their parents were healthy and strong. The equally embarrassing situation was that the children's money doles were consumed by their parents.²⁸

In order to emphasize the reasons that why did people refuse to join in the relief work, one has to understand

26. L.No.1275, 22 Sept. 1889, From General Deputy Collector to Collector of Ganjam: F.P.No.3, Jan. 1890.

27. L.No.1275, 22 Sept. 1889: op.cit.

28. L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890: op.cit.

first that whether these people were involved in physical labour or wage labour in normal times? If yes, why did they refuse to do so in the famine relief work? Did it have any sex implications?

Generally, the higher caste people never involved in wage labour work in normal times. C.A. Galton, Secretary to the Government of Fort St. George, reported that the "stronger prejudiced people" of Ganjam normally refused "to allow their women and children to earn wages on works, when the men themselves are not willing to labour, makes difficult in times of distress to save them from effects of their own pride and apathy."²⁹ So far as the lower classes are concerned, majority of them including children and women do field works and road works in normal situations. Utkal Dipika suggests that the higher caste people refused to do relief work in Ganjam during 1888-89 owing to their caste prejudices. They thought that if they would join they would lose their social position. The interaction with the ritually polluting castes was impossible.³⁰

It has been suggested that the joining of higher castes in the relief works depends on the degree of the -----

29. L.No.486, 12 June 1889: op.cit.

30. UD, 29 June 1889, p.203.

intensity of the famine. B. Mohanty emphasizing that how the intensity of Orissa famine of 1866 compelled the higher caste women and children to join in the relief work. Her remark in regard to relief work is as follows: "the intensity of the distress was also shown by the caste of the women and children who were working in the public relief programmes... the women and children of brahman, Khandaits (landholders), Mohanty (writers/professional caste) and goala (pastoral caste) did not work on the roads before the famine because of caste prejudice. But during the famine they started light labour."³¹ David Arnold remarks that the reluctance of "caste conscious raiyats" has been partially overcome by sending their women and children to the relief work and kitchen. He claims that it shows the instrumental attitudes of the dominated males in sending those subordinate social groups. It is evident from the composition of the famine labourers that the high proportion was that of women and children. To quote Arnold:

...the raiyats preferred to send their wives and children to bear the brunt of the disgrace-and the hard work incident to it' rather than go themselves. If this was so then it represents another example of the way in which raiyats

31. Mohanty, "Orissa Famine of 1866", pp.61-62.

transferred part of the burden of the famine to subordinate social groups, in this case women and children.³²

We can state that the case of Madras was different from that of Orissa. In the sense that the male persons work as daily labourers even today and women are not allowed unless one is very poor. It is the belief of social degradation. It may be pointed that the higher caste people do not work under a lower caste person (emphasis added).

Let us discuss the reasons that why people preferred mostly raw grains and vehemently opposed to accept cooked food at the public kitchen irrespective of caste? This will include the reasons why they refused to join in the relief work. The focus will be also on how caste system was working as a dominating force by manifesting its norms and principles.

We can project that the socio-cultural beliefs and observances were accountable to the denial of cooked food, as caste played a vital role in social life in India. In addition, all people equally objected the experiment of distribution of raw-grains which had "to be cooked by the

32. Arnold, 'Peasant Consciousness', pp.108-9.

recipients at the kitchen".³³ To begin with, the problems of caste people can be explained in terms of L. Dumont's notion of "purity and pollution".³⁴ H.N.C. Stevenson calls it as "the Hindu pollution concept".³⁵ Here, the theory of Dumont does not explain the reasons in the case of lower castes in Ganjam that why did they refuse to accept cooked food. In countering Dumont, D. Gupta states that it is not the caste people only who follow the "notion of purity and pollution" but lower caste people also have their own notion of the same what he calls "muddled Hierarchies".³⁶ In support of his argument he cites the example of E.A.H. Blunt who argues that dhobi is higher than a bhangi and sixteen castes won't touch a dhobi but eleven castes refrain from contacting a bhangi.³⁷ Similarly, the low caste "Kuricchan of Malabar plasters his house with cow-dung if it

33. Govt. Order 628, 628A, 23 July 1889, GOI; L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890: op.cit.

34. L. Dumont, Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications, UCP, London, 1980.

35. H.N.C. Stevenson, 'Status Evaluation in the Hindu Caste System' JRAI, vol.LXXXIV (1-2) 1954, p.63.

36. D.Gupta, Social Stratification, O. U. P., Delhi, 1993, p.124.

37. E.A.H. Blunt, The caste system of Northern India with Reference to the United provinces of Agra & Oudh, S.Chand & Co., Delhi, 1969, p.102.

is polluted by the entry of a Brahman".³⁸

It seems more appropriate to say that it was because of the belief that the raw grain is immune from pollution and recipient considered himself to be superior, as pointed out by Dumont. For example, a Brahman who performs ritual services for an inferior caste often receives most preferably raw grains (Sidha).³⁹ M. Marriot puts it in terms of gifts.

Talking about the "ritual status" based on the degree of purity and pollution, H.N.C. Stevenson explains the forms of pollution in terms of marriage, food and drink, which are inherent in character. To quote him, "as a permanent attribute, pollution is an inherent characteristic of the relationship between social groups of various categories; ...It is the degree of permanent purity or pollution which fixes group ritual status, that orders intergroup behaviour and attitudes."⁴⁰ Classifying the pollution into permanent and temporary, he remarks that the absorption of cooked food stuffs is the serious form of

38. J.H.Hutton, Caste in India: Its Nature, Function and origin, OUP, Bombay, 1963, p.78; Quoted in Gupta, op.cit, p.124.

39. Dumont, op.cit., p.84.

40. Stevenson, op.cit., p.50.

internal pollutions.⁴¹ Blunt analyses the concept of pollution in terms of "taboos". Categorizing it into seven taboos (commensal, cooking, food, eating, drinking, smoking and vessel) he points out that some of the rules are not directly associated with caste rather general aspects of belief and ideas.⁴² In her field work investigation of Khalapur village in western U.P., P. Mahar tries to demonstrate that how certain principles are relevant to the problems of interaction. These norms are linked to touch, eating, drinking and smoking and symbolize the inequality of ritual status. She ranks the various castes according to their ritual status by using thirteen criteria.⁴³ In explaining the means of purification she states that the acceptance of polluted food or water is the most serious form of pollution for which no means of purification exists.⁴⁴ E. Crawley mentions that certain human qualities are transmitted by food and even by eating together.⁴⁵

41. Ibid., p.56.

42. Blunt, op.cit., p.88.

43. P.M. Mahar, "A Multiple Scaling Technique for Caste Ranking", MI, XXXIX(2), 1959 p.128.

44. Ibid., p.139.

45. E. Crawley, The Mystic Rose, Watts, London, 1932 pp.129 ff.; cited in Dumont, op.cit., p.304, n.63,e.

So far as the denial of cooked food is concerned we find different and contradicting views given by government officials. The government of India's explanation in this regard rests on two problems -- kitchen and cook. It assumed that if people do not come to the kitchen to have their food inspite of all arrangements which ensures the maintenance of caste scruples (i.e., separate kitchen and Brahmin cook) they have the means to survive. To quote Government of India:

The governmentt offers cooked food under arrangements, which do not affect the caste or the recipient in any way, and if the people refuse to accept the food thus offered, the natural presumption is that they have other means of subsistence.⁴⁶

Citing the Famine Commission Reoort, We can say that the central govt. failed to understand the importance of moral character and good family background of a cook who was to be selected for cooking. The Famine commissioner states:

I do not think that any of the respectable classes would eat food cooked by a Brahman of notoriously bad livelihood. Some castes, the Gwalas or Ahirs, for instance, will take food cooked by a Brahman &

46. L.No. 109-198F., 28 Oct. 1889: op.cit.

Gararas will throw away food cooked by themselves if a Brahman has come into contact with it... the Hindus feel that they have no security, that any scoundrel may have been selected to cook⁴⁷

One of the famine administrators reported in 1860 of the same sort which follows:

...the explanation (for the unpopularity of poor houses) lies in the reluctance to take food prepared under the Govt. auspices. We think it sufficient to provide a Brahmin cook, but this is a great mistake. Brahmins of one family will not eat food cooked by Brahmin, unless they know that he is a man of good family and good moral character⁴⁸

Mr. Horne Acting Special Assistant Agent reported that the people of Ganjam did not accept cooked food willingly, it is not because of the company (Christian government) but because of eating at "Public Chattram".⁴⁹ Similarly Mr. Carr mentioned that one of the principal reasons of the higher caste's refusal to eat cooked food was that the food was cooked "in one place", though distributed in separate

47. Report of the Indian famine commission, Part III, 1880, pp.250-55.

48. J.C.Goddes, op.cit., p.366; Quoted in Singh, "Famine and Social Change", p.199.

49. M.M., 6 Sept. 1889, p.5.

enclosures and separate cook houses.⁵⁰ It seems that his main argument was that of the problem of kitchen. S. Ketkar informs about the intermediary things that pollute the high caste people, like earthen pots, the place they inhabit and the temple premises. He accepts kitchen as the most vulnerable place in the house and this is directly linked with the vulnerability of food and of the eater.⁵¹ Admitting the arguments of intermediary places, Dumont says that the kitchen is the most vulnerable place in a house, as it is the "basic sacred place".⁵² Srinivas is talking about the sacredness of the kitchen, as food is cooked there. He further says that food has to be cooked in a pure place and with a proper care which would prevent impure persons and objects from entering into the kitchen.⁵³ Discussing about the problems of utensils and vessels P. Mahar states that "a polluted brass vessels may be purified only through scoring it with hot coals and polluted earthenware vessel must be discarded."⁵⁴

50. Ibid.

51. S. Ketkar, The History of Caste in India, 1909, p.24.

52. Dumont, 'Pure & Impure', pp.37-8.

53. M.N. Srinivas, Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1952, pp.76-7; cited in ibid., p.38.

54. Mahar, op. cit., p.139.

In this connection, it is understood from the reports of Venkata Sastrigaru that how the utensils played an important role in prohibiting caste people to accept food. For example, an embarrassing episode occurred at Boirani Kitchen where some high caste people who sat to take food went away when a Hospital Assistant entered into the kitchen. But all the inmates returned to the kitchen to have their food as soon as fresh cooking utensils were substituted for old ones. This was reported by the gumasta and the circle inspector of the kitchen. Here the intention of the Hospital Assistant is obscure but it is clear that when he entered into the kitchen and he touched nothing, as he confessed himself.⁵⁵

Incidence of frequent deaths was seen as one of the important factor leading to pollution. As famine involves excessive mortality, people of Ganjam might have thought that famine relief kitchen was one of the polluting places.

In the context of temporary impurity, Dumont says that there exists certain events like birth and death which prohibits contact temporarily with the affected person in personal and family life. To quote him, "in India the

55. L.No.1275, 22 Sept. 1889: op. cit.

persons affected by this kind of event are impure for a prescribed period and Indians themselves identify this impurity with that of untouchables".⁵⁶ In his book, The History of the Dharmasastra, P.V. Kane claims that one's nearest relatives and his best friend become untouchable for a specific time.⁵⁷ The pollution problem of death is a social rather than a physical matter, as it affects the people not only belonging to his family but also his relatives. It is anachronistic and troublesome for Kane and he suggests a specific time for mourning. The mourning is observed for 10 days for family members and 3 days for joint family members and for others a ritual bath is enough.⁵⁸ The period of impurity depends on the social status of a person, who dies. In the case of Brahman 10 days, 12 days for Khatriyas, 15 for Vaisyas and 30 days for Sudras.. Even today it exists wherever orthodoxy works.⁵⁹

However evidences show that some famines witnessed cannibalism during the famine period which contradicts the above possibility. What is curious to know is that Hindus

56. Dumont, op. cit., p.48.

57. Cited in Dumont, op.cit., p.48.

58. Dumont, op.cit., p.50.

59. Ibid., p.

could eat their dead children but refused to accept the cooked food at the public kitchen. For example, J.L. Phillips remarks that the intensity of the famine of 1866 was so severe that Hindus ate their dead children owing to the non-availability of other means to survival.⁶⁰ Similarly, a British official who was assigned to examine the situation of Balasore commented in his report that "I have known no instance of the Hindoos eating dogs, cows, but they did eat their children when they were dead."⁶¹

Manu also talks of the similar kind of things which follows: "Azeegarta (a celebrated rishi or devotee) did not scruple to slay his own son in order to appease his hunger; for, committed under the imperative dictates of hunger, no act is sinful".⁶²

CASTE ORIENTED POLICY : A DEBATE

The problems of the intensification of the famine situation, of the causation of excessive mortality, and of the abandonment and subordination of family members

60. J.L. Philips, Missionary to the Children of India, London, 1898, p.102; cited in Swaro, "Role of Missionaries in 1866 Famine", p.46.

61. Quoted in Ibid p.53, n.3.

62. Quoted in Singh, "Famine and Social Change", p.201.

stimulated wide ranging debates among the government officials as to how to deal with these problems. The first one was whether the culprits who allowed their family members to starve owing to caste prejudices should be punished or not? They all should be brought into the kitchen forcibly or not. Secondly, what form of gratuitous relief had to be distributed and which should be the better form to save lives of the victims. The District Surgeon recommended that the culprits should be punished, who neither allowed their children nor themselves to go to the kitchen and left their children to starve by eating their money doles.⁶³ The Senior Assistant Mr. Foster pointed out that the lower caste people - Bouris and Panos etc., should be confined to the kitchen. Mr. Horsfall declared that "we shall have no more of the so-termed caste objections on the part of the Bouris, Panos and Dandasis and so on", if they found any inhuman parent who had killed their children by starvation in lieu of taking him to the kitchen.⁶⁴

Most of the arguments of government officials concerning the main problems of relief kitchen led to the -----

63. L.No.547, 27 Sept. 1889 from the Collector of Ganjam to the Secretary to the GOM: F.P.No. 3 Jan. 1890.

64. L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890: op. cit.

conclusion that the penal offence should be made for a person who allowed his family members to starve owing to the threat of caste. The Collector proposed the government to introduce it as a penal offence. His statement is as follows:

My own opinion is that the legislature must step in and make it a punishable offence for parents to allow their children to starve when food is to be had with every regard to caste prejudices at the government kitchens; nothing less than this will get over the difficulty; as it is, force has to be used to bring them into the kitchens, and this is not always successful.⁶⁵

The following quotation contains the response of the government of India which questioned the firmness of the district officers and the counter argument of the collector in support of his proposal:

The government appears (vide G.O. No. 757 6th Sept. 1889) to be under the impression that there has been a want of firmness on the part of the district officers in this respect but I beg to assure them that such is not the case. Threats and persuasion alike, and it was only by compulsion that the Bouris at Purushottapur and elsewhere

65. Ibid.

were brought into the kitchens. The same tactics had to be pursued at every kitchen I visited, and the consequence was that, in some instances, notably at Surada, the villages were deserted on hearing on my approach. It is not a pleasant task bringing forcibly to the kitchens, and could any other method have succeeded, I for one would certainly have adopted it."⁶⁶

No proposals were accepted to be introduced as the Government official order. But government admitted that the provisions of the penal code in regard to defamation were sufficient whereas a neutral position was maintained in regard to the caste prejudices. To quote the versions of Govt. of India:-

As regards the first part of the suggestion, the Government considers that the provisions of the Penal Code in regard to defamation are sufficient, and as regards the later part, it is apparently intended that the scruples of the higher classes should be respected and that compulsion should be resorted to only in the case of the lower castes. Legislation of this nature is, of course, out of the question...It is desirable to strengthen the hands of Famine Relief Officers and to give legal sanction to acts which have to be performed by them but which are not in accordance with the law as it stands at present.⁶⁷

66. Ibid.

67. L.No.109-198F., 28 Oct. 1889; op.cit.

As the Govt. of India considered three forms of gratuitous relief in times of scarcity - money doles, grain doles and cooked food, the debate was to decide that which form was the best form of gratuitous relief and which would save the lives of famine victims. To begin with, focusing on problems of money doles in terms of savings and one of the demoralizing system, Mr. Wedderburn argued that Money dole recipients did not spend the whole amount for adequate and good food, though they suffered from emaciation. He claimed that the system of grain doles would provide more temptation to eat rather than savings. Strongly favouring the grain doles system, Mr. Wedderburn proclaimed the following words:

Most officers who have any experiences prefer doles in the form of grain. The fact is that when money is given, it is not always spent upon food.... Most officers have noted that the recipients of money doles did not improve as rapidly as those that were fed, and cases have been met with where the money was laid out on tobacco or arrack instead of sustaining food which was required. The poor no doubt, have a difficulty in getting rice. retailed to them in times of scarcity, they get small measures and the worst sort and have to get their money changed, they have been living on insufficient food and will not buy themselves a good meal. When grain is given them, there is more temptation to eat and less to save. It is also supposed that money has a greater tendency to stick by the way than grain.*

Treasury Dy. Collector, who supervised the distribution of grain doles at the Chatrapur headquarters wrote that "this system was liked by the recipients, some of them stated indirectly that they were fortunate when they compared with the recipients and money doles who survives at the mercy of Karnams".⁶⁸ It was reported by Horsfall that the distribution of raw grain instead of money doles was gladly accepted by recipients.⁶⁹ Mr. Elphinstone informed that he had been distributing raw grain instead of money doles in several villages and received no objection, rather people preferred it.⁷⁰

In the context of moneydoles, it was argued that money doles were better than graindoles as there existed many grain riots. The money had a greater tendency to stick in the way than the raw grains.⁷¹ During the trial of money doles in his division Mr. Carr wrote:

The people in receipt of gratuitous relief in and near Pattupur greatly appreciated the system.... This preference is easily accounted for. A pauper

68. Ibid.

69. Madras Mail, 6 Sept. 1889, p. 5.

70. L. No. 879, 24 Oct. 1889.: op.cit.

71. L.No. 1544, 19 Feb. 1890.: op.cit.

on receiving his weekly dole from the Karnam or Carji of his village has to buy grain in small quantities from the nearest Comati who naturally secures his profit on retain dealings; the Karnam, moreover, if dishonest, deducts his portion of the dole before payment. With a system of raw grain payments on the other hand, the full allotment is made, and the grain having in addition been purchased in the cheapest market, the pauper gets considerably more than he would do if left to obtain it for himself.⁷²

However, the grain-doles possessed a greater advantage over money-doles, namely, that embezzlement of grain was not quite so easy as that of money doles while its distribution could be more easily supervised. But, no doubt, the distribution of grain doles was far more troublesome than the distribution of moneydoles - enhanced price, cost of carriage and storage and wastage etc.⁷³

In his report on the famine in Ganjam, the Collector was emphatic in recommending the abolition of money doles as a form of relief. The objections to this form of relief is as follows:

It is demoralising. Many who would refuse to take cooked food and even hesitate as to raw grain-doles unhesitatingly clamour for money. Circle Inspectors are not above temptation. Much

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

less, village officers. There is no guarantee that the money paid by Government does actually reach the supposed recipients, and even if it does, it is not always expended upon wholesome diet. Moneydoles also tended to keep people back from self-exertion."⁷⁴

Mr. Horsfall cited in his report the opinion of the Collector of Nellore District in 1876, who protested against the System of money-doles owing to the dishonesty of the village officers and Relief Inspectors and the need of control over them in Zamindari villages. It was also argued by the Nellore Collector that much of the dole was being spent on arrack or toddy or other luxuries by the parents leaving their children to starve.⁷⁵

Mr. Horsfall had no hesitation in declaring that the most efficacious and cheapest form of gratuitous relief was the cooked food. He argued that the recipients were subject to better checks, by the casual observer, as given food was just sufficient. However, he pointed out, the extreme difficulty in persuading the Oriyas to the relief kitchen.⁷⁶ Further, he made a marked distinction between those fed in a kitchen and those who received money doles.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

For example, in Boirani he noticed that a child, who was receiving money doles, was in very emaciated condition, whereas his elder brother was fairly healthy as he was fed at the kitchen. Another child was found as a skeleton, who was receiving moneydoles.⁷⁷

The following table demonstrates that the number of money doles and raw grains recipients were remarkably high than the number of people fed in kitchen, they were 28266 and 7173 respectively.⁷⁸

NUMBER OF GRATUITOUS RELIEF RECEIPIENTS

Gratuitous Relief	Men	Women	Children	Total
Money doles and Raw grains	4032	7112	17,122	28,266
Fed in Kitchen	708	1151	5,314	7,173
Total	4740	8263	22,436	35,439

It was quite often reported that the relief lists demonstrate a very heavy mortality rate among the recipients of money doles. To understand the efficiency of

77. Madras Mail, 6 Sept. 1889, p. 5.

78. L.No. 653, 21 Sept. 1889, Additional Special Asst. Collector of Ganjam to the Collector of Ganjam: F.P.NO. 3 Jan. 1890.

the gratuitous relief distribution, we can take into account the following table. These figures point to the greater efficiency of relief in the form of cooked food than the grains and money doles distribution. The health status of the recipients was varying, for example, 516 recipients of cooked food were in good and fair position while in the case of grain doles and money doles it was only 312 and 202 respectively. Only 128 individuals who received kitchen food were in bad and very bad condition while in respect of grain and money doles they were 312 and 368 respectively. This table also shows that the number of persons having good and fair health was highest in relief work.⁷⁹

PHYSICAL CONDITION OF RELIEF RECIPIENTS

Relief	Bad & Very bad	Indifferent	Good & Fair	Total
Kitchen	128	356	516	1000
Graindoles	312	367	321	1000
Moneydoles	368	430	202	1000
Works	130	316	554	1000

Therefore, better efficiency was seen in the cooked food distribution. It was attributable to several causes.

79. L.No. 8881, 31 Oct. 1889.: op.cit.

It prohibited people to buy sweet meats, liquor, tobacco in place of food. Besides, money and grain doles made it difficult to supervise and provided much opportunities for swindlers to fraud. The collector suggested for the total abolition of money doles in future famines. And he categorically stated that the raw grains should be distributed to the caste people and people unable to leave their homes and the cooked food to the lower caste people.⁸⁰

With regard to the caste inhibition and social inferiority of pariah castes Mr. Horne states:

The objection to take cooked food on the part of these pariah castes has been so confirmed in the present famine that it is to be feared that a precedent has been established, but if in a future famine it should be decided that the system of village relief by money-doles is cumbrous, expensive, impossible to control, affords unlimited opportunity for embezzlement and has, in fact, proved itself a failure, and if it should be determined on these facts to offer gratuitous relief only in the shape of food, then, I believe, that all pariah castes would at once see the necessity of abandoning their self-made scruples and would take food cheerfully.⁸¹

80. L.No. 1544, 19 Feb. 1890.: op.cit.

81. Ibid.

SOCIETAL CHANGE

The notion of "purity and pollution" made people irrespective of caste to refuse to accept cooked food, as shown in the foregoing discussion. This study contradicts the arguments of K.S. Singh that the tribals declined to accept cooked food owing to their cultural norms and the lower caste people did not object to take cooked food.⁸² In Ganjam the tribals had neither any caste prejudices nor any sort of hesitation in eating at the public kitchen rather lower caste people objected to it. Singh is right in saying that upper castes refused to eat cooked food.

What is interesting to know is that people did not follow the rules of Manu. They perhaps followed rigid principles than Manu. Manu says that "it is no crime in a man, if, in great necessity, and to save his life, he eats impure food. He who receives food, when his life could not, otherwise, be sustained, from any man whatever, is no more tainted by sin than the subtle either by need".⁸³

82. Singh, "Famine and Social Change", p.199.

83. Quoted in Ibid, p.200-1.

It is generally held that people refuse to join in the relief work, and relief kitchen taking it to be a sin. Ganjam was not an exception to it. We can cite one example, pointed out by Horsfall -- the people ate cooked food after an offering made by a native gentleman, in the temple. In his words:

"So far as I can learn, the same objection holds good in regard to cooked food distributed by native gentlemen. The cooked food has first to be offered in the temple before distribution, and is then freely partaken of under the pretext apparently that the recipients are sharing in the offerings at a sacred ceremony. As a rule, however, the better classes will not receive cooked food, but readily accept raw grain which they carry off home to cook. It cannot for a moment be admitted that a Christian Govt. will descend to the device of offering cooked food in a temple before distributing it to the people, and the caste difficulty must continue, so far as Uriyas are concerned, an insuperable one".⁸⁴

It has been suggested that famines led to the emergence of many new castes. B. Mohanty claims that the caste prejudices in the Orissa Famine of 1866 generated a distinct caste called "chhatro-khia", which is found even today in Orissa. They acquired a degraded status irrespective of caste in Orissa Division. Though they were kept as servants, even water was not accepted from them.

84. L.No. 1544, 19 Feb., 1890: op.cit.

To quote her, "a distinct caste called Chhatro-khia, or those who ate in the relief kitchen was created; people from all castes were subsumed over this caste".⁸⁵ We have the evidence like Chotro-kiya in Ganjam famine of 1866, Suryuriya in 1770 famine,⁸⁶ and the weaver community of Meghwals in Saurashtra were degraded to the ranks of scavengers.⁸⁷ It threatened the social fabric by separating the spouse, children, parents and family members. Now one question can be posed whether there was any endeavour made by social reformers or leaders, to readmit these people to their former castes? Arnold has talked about how the incidence of caste prejudices in the Madras famine of 1876-78 brought a change in the attitudes of famine victims towards the government, what he calls "ambiguity in peasant attitudes to the colonial state."⁸⁸ It also shattered the expectation from state measures. Instead it created a resentment among the peasants. The main problem was that people suspected the activities of government in bringing them into the kitchen and making them eat ritually impure

85. B. Mohanty, "Orissa Famine of 1866", p.62.

86. Madaneswar Mishra, "Purnea and the Famine of 1770", The Indian nation, Patna, 16 June 1974; Cited in Singh, "Famine and Social Change", p. 199.

87. Cited in Ibid. p. 203.

88. Arnold, 'Peasant Consciousness', p.107.

food and associating with polluting castes which would lead to their social ostracism and go against their religion.⁸⁹

It has been pointed out that the famine of Orissa led to a social reformation movement in which "Pundits and social leaders got involved to readmit them into their respective castes. At first, the Pundits of Calcutta and Puri refused to readmit them but ultimately re-admission took place. This purification took place "as a result of the efforts of Sri Bichitranand Das, a social leader, the Zamindars wanted to re-settle the Chhatrakhia and the villagers also wanted to readmit them to their former castes".⁹⁰ Singh points out that Manu is silent in this context. How did this readmission take place? Singh states that "the Orissa Pundits in their anxiety to make a living in troubled times, considered it expedient to lay down prescriptions (Vyavasthas) which consisted of payment of pawannas (a little money) and the performances of certain ceremonies for recovering one's social position. The Pundits said, "it is better for the person who had defiled food to perform some penance to escape from censure -----"

89. Ibid.

90. *Mohanty, "Orissa Famine of 1866", p.62 ;*
It has been said that the Zamindars and the villagers wanted to readmit them what was the main reason? was there any vested interest in it?

of his fellowmen." Two sets of ceremonies (vrata) were laid down for persons of four varnas -- for those who were forced to eat impure food; and for those who partook of food cooked by persons of lower castes. The Pundits "authoritative ruling" was made widely known and it had considerable effect in readmitting a large number of outcastes to their castes."⁹¹ Mohanty pointed out that the "Chhatrakhias " were supposed to provide a feast to their relatives and offerings to the village goddesses to be readmitted.⁹²

The process of social reformation was intensified by the incidences of famines. The great social leaders/reformers Vivekananda and M.K. Gandhi played significant role in serving the famine victims. The involvement of Vivekananda in the famine relief of 1897 had a profound influence on people. He observed that "the Brahman boys were found nursing beside of the Cholera stricken pariahs", and remarked that "all such work" was "real work" to influence people, through which the "seeds

"Famines and Social Change"
91. Singh, p. 201-202.

92. Mohanty, "Orissa Famine of 1866", p. 62.

of spiritual wisdom can be shown" very easily.⁹³ C.F. Andrews analysing it in terms of national ethos, states that the social service is the greatest of all reforms and it may be wrought by those who serve their fellow men, rather than by those who rule. The natural calamities ruptured the hard rules of custom and traditions Hindus worked in the Muslim areas during the Bengal flood. This is the genuine form of social service.⁹⁴

The social structure got affected by the famine and therefore the study of famine includes in its fold the development in social structures which owes its origin to this phenomenon of famine becomes important. The famine of 1866 made the Ganjam society more rigid and complex by causing a new caste called "Chotro-kiya" where as we find no evidence of such a new caste during the 1888-89 famine, though people refused to accept cooked food. This fact, perhaps is accepted by Mohanty who has studied Orissa division famines (1865-1921), as she only talks of this kind of situation that occurred in 1866. Why did it happen that the famine of 1866 caused a new caste and why not in

93. The complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. VIII, p. 411 ff.; Cited in Singh, "Famines and Social Change", p. 194.

94. cited in Ibid. p. 194-5.

other famines in Orissa including Ganjam? This may be said that it started declining owing to the increased sufferings and severity of the famine and change in the belief of the people over time. But famine has not been able to destroy the caste system as a structure/organisation though it led to the relaxation of its norms and principles - commensality and taboos to some extent. Thus, the foregoing analysis took stock of the morbid impact of caste taboos on famine situation. It not only intensified the famine situation but also threatened the social fabric in generating acrimonial relations between family members and relatives. This discussion also demonstrates the the attitudes of the govt. officials, especially towards the notion of caste and religion. Our study has proved that the famine relief policy affected the caste system and vice-versa.

The sheer resolve of common man to survive made them to look for other means of survival, however, inhuman which show the dreadful hold that caste taboos exert on the mind of people.

CHAPTER IV

THE FORMS OF SURVIVAL: A HISTORICAL DIMENSION

In an exchange economy, whether a family will starve or not depend on what it has to sell, whether it can sell them, and at what prices, and also on the price of food. An economy in a state of comparative tranquility may develop a famine if there is a sudden shake-up of the system of rewards for exchange of labour, commodities, and other possessions, even without a 'sudden, sharp reduction in the food supply'.

Amartya Sen¹

This quotation stresses the idea that famine can take place without a sharp decline in food availability and the starvation depends on the employment of the possessive assets, what A. Sen calls the "failure of exchange entitlement"². Does it explain all the dimensions of famine? If the incidence of famine is inevitable with the loss of one's or entitled power "what about the moral economy" and several other survival techniques? P.R. Greenough explains famine in terms of the collapse of rural patron's resources and claims that the analysis of A. Sen

1. Sen, "Starvation and Exchange Entitlements: A General Approach and its implication to the Great Bengal Famine", C.J.E. 1, 1977, p.34.
2. Sen, "Failure of Exchange Entitlement", p.1273.

is "one-sided".³

A contradictory attempt has been made to study the forms of survival techniques adopted by famine victims -- private charity, acceptance of inedibles, cannibalism, food riots, migrations and conversion of religion. This will also prove that the victims were not passive and fatalist.

PRIVATE CHARITY

One of the significant forms of technique of famished people was the traditional source of charity, in which socio-cultural values have a conspicuous role. D. Arnold analyses this traditional source of subsistence in terms of "Rajadharma". It was the duty of the rulers to provide assistance to their subjects at the time of crisis.⁴

Discussing the traditional system of subsistence security Greenough states that it contradicted British model of prosperity. This is exemplified by three types of providers of subsistence securities within the society known as "Annadata". They were Deity, King and Master, whose moral responsibility was to provide substantial help to their subjects at the time of crisis. Among them the

3. Greenough, "Famine and Peasant Victims" p.207.

4. Arnold, "Peasant consciousness", p.98.

most important role was played by the King who was basically a landlord.⁵ This tie between landlord and peasant was referred to as *raja-praja-sambandha* or "King-subject relationship".⁶

Utkal Dipika explains the distribution of Private Charity in terms of *Special duty* or *dharma* technique of a King (the Zamindar). It claims that to provide charity, borrowing from the Govt. won't degrade the position of a "raja" rather it was his dharma and added to his fame. Making a comparison, it states like it is the duty of the head of a family to save money for his rainy days, the "raja" should save resources to meet the unforeseen circumstances in their respective kingdoms.⁷ Further, showing grave concern for the plight of the people, the newspaper stated how govt. was indifferent towards the famine stricken people of Ganjam and Bihar. It remarks that though there was a provision of Famine Relief Fund in which 50 lakh rupees were deposited in every year to help the famished people, but it was spent in strengthening the

5. Greenough, Prosperity and Misery in Bengal, pp.19, 39-40, 43.
6. M.N. Gupta, The Land System of Bengal, Calcutta, University Press, Calcutta, 1940, p.54.; Cited in Ibid p.19.
7. U.D., 27 July 1889, p.234.

North-Western Frontier of India. What is unfortunate that Lord Dufferin was highly praised for this act while ultimately the relief work was delayed causing numerous deaths.⁸ Hindu Patriot rightly pointed out that what was the need of constructing a strong building against the dacoity if they had nothing to eat.⁹

In case of Ganjam we find the existence of private charity. The Zamindars and landed proprietors were the main source of these benevolent activities. Relief kitchens were opened at Boirani, Calingapatnam, Chicacole, and Parlakimedi, supported by private charity. The Zamindar of Chekati opened four kitchens in his estate in which about 500 persons were fed daily for quite sometime. The late Raja of Mandasa provided one bandy-load of paddy to the distressed people daily.¹⁰ MR Wedderburn, Acting Principal Asst. Collector remarked that Sambiah Shastri kept a kitchen open at Chicacole at his own expense for three months, with the help of subscriptions, before the

8. U.D., 17 Aug. 1889, p.259.

9. Cited in Ibid.

10. L. No.1544, 19 Feb.1890:op. cit.

govt. kitchen commenced.¹¹ Mr. Artho Bisvasara of Pattupur demonstrated "commendable spirit" in distributing public charity at the commencement of the distress, pointed out by Mr. Carr, Additional Special Asst. Collector.¹² In the Malliahs, charitable Zamindars also issued cooked food to the poor from 1st April 1889 at Bodo godo Malliah and Chinnakimedi estate.¹³ Arna Kali Devi, the widow of Late Roy Bahadur gave Rs.501/- in the hands of Municipal authorities to distribute it among the Cholera patients.¹⁴

What is important to know is that more markedly private charity provided work for the labouring classes. For example, it was estimated that in Berhampore town, not less than 1,000 workers were employed for three months. The work was to clean up dried tanks with a view to provide work and to improve the water supply in future.¹⁵ We find the existence of exploitation in these private charity e.g.

-
11. L. No.186F., 16 Oct. 1889, From Acting Principal Asst. Collector of Ganjam to the Collector of Ganjam : F.P.No. 12 Jan 1890.
 12. L.No.868, 27 Oct. 1889, From Additional Special Asst. Collector of Ganjam to the Collector of Ganjam : F.P. No. 13 Jan. 1890.
 13. L.No.274, 9 Sept. 1890: op.cit.
 14. I.M., 20 April 1889.
 15. L.No.486, 12 June 1889 : Op.Cit.

the Sergada Zamindar was employing daily 500 persons as field labour and was paying them wages below the govt. rate. This work was, however, congenial and attracted many due to lack of other incentives.¹⁶ Here, we find a contradiction that some people refused to join in the relief work as wages provided no access to have rice.¹⁷

The Famine Proceeding Records show very prominently that how the private charity existed in Ganjam tremendously, especially mentioned at the time of closing kitchens in Oct. 1889¹⁸.

In stating the availability of new ragi which had not been brought to the market, the Mahajans at Kalliket said that the paupers would fall back on them both for want of ragi and labour.¹⁹ While talking about the improving condition of the famine situation, H.W. Foster, Acting -----

16. L.No.697, 29 Sept. 1889, From Add. Spl. Asst. Collector of Ganjam to the Collector of Ganjam : FP No. 4 Jan. 1890.
17. L.No. E.547, 27 Sept. 1889 : op.cit.
18. L.No. 653, 21 Sept 1889, From Add. Spl. Asst. Collector of Ganjam to the Collector of Ganjam : F.P. No. 3 Jan.1890; L.No.785, 13 Oct.1889, Add. Spl. Asst. Collector of Ganjam to the Collector of Ganjam: F.P. No.11 Jan. 1890;L.No.613-89, 23 Sept 1889, From Acting Sr. Asst. Collector of Ganjam to the Collector of Ganjam : F.P. No.3 Jan. 1890.
19. L.No.1275, 22 Sept. 1889 : Op.Cit.

Senior Asst. Collector stated that "the steadily growing abundance of foodgrains will doubtless produce a speedy revival of private charity on its usual scale", and "I found a basket of ragi-ears, which on enquiry turned out to have been given in alms."²⁰ For example, the distress among weavers was gradually being eliminated due to the improvement of raiyot class.²¹

Utkal Dipika mentions that cooked food recipients not only belonged to the lower caste (Panos, Haddis) but also to other castes (tanti, chara and other sudra castes).²² It further states that cooked food was distributed among women and children whereas seeds were given to the cultivators in Ganjam. The Municipal authority provided rice to the beggars.²³

The increase of beggar was one of the features of famine. They were not only economically destitute but socially degraded people. T. Das and others report in their destitute survey in 1943 that "a large number of

20. L.No.682, 30 Sept. 1889, From Acting Sr. asst. collector of Ganjam to the Collector of Ganjam : F.P.No.4 Jan. 1890.

21. L.No.653, 21 Sept. 1889 : Op.Cit.

22. U.D., 29 June 1889, p.203.

23. U.D., 15 June 1889, p.186.

units frankly admitted that they had given up the restrictions on food for the time being under the pressure of starvation, but would observe them again with the improvement of the food situation and when normal condition would prevail."²⁴ The Utkal Dipika suggested that many people turned into beggars, devotees of Vishnu, saints etc., and accepted food from everyone one due to the acute scarcity of foodgrains. It also mentions that these victims would come back to their previous position when the agricultural production would be obtained²⁵ In this light, it is rightly pointed out that the collector did injustice by depriving the beggars from any help considering them as professional beggars.²⁶

Sambalpur Hiteisini states that the subjects of SriLuxmi Nrushimha Singh, Zamindar, were in a good position, as the Zamindar was sympathetic towards them. He was distributing clothes and food among the distressed people after investigating the condition in the village.²⁷

24. Quoted in Greenough, Prosperity and Misery of Bengal, p.227.

25. U.D., 22 Sept. 1888, p.302.

26. U.D. 29 June, 1889, p. 203.

27. S.H., 27 Nov. 1889, p.88.

Rightly pointing out the responses of the Zamindars which were "very mixed" Arnold remarks that the ancient Zamindars were more sympathetic than the colonial landlords -- e.g. Vishakhapatnam dist. Zamindars provided no charity, though they were not poor.²⁸ The Orissa famine of 1866 witnessed that the older Zamindars demonstrated more willingness to help their raiyats than new landholders. It is important to note that these new landholders were mostly outsiders and absentee zamindars who hardly provided charity or help to their raiyats.²⁹

INEDIBLES

History has witnessed numerous evidences of inedibles adopted by famine victims as their means of survival, what can be called famine food. In order to satisfy the hunger, the victims accepted variety of unusual food stuffs which even caused death.

Studying the famine situation of 1555-62, I. Habib has remarked that people ate seeds of Egyptian thorn, wild dry grass and cow hides etc.³⁰ Ireland peasants accepted

28. Arnold, "Peasant Consciousness", p.99 n.107.

29. Arnold, Famine p.83.

30. Cited in Alamgir, op.cit., p.55.

nettles, berries, fungi, seaweed, frogs, rats and cattle flesh. Cattle were eaten . . . and Charlock (wild mustard) became the food for the poor.³¹ During the famine of 1865-66 people of Orissa ate roots, herbs, leaves and weeds.³² In the Sahelian drought of 1931, the victims in Niger cut down palm trees to roast and eat the pith as "palm cabbage". Lily roots were also taken.³³ The famine of 1944-45 of North Vietnam saw the victims eating potato leaves, banana roots, grasses, and the bark of trees etc.³⁴ Greenough states that the victims of Bengal famine of 1943-44 ate vegetables, leaves, creepers, snails, crustaceans, various polluted, rotting or discarded food items and tubers to avoid their physical deterioration.³⁵

Before studying the dietary . . . of people of Ganjam, it is necessary to understand their normal diets. The usual food was rice (Bhato) in the plain areas. Another preparation of rice was "chuda". "Kanji" was also eaten which was a thick liquid water in which rice had been

31. Arnold, Famine, p.79.

32. Swaro, "Role of Missionaries in 1866", pp. 46-47; Mohanty, "Orissa Famine of 1866", P.63.

33. Arnold, Famine, p.79.

34. Scott, Moral Economy, p.1.

35. Greenough, Prosperity and Misery in Bengal, p. 231.

boiled. But, people in the hilly areas were very different. They had no bar in diets. Usually, they made grains into porridge with lumps of flesh. They also ate numerous jungle roots, sweet potatoes, yams and mahua flowers, etc.³⁶

The Ganjam famine of 1888-89 experienced the same pattern where people accepted variety of inedibles. While informing about the condition of the agricultural output and the distressed situation Mr. Bell, one of the revenue department officials reported that in Chendragiri, the paddy crops had yielded nothing and dry crops were one fourth, the people had been reduced to live on roots and jungle products. He also pointed out that it was not only the poorer classes but also the cultivating classes that were said to be living in this manner. He further found in Mohana where the paddy crops completely failed and the ragi crop somewhat below the average that the similar kind of things had existed. He categorically informed that poor people only relied on roots and plants whereas the cultivating classes had grain stocks to last for 2/3

36. Maltby, op.cit., pp. 72, 237.

months.³⁷ C.J. McNally, Acting Dy. Sanitary Commissioner reported that Balipada village, two miles from Surada the people generally were in fair condition owing to the presence of many toddy trees.³⁸

Sambalpur Hiteisini mentions that people were surviving by taking one meal in a day or one meal in two or three days owing to acute scarcity of foodstuffs. It further states that people were not getting even leaves and fruits of any variety to eat.³⁹ Utkal Dipika also informs that people ate leaves and fruits of trees like - banyan, norgasa, tamarind, pipal, date palm, etc.⁴⁰ The hilly area people relied on jungle Products for six months in normal times in Orissa. So, these people were largely depending on them during the famine.⁴¹ It was also found that they were less affected by famine compared to plains. As govt. kept open the forest during famine, the victims especially

37. L.No.6162, 15 Dec. 1888, From the Collector of Ganjam to the chief Secy. to Govt. Judicial Dept. : F.P.No.22, 22A Jan. 1889.

38. L.No. 23, 31 Aug. 1889, from the Acting Dy. Sanitary Commissioner to the Chief Secy. to GOM: F.P. No. 7, Jan. 1890.

39. S.H., 13 Nov. 1889, p.77.

40. U.D., 18 May 1889, p. 154.

41. U.D. 1 Dec. 1889, p. 380.

the lower caste people - Panos and Haddis, lived on it.⁴²

The following table demonstrates the list of plants and roots in oriya and Telugu languages, which were adopted as the means of survival during Ganjam famine of 1888-89.⁴³

LIST OF PLANTS AND ROOTS

Oriya Names	Telugu Names
1. Chakunda plant	Tantem Chettu
2. Jubba plant	
3. Kanna plant	Vennamudda chettu
4. Boroda plant	Devakanchena chettu
5. Koilokka plant	Gobbi chettu
6. Oggimotto or Vogamarti plant	
7. Poitondi plant	
8. Guru gulia plant	Gurunkoora chettu
9. Kanta Maliso plant	Mullatotakoora chettu
10. Gangaisio plant	Tummikoora chettu
11. Bodobododiya plant	
12. Pillokoyi plant	
13. Atikapodi plant	Ambati Mavidi chettu
14. Batto plant	
15. Mammu Plant	
16. Pitola plant	
17. Maricha plant	
18. Sutta plant	
19. Cheranga plant	
20. Mosya plant	
21. Mundi plant	

42. U.D. 20 July 1889, p.227.

43. L.No.6162, 15 Dec. 1888 : op.cit.

We have evidence of inedibles that caused illness and death. Russian famine of late 19th century witnessed "famine bread" prepared by mixing little rye with a plant known as "goosefood" that grew in the dry fields. It was yellowish in colour and had a bitter taste. It created headaches, vomiting, and diarrhoea.⁴⁴ In Northeastern Brazil people ate seeds of the Mucuman plant during the famine of 1877 which caused dropsy and death. The roots of the Pao de Moco, a shrub which made a lot of people blind within hours.⁴⁵ The contemporary history also witnessed similar incidents -- Piladhar and Durbal (Tribals) of Komna block of Kalahandi district, who were fed boiled wild roots by their parents died.⁴⁶

The Ganjam famine of 1888-89 witnessed a paradoxical situation in which the famine victims simultaneously adopted inedibles as the means of survival and refused to accept ragi, as it was unusual diet to them. It has been suggested that the reluctance of victims to change their habitual level of consumption can explain the famine

44. Arnold, Famine, p.79.

45. Ibid.

46. B. Das and B. Pati, "The Eternal Famine : Poverty, Food Scarcity and Survival in Kalahandi (Orissa)", H.S., NMML, New Delhi, XC,1994, p.10.

situation. Citing the Bengal famine of 1943-4 and Irish famine of 1844-6, A.K.Ghosh claims that the uncompromising stand of victims against the unusual diet could explain the intensity of famine situation.⁴⁷ W. Smith has emphasized that the Irish famine situation would have improved, if the famine victims had changed their dietary habits and accepted anything other than potatoes.⁴⁸ Similarly, during Bengal famine of 1943-44 many Bengalis could have escaped death had they adopted wheat as the means of their subsistence.⁴⁹ The Bihar famine of 1967 also witnessed this fact⁵⁰ Aykroyd points out that if the Madras people would have known about the eatable forms of wheat, probably many would have saved their lives from the famine of 1895-96.⁵¹

-
47. A.K. Ghosh, "Famine" in J. Eatwell, M. Miligate and P. Newman, eds. The New Palgrave; A Dictionary of Economics, Macmillan, London, 1987, p.123.
 48. C. Woodham-Smith, The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-49, Hamish Hamilton, London. 1962; Cited in Ibid.
 49. D. Moraes, "The Dimensions of the Problem: Comment" in S. Aziz, ed., Hunger, Politics and Markets: The Real Issues of the Food Crisis, New York University Press, New York, 1975; cited in Ibid.
 50. Aykroyd, op.cit, p. 63.
 51. Ibid.

Let us first substantiate our argument by taking two illustrations into consideration that how ragi was not accepted. First, the refusal by people to join in the relief work at famine rates of wages which was below the normal wages which provided no access to purchase rice. The famine wages were only one anna four pies for a man, one anna for women and 8 pies for a child. The main problem was that these were provided according to the calculation of the market price of ragi.⁵² Horsfall remarked that it was insufficient as foodgrains nearly doubled in price and the famine wages were below the normal wages, e.g., a male labourer generally received 2 annas in ordinary times and much more at the time of harvest while the famine wage was 1 anna 4 pies.⁵³ Secondly, it is found that less people came to attend the kitchen to have food when ragi was being served. For example, one of the kitchen register revealed that there was less attendants in the morning shift than the evening shift, as ragi was given in the morning.⁵⁴ In fact, ragi was eaten by the poorer classes occasionally mixed with rice.

52. L.No.E547, 27 Sept. 1889; op. cit.

53. L.No. 274, 9 Sept. 1890, Resolution of the GOI: F.P.No.39, Nov. 1891; L.No. 1544, 19 Sept. 1890; op. cit.

54. L.no.879, 24 Oct. 1889; op. cit.

It makes one curious to study the reasons that why the Government provided unusual food to the victims? In explaining the dietary problems Aykroyd remarks that these were the organizational problems on the part of the government. He is of the view that the government did not organise cleverly the distribution of food for famine victims.⁵⁵ But it can be argued that the government was more concerned with the cost dynamics of foodgrains rather than compromising with the dietary habits of the victims. The colonial rule went to the extent of introducing unusual diet as the staple grain through official orders. This happened in Ganjam when Government passed an official order on 12th December 1888 that ragi being the cheapest food in the district should be regarded as the standard grain.⁵⁶ It was later acknowledged by the Collector as "a grave error" to take ragi instead of rice as the staple grain of the district.⁵⁷

Was the govt. really at profit? W.R. Aykroyd, who witnessed the Bengal famine of 1943-44 and was a member of the Famine Commission, concludes that "I was shown large

55. Aykroyd, op. cit., p.63.

f56. Indian Famine Commission Report, 1898, p. 16.

57. L.No.274, 9 Sept. 1890: op. cit.

heaps of millet in the botanical gardens in Calcutta, rotting in the rain. The Millet had proved quite useless for famine relief in Bengal."⁵⁸ It was in no way benefitting the government. For example, the calculation of the market price of ragi led to the refusal to join in the relief work in Ganjam which eventually put the people back in the relief list.⁵⁹ Did it not entail extra cost to the state? If rice would have been considered as the staple grain this difficulty could have been avoided to a great extent. The uncompromising stand of government with the dietary habits of Ganjam people led to the intensification of famine situation by causing excessive mortality.

What happened to those who accepted ragi to escape from death. R. Pemberton, the Surgeon reported that the severe outbreak of diarrhoea was the consequence of the distribution of ragi flour. It prevailed in numerous places such as - Kullada, Ballisara, Bellugunta, Patrapur, Ichapur, Russellkonda and Berhampore etc. Citing the problems of Jail, he claimed that ragi flour was the inevitable cause of the incidence of diarrhoea. It was

58. Aykroyd, op.cit., p.63.

59. L.NO.1544, 19 Feb. 1890: op.cit.

found in certain kitchens where ragi was being served once there was a reduction of diarrhoea cases and where rice was being served at both meals there was scarcely a single case.⁶⁰

In Pattupur kitchen where rice was given at both meals we found 40 out of 133 persons were in good condition (Table-1) whereas at Aska kitchen^{only} 26 out of 164, were in good condition where 1/4 rice and ragi in the morning and ragi in the evening^{issued} (Table-2). Mr. Carr reported rapid improvement found in the condition of children to its use instead of pure ragi.⁶¹

Table-1 62

	Total	Good	Fair	Indiffe- rent	Bad	Very bad
Men	10	-	1	5	3	1
Women	8	-	-	7	1	-
Children	115	40	36	32	6	1
Total	133	40	37	44	10	2

60. Medical Report, 26 Dec. 1889; op. cit.

61. L.No. 1372, 18 Sept. 1889, from acting inspector of vaccination and Dy. Commissioner of Ganjam to Chief Secretary to the GOM : F.P. No.7, Jan. 1890 and also in F.P. No.39 Nov. 1891.

62. Ibid.

Table-2 63

	Total	Good	Fair	Indiffe- rent	Bad	Very bad
Men	17	-	1	10	6	-
Women	21	1	8	7	4	1
Children	126	25	51	43	6	1
Total	164	26	60	60	16	2

It is hard to identify those people who refused to change their dietary habits and who accepted the inedibles. It is found that the inhabitants of hilly tracts had no diet bar, hence it may be that they were accepting inedibles to large extent. So far as the plain area is concerned people did not want to compromise of their dietary habits and those who tried to adjust faced the consequences. Thus, we can arrive at the conclusion that the reluctance of famine victims to change their dietary habits explains the famine situation. It also demonstrated that government lost huge revenue due to this policy and was responsible for the excess mortality rate.

63. L.No. 23, 31 Aug. 1889: op.cit.

CANNIBALISM

I have seen mothers snatch food from the hands of their starving children; known a father to engage in a fatal struggle with a son for a potato; have seen parents look on the putrid bodies of their offspring, without evincing a symptom of sorrow. Such is the inevitable consequences of starvation.

D. Donovan. ⁶⁴

Famine has proved many signs of abnormality. It not only degraded the human quality but also generated insensibility in the minds of the sufferers for other feelings, except that of supplying their own wants. In this light, where does the socio-cultural values stand? If the cultural norms and social relations which prevented the hungry people to accept prepared food are more important than the survival of human beings, how could we explain the ample evidences of cannibalism during the famine time. Similarly, due to the customary religious opposition the caste people avoided beef as a means of their subsistence.

J.L. Philips states that the famine of 1865-6 witnessed the incidences of cannibalism and that too the

64. Quotated in Aykroyd, op.cit, P. 63.

Hindus ate their dead children.⁶⁵ Similarly, one British official called A. Miller reported that "I have seen no instance of the Hindoos eating dogs and cows, but they did eat their children when they were dead".⁶⁶ The terrible famine, which took place during the reign of Muhammad Tughluq, experienced cannibalism.⁶⁷ The early records of China refers to the occurrence of cannibalism pertaining to drought and starvation.⁶⁸ One of the major famines which occurred in the year of 1921-22 witnessed cannibalism. It was confined to a few people driven by suffering.⁶⁹ The famine of Russia of 1932-34 saw people eating human flesh owing to their precarious condition.⁷⁰ Gujarat and Deccan famine of 1830-32 evidenced that famine victims did not hesitate to eat human flesh.⁷¹ The famine of North China (1877) witnessed that husband ate wife, parents ate their

65. Cited in Swaro, "Role of Missionaries in 1866 Famine", p.46.

66. Quoted in Ibid., p.53, n.3.

67. Aykroyd, op.cit., p.50.

68. Ibid., p.83.

69. Ibid., p.93.

70. Arnold, Famine, p.19.

71. I. Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, (1556-1707), New York, 1963, pp.103-4.

sons and daughters as well as children ate their parents.⁷²

Utkal Dipika has suggested that the famine victims of 1888-89 especially lower caste people ate animals' flesh. It also states that they might eat human flesh.⁷³

FOOD RIOTS

Did the crisis of famine reveal the socio-economic conflicts and tensions in a society? If it is not so, what about the outbreak of food riots, loots and even murders. These were, of course, familiar and universal means of survival of famine victims. These activities are characterised by elites as "crime". If they are considered as crimes, what about their means of survival. In fact, they were the conscious expression of their self-deprivation from subsistence rights.

We cannot claim that it was a tradition for victims of famine. But, it can be argued that the political and economic changes in the economy provided a wider possibility for such activities -- the intrusion of colonial power. It was the colonial rule which generated different kinds of social relations between the landlords

72. Arnold, Famine, p.19.

73. U.D., 18 May 1889, p. 154.

and peasants. This brought changes in the paternalistic attitudes or positive moral obligation.

David Arnold analyses food riots in terms of an attempt to remind the power holders (Moneylender, landlord and grain dealers) of their personal obligations. It was because of the subaltern perception that the denial of subsistence needs was an abuse of power.⁷⁴ E.P. Thomson explains it within the framework of "moral economy"⁷⁵. The "moral economy" argument is highlighted in cultural perspectives by James Scott. Accepting it as a popular protest J.Scott argues that it never aimed at an equality of wealth and land holding, but the more "modest claim" of a right to subsistence.⁷⁶

Questioning the moral economy of food riots in Colonial India, S. Sharma argues that these starvation-related crimes tended to target the richer sections in general.⁷⁷ In this light, P.R.Greenough has refuted the maxim that "hungry men must rebel" by arguing that there

74. Arnold, "Peasant Consciousness", p.85.

75. E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18th Century", p.p, 50 (Feb) 1971.

76. Scott, Moral Economy of the Peasants, p.33.

77. S. Sharma, "The 1837-38 Famine in U.P. : Some Dimensions of Popular Action!" IESHR, 30(3)1993 pp.368-9.

was no organized attempt of destitutes and no attacks on Zamindars' granaries, govt. store houses or merchants' stocks. In Bengal, he further claims that there was no violence which he explains in terms of an extraordinary failure of will or a powerful religious inhabitation-- "fatalism", "resignation", and "karma". His analysis is not to claim the passivism of the peasantry, rather the cultural values of them.⁷⁸ If Greenough's analysis is right how could we explain the questions of Thompson that if people are hungry how could they modify their behaviour by custom, culture and reason.⁷⁹

Describing the food riots as minor forms of "social protests" K.S. Singh remarked that it did not lead to any major uprising. He states that they were an effect condition but not the cause of a movement which required a leadership and organisation. He is criticised on this ground ^{that} peasants (victims) were passive.⁸⁰

Ganjam was not an exception. It witnessed such unprecedented activities.⁸¹ But, how it took place and -----

78. Greenough, Prosperity and Misery in Bengal, pp. 266-7.

79. Thompson, op.cit, pp. 77-78.

80. Singh, "Famine and Social Change", p.188.

81. MPAR, 1888, P.3.

gathered the attention of famine victims, who were the targets and who were the people involved in it? It was taking place in an organized form and led by the professional thieves. This idea was spread through rumours that looting and rioting had been permitted by the "Sircar" (Govt.).⁸² The targets were the rich villagers, moneylenders, traders and landlords. The involved rioters were of poorer classes -- the frustrated and desperate people, especially the agricultural labourers, deprived youth and deprived peasants of inam land rights (paiks) and desperate youth.⁸³

Arnold claims that the untouchables and low caste labourers committed petty thefts even dacoity for means of survival during the dry seasons.⁸⁴

The first grain loot took place on 14th October, 1888 at Kotabommali in the Chicacole division. This incident was quickly followed by others in Goomsur Berhampur taluks.⁸⁵ Severe disturbances appeared in Aska where not

82. L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890 : op.cit.; MPAR. 1888; I.M., 31 Oct. 1888; M.M., 29 Oct. 1888, p.4.

83. Ibid.

84. Arnold, "Peasant Consciousness"; p.90.

85. L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890 : op.cit.

less than 30 villages were looted. Even coolies, who were working in the field, got involved in looting.⁸⁶ The Police Administration Report contains that two Zamindari Paik villagers - Govindapur of Shergadu & Oilladigado of Peddakimidi, were especially notorious and spread terror through the surrounding areas.⁸⁷ Utkal Dipika states that the poor and the lower caste people of Russelkonda and Gumsoor were involved in looting and rioting on 18th and 19th October of 1888. This disturbances were again witnessed on the refusal of businessmen to sell rice on 20th Oct. Even looting of paddy and ragi took place in the broad day light.⁸⁸ They were deprived paiks who lost their inam land rights and the desperate young people speedily joined in these actions which came to 800 in number. The sub-Jail held 197 culprits safely.⁸⁹ There was another gang containing some hundreds of Samastanam Paiks, who practised dreadful dacoities even in broad day light by defying the ordinary police force. Why did not the Zamindars resist such riots with their personal forces. The Seguda Zamindar did not take any step to arrest the

86. M.M., 16 Nov. 1888, p.3.

87. MPAR, 1888, p.3.

88. U.D., 27 Oct. 1888, p.327.

89. I.M., 31 Oct. 1888; M.M., Oct. 29, 1888, p.4.

activitist but held the leader of the Gang who was handed over to the Police. In Govindpur 150 arrests were made.⁹⁰ According to the telegraphic news of 26 Oct 1888, 72 people were caught on account of looting.⁹¹

To understand the critical situation and the aggressiveness of people, we can cite one example -- when the Police Superintendent appeared to observe the tense situation, he was abused and even stoned. Ultimately, there was numerous deployment of police forces, who were brought from Berhampore to Govindapur and Seraguda.⁹² Besides, two murder cases were reported - one at Nolohta near Aska, where a man received a blow on the head with a stone and another at Gangupur where a looter was shot dead in self-defence by a Police constable.⁹³ It was reported by the collector that 208 cases of grain loots took place within 13 days (14th Octo. to 27 Oct. 1888) and 125 cases were detected. 2,986 persons were arrested out of which 1895 were convicted and 1083 acquitted.⁹⁴

90. M.M. 16 Nov. 1888, p.3.

91. U.D. 3 Nov 1888, p.329.

92. U.D., 17 Nov 1888, p.345.

93. L.No.1544, 19 Feb. 1890 : op.cit.; MPAR, 1888, p.4.

94. Ibid.

One significant feature in looting and rioting was the burning of houses and shops. The burning of Ranpur King's palace was one of the major news item of Utkal Dipika on 18 May 1889. It was expected that was done by a famine stricken person. It was also reported that heavy wealth was lost in these activities and it was rampant. The villagers kept vigil in night fearing burnings and theft.⁹⁵

Public meetings were held in Ganjam regarding the problem of riots.⁹⁶ Unlike Anugul, we find one major Public Meeting which took place at Aska on 23rd Oct. 1888, attended by more than 200 people. It was the outcome of the disturbances and aimed at bringing the normal situation at Aska and to save the wealth and property of the rich people especially who were not affected by famine. This meeting unanimously passed six major resolutions which are as follows:

1. the meeting records with regret the great disturbances which prevail in this taluq consequent on the failure of crops;

95. U.D., 18 May 1889, p.153; U.D. 27 Oct. 1888, p.325.

96. In Anugul Division under Bengal Presidency there was one Famine Preventive Meeting where it was decided to collect funds to provide charity to the famine stricken people and draw the govt. attention. U.D. 22 Sept. 1888, p.301

2. the looting has been universal and no prompt action is taken to prevent/punish the crime.
3. the district Magistrate to be requested to send an enervate First Class Magistrate with powers to award prompt punishment to the looters.
4. the additional police force and a regiment to protect the persons and property of the public;
5. to take necessary steps to open the Rushikulya Project and other relief works and poor houses.
6. A standing Committee under the designation of the Safety Committee of Aska be formed of ten gentlemen, including landholders, merchants and pleaders and for carrying these above resolutions.

All these resolutions were appreciated by the Collector of Ganjam. The Collector was made more powerful to use even troops to restore the normal situation in Ganjam. The safety Committee and some pleaders of the local bar helped the Govt. immensely to restore the normal situation in the administrative process in Aska Division. The Committee also beating up the tom-toms in the villages informed the people of the conviction of the looters.⁹⁷

97. L.No. 1544, 19 Feb 1890: op.cit.

It is clear to understand that the food riots in Ganjam had a distinct character especially very violent. It may be that the Zamindars were not concerned about the problems of their subjects or indifferent to them which made the situation worse.

These activities were collective efforts of villagers. The fundamental feature of the riots was that they were grain involved riots. The following table compares the crime of the year of Oct.1888 to Oct., 1889 with that of the previous year of 1887. It shows that how the house breaking and theft cases had a remarkable increase compared to the previous year. Housebreaking and thefts were 1094 and 1922 in the famine year respectively whereas in 1887 they were 563 and 1,243. The other crimes were also not normal.⁹⁸

Name of the Offences	1888-89 cases	1887-88 cases
Murder	19	22
Culpable Homicide	09	14
Dacoities	60	03

Table Contd...

98. L.No.1544, 19 feb. 1890 : op.cit.

Table Contd...

Name of the Offences	1888-89 cases	1887-88 cases
Robberies	25	05
Riots	26	09
Housebreaking	1,094	563
Theft	1,922	1,243
Akbari Act	221	259
Salt Act	670	486
Arms Act	14	18
Opium Act	35	28
Forest	47	24

We find a different pattern and nature in colonial India compared to Europe. The incidence of grain riots were not linked to the colonial state in India whereas the popular expectation developed along with the State's involvement in the distribution of foodstuffs in Europe, as Thompson has argued. In Europe, there was popular demand for reduction of the high prices and scarcity situation but in India nothing happened like that.⁹⁹ R.B. Wong analyses

99. Thompson, ; John Walter, "Grain Riots and popular attitudes to the law : Maldon & the Crisis of 1629" In Brewer & styles ed.s, An ungovernable people, the English and their law in the 17th & 18th Centuries London, 1980.

the similar kind of food riots in China. He argues that the riots whether to protest ~~or~~ block exports mainly aimed at lowering the prices and to the availability of loans to them which were similar in form and content throughout the Qing history (18th and 19th century China)¹⁰⁰

MIGRATION

Historically, the adoption of Migration as a means of survival seems to be rational. And indeed we find instances of it. As famine leads to the collapse of employment and drying up local charity, people moved out in search of work and food. P.A. Sorokin comments in this regard:

In contradiction to the gradual, orderly and voluntary character of migration and mobility in normal times, catastrophes render these processes sudden, violent, chaotic, largely involuntary and essentially tragic.¹⁰¹

The existing literatures suggests that famine related migration had taken a wide variety of forms. It had not

100. R.B. Wong, "Food Riots in the Quing Dynasty", JAS, XLI, (4)1982.

101. P.A. Sorokin, Man and sciety in Calamity : The effect of War, Revolution, Famine, Pestilence upon Human Mind, Behaviour, Social Organisation and cultural Life, E.P. Dutton and Co.New York, 1942, p.106;

only short term consequences for economic and social changes but also on reshaping patterns of population distribution. In her study B.Mohanty has shown that the Orissa famine induced migrants migrated to Calcutta, Burma and Assam and claimed migration to be sex-selective owing to the socio-economic reasons. The male migration was more, as they left their wives at home and were more exposed to new diseases and caused higher rate of mortality.¹⁰² The Irish Famine of 1846-51 witnessed a very different pattern of migration that it was significantly not within Ireland. It has been pointed out that it led to a tremendous change in socio-demographic structure. The rural migrants left for British or American cities and had to change their ways of life to adapt not only to an alien country but also to a new urban environment.¹⁰³

Arnold has explained how migration was bringing a change in the pattern of agricultural cultivation. In the Tirunelveli district the Telugu speaking people migrated to the farther northern side and started growing cotton and -----

102. Mohanty, "Migration, Famines and Sex-ratio in Orissa Division between 1881 & 1921," IESHR, 29 (4)1992, p.507.

103. L.H. Lees and J. Modell, "The Irish Country Man Urbanized : a comparative perspective on the famine Migration," JUH, 34, 1977, pp.356-401; cited in G.J. Hugo, op.cit., p.23,;

other market crops which were unknown to the local Tamil population. Ultimately, Tamil people followed this cultivation.¹⁰⁴ It involved to a great extent mixing of different ethnic, cultural and socio-economic groups. They were also exposed to new and different ideas, attitudes, participation in different forms of employment and levels of income and of consumption.

Ganjam famine of 1888-89 witnessed large scale migration to Calcutta, Assam and Rangoon etc. The Utkal Dipika suggests that many people especially coolies were migrating to Bengal and Assam tea gardens in search of jobs, though there was a govt. order against it. It is also stated that there were some contractors who were managing to allure them.¹⁰⁵ In this connection, once one Telugu contractor was caught in the way to Assam while he was coming with 80 coolies from Berhampore. They were told that the Contractor would provide employment at Cuttack but the real aim was to take them to Assam. Ultimately, the coolies were given money to go back home.¹⁰⁶

104. Arnold, Famine, p.62.

105. U.D., 20 July 1889, p.225.

106. U.D., 6 April 1889, p.106.

The Collector's report says that people of Ganjam started emigrating to Rangoon owing to the unfavourable season in June 1888. They migrated in different directions to Orissa, Godavari and the Central Provinces. The following table shows how the year of 1888-89 was significant compared to the corresponding years since 1877-78.¹⁰⁷

The Years	Immigrants	Emigrants	Remarks
1877-78	39	1,087	
1878-79	186	792	
1879-80	938	1,371	These
1980-81	1,663	3,745	Figures
1981--82	3,647	9,291	include
1882-83	1,302	7,983	Passengers
1883-84	3,939	1,900	as well as
1884-85	2,517	3,024	emigrants
1885-86	3,790	6,957	
1886-87	1,997	7,859	
1887-88	4,378	11,400	
1888-89	3,118	15,394	

In addition about 1,000 people emigrated to

107. L.No. 1544, 19 Feb. 1890: op.cit.

Mauritius, between June and Oct. 1889 and the emigration through sea increased to over 16,000 people. It was estimated by the Collector that it was more than double the number who left by land. The categorical estimation of the Collector claimed that it was 50,000 at the lowest, who migrated to other countries.¹⁰⁸

We have evidence that the existence of private charity attracted the rural migrants to the towns. For example, the Santhals migrated from the interior areas and were supported by the Missionaries at Jallesore and Santipore during the Orissa famine of 1865-66. The rural poor also migrated to the town of Balasore in the same time.¹⁰⁹ The Utkal Dipika has stated that many people from villages were proceeding towards towns where charity institutions were available. For example, Jagannath Mandir helped immensely the distressed people by providing vegetable curry like tubers, pumpkin etc.¹¹⁰

Some have suggested that the disruption associated with famine migration frequently undermines the family unit and other traditional institutions which lead to a -----

108. Ibid.

109. Swaro, "Role of MISSIONARIES in 1866 Famine", pp.50-51.

110. U.D. 29 June 1889, pp.203-5.

transformation of social institutions. Sorokin says that they are one of the most powerful factors of socio-cultural change¹¹¹. Greenough has studied how migration disrupted family life by separating spouse and family members.¹¹² Both these authors have highlighted one issue that the migration led to the increase in prostitution and sale of children. Sorokin states that the incidence of famines in China, India, Soviet Russia, Europe and other countries have witnessed a considerable number of girls and women's involvement in sex services for bread.¹¹³

In Soviet Russia, 1918-22, women and girls served as mistresses of the Soviet commissars and other communists, were the only group who had more than enough food. They lived openly with their "feeders". Likewise, a vast number of women and girls sold their honour under distress to any one who could offer some food.¹¹⁴

Greenough argues that when she lost her security of father, husband and brother, she had to involve in

111. Sorokin, op.cit., p.62.

112. Greenough, Prosperity and Misery in Bengal, p.221.

113. Sorokin, op.cit., p.62.

114. Cited in Sorokin, op.cit., p.63.

Prostitution, if she wished to survive.¹¹⁵ He cites one example - one of the interviewee who turned into prostitution after she was abandoned by her spouse or parents said "I never again went to live with my husband. I had undergone so much hardship and had fed him by begging. When he fled from the house, he did not think of me and I did not like him anymore. I banished him from my memory."¹¹⁶

Sorokin points out that famine led to indefinite postponement of marriage and sex life. It caused many abnormal forms of sex satisfaction such as homosexuality, polyandry and the rental of wives, for temporary period and so on.¹¹⁷

Sale and abuse of children is one of the important features of famine victimization. Greenough says that it was a "process of intentional dismemberment of families". It is expected that a child sold to another person might be cared for more favourably. The dominant motive for selling children was to obtain cash and to have access to food. Second motive seems to be for parents to relieve themselves

115. Greenough, Prosperity and Misery, p.222.

116. Ibid., p.266, n.6.

117. Sorokin, op.cit., p.63.

of the intolerable clamouring for food by children. The Bengal famine experienced these things and even the destitute mothers left their kids on the roadside.¹¹⁸ The recent Kalahandi famine (1986) witnessed that Phanas Punji of village Amlapali, sold her sister-in-law to a blind person of a neighbouring village for Rs.40/-.¹¹⁹

CONVERSION OF RELIGION

Did famine influence religion? It is no doubt that famine played a significant role in converting many famine victims into Christianity. Infact, it worked as an accelerator of the process as it stated earlier, when the lower caste people realized their position of extreme subordination in the society. Was the conversion confined to some particular social groups? Basically the concentration was on the lower caste people and tribals, but they were not indifferent towards higher castes. The brilliant example is that there was no discriminatory policy in their relief operation. For example, the higher caste people sent their children for the Missionary help during the Orissa famine of 1866, though they were aware of the fact that the children would be converted into -----

118. Greenough, Prosperity and Misery in Bengal, p.222.

119. Das and Pati, op.cit., p.10.

Christianity.¹²⁰

The adoption of Christian religion was one of the important strategy to stay alive during the famine. To begin with, how did the Missionaries help the famine victims and what did they do? They were the first men to draw the attention of colonial govt. to the distressed situation. As most of the Indians were ignorant about the needs and means for alleviating the situation, it was the role of missionaries who created public awareness about famine funds through public meetings. What is interesting to know is that though they were working primarily within the Govt. relief operation, they vehemently criticized the government. It has been pointed out that govt. showed it apathy towards the missionary managed relief centres. A. Miller, a Missionary at Balasore complained that govt. did not supply rice or money to them.¹²¹ Besides money and rice, the Missionaries also provided blankets and clothes to the victims during the winter time (1876-8). The financial support to the Missionaries was coming from their Mother Churches.¹²²

120. Swaro, "Role of Missionaries in 1866 Famine", p.49.

121. Ibid., p.50.

122. Raju and Gangaiah, op.cit., pp.47-8.

What was the prime motive in participating actively in the famine relief operations keeping aside their evangelistic work? They did not have a declared motive of exploiting the distress situation but rather to show their ideals of benevolence and public service. As their concentration was not higher castes, they tried to highlight the social taboos and commitments of them e.g. the denial of the upper caste medical practitioners to vaccinate the untouchables. They also pointed out the major problems of the lower caste people that the Oriya those christians plight was worse than the local Hindus and they had no employment opportunities owing to their lack of education and being "social out-castes".¹²³ In order to draw the attention of govt. the missionaries reported that the lower caste people like the Baorees and Tantees etc. were the worst sufferers of famine.¹²⁴

It is not that they only emphasised on the higher caste's discriminatory attitudes, they also showed their philanthropic character by involving in works like the Christian doctors provided medical treatments to the lower caste patients carefully.

123. Swaro, "Role of Missionaries in 1866 Famine", p.49.

124. Ibid.

In this manner, the Missionaries aroused a sense of social awareness among the lower castes and converted them into Christianity. The famine of 1876-78 encouraged many to convert their religion. The conversion took place remarkably in two districts -- Nellore and Kurnool. D. Arnold remarked that the large scale conversion movement occurred among the Madiga and Mala untouchable labourers.¹²⁵ There took place a rapid rise in conversions in Chotanagpur between 1895 and 1901 as suggested by Singh.¹²⁶ The Orissa famine of 1866 experienced remarkably the conversions ~~into~~ into Christianity. The Dipika reported that there were 8,000 orphans in care of missionaries¹²⁷. In fact, these orphans were taken by the Missionaries after the termination of relief distribution.

The famine of 1888-89 in Ganjam witnessed the similar kind of things and converted many lower caste people. The Census of Madras shows that there was an increase in Christian population in Ganjam. About 1043 people were -----

125. Arnold, "Peasant Consciousness", pp.74-5.

126. Singh, "Famine and Social Change", p.148.

127. Mohanty, "Orissa Famine of 1866", p.62; see also "Impact of Famine on Agrarian and Demographic Structure", p.258.

Christians in 1871 which increased to 1551 in 1881 and 2813 in the year of 1891. The percentage of its increase was 48.70% and 81.36% in 1871-81 and 1881-91 respectively.¹²⁸ C.J.McNally, Acting Dy. Sanitary Commissioner reported that the Panos were said to be Christians in Surada, where the relief kitchen was being managed by the French Roman Catholic Missionaries since its opening on 16th June.¹²⁹

Was there any public agitation against orphans being delivered to the Christian Missionaries after the termination of relief? Or was there any dissatisfaction among the converted Christians during the famine time? We have the evidence of public agitation in relating to the former. For example, Mysore witnessed the public agitation while orphans were being delivered to the Roman Catholic Mission.¹³⁰ It went to the extent of promulgating laws to ban the mass conversion to Christianity. It happened in three Indian States - Rajasthan, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.¹³¹

128. MCR, 1881 and 1891.

129. L.No.23, 31 Aug. 1889: op.cit.

130. Singh, "Famine and Social Change", p.198.

131. Ibid., p.199.

CHAPTER V

THE RURAL POOR IN MORAL ECONOMY

If the perennial quest of man is to fight for food, why has it been a perpetual threat to the poor only? If it is questionable, do famines have equal impact on people? A.Sen has pointed out that no famines with equal impact on people have occurred, since different socio-economic groups exist in a society.¹ In order to understand why there is a selective victimization of people in the wake of famine in colonial India, one needs to explore the threatened lives of rural masses that how they maintained their sustenance in normal times within their socio-cultural milieu, which is called "pre-famine conjuncture".² If the poor relied on certain social institutions, why did the poor suffer and what happened to the social institutions? An attempt is made to investigate the role of social institutions whether they render people vulnerable to the clutches of famine or not. The central argument would revolve round the issues and problems regarding who suffered, when and

1. Sen, Poverty and Famines, p.43.

2. U. Patnaik, op.cit, p.1.

why?

The existing literature on famine, broadly, claims that the worst sufferers of famine were the poor, such as, agricultural labourers, artisans, and professional and service occupants and so on. To quote Arnold, "those settled cultivators to whom we can apply the generic term 'peasants' have historically shown an exceptional vulnerability to famine".³

B. Mohanty demonstrates that the famine of 1866 had an unequal impact on different socio-economic groups. She categorically mentions that "the deaths of the agricultural labour castes, namely, hari, dom, bauri and the lohars, were greatest. Next came chasas (cultivators, land and agricultural owners and labourers), goala and tanti (weavers)".⁴ Greenough says that priests, barbers, washermen, garland makers and musicians etc. were the least affected victims of Bengal famine of 1943-44, compare to the agricultural labourers and artisans.⁵ In case of Ganjam famine⁴¹⁸⁸⁸⁻⁹ C.J. McNally, Acting Deputy Sanitary Commissioner wrote that, "this is -----"

3. Arnold, Famine, p.50.

4. Mohanty, "Orissa Famine of 1866", p.62.

5. Greenough, "Famine and Peasant Victims," p.224.

the residence of the Pedakimedi zamindar and contains a large population of well to do Brahmans, who are in excellent condition. Distress appears to be confined to some of the lowest castes."⁶ Similarly, R. Pemberton reported that the diseases appeared to be confined to the poor who had no means of subsistence such as Dandasis, Haddies and Bowries (untouchables).⁷ Thus, it would appear that the landless agriculturalists and labourers who quite often happened to be of lower castes, were the worst sufferers of the famine in Ganjam.

In explaining the reasons why peasants are the worst victims of famine, J.D. Powell discusses it in terms of "environmental threats", both natural and human. Discussing the human threats he throws light on low productivity in agricultural production, owing to the lack of technology, capital, marketing information and credit.⁸ Similarly, talking about the vulnerability, G.M. Foster opines that it is because of their political subordination and expropriation of their surplus produce by

6. L.No.1372, 18 Sept. 1889: op.cit.

7. Medical Report, 26 Dec. 1889; op. cit.

8. J.D. Powell, "Peasant Society and Clientelist Politicks", A.P.S.R., 64, 1970, p.411

others.⁹ Analysing the factors for peasants victimization, Seavoy admits that it is due to the problems of the societal and institutional values which govern the peasantry, what he calls "subsistence culture".¹⁰ To substantiate his arguments Seavoy cites three illustrations in the subsistence compromise, such as minimum labour expenditure, equal cultivation rights and equal sharing of harvests.¹¹ Exemplifying the case of India, he has argued that it is because of the caste system, the most important institution in subsistence culture, the peasants are vulnerable to periodic famines, even today. He further points out that India is more vulnerable because of the prevailing exchange system based on communal relationships, in which labour services operate among hereditary social groups. He also emphasizes how the dynamics of caste systems help in the perpetuation of the exploitation of the weaker sections in the form of physical labour. And it is another form of power to con-

-
9. G.M. Foster, "The Dyadic Contract in Tzintzuntzan, II: Patron Client Relationship", A.A., 65, 1963, p.1280.
 10. R.E. Seavoy, Famine in Peasant Societies, Greenwood Press, New York, 1986, p.5.
 11. See, for detail arguments in regard to the subsistence compromise, ibid., pp.12-22.

trol land and religion.¹²

Seavoy is contradicting himself. If not, does equality exist in cultivation rights and in sharing harvest in India? It becomes more clear when he explains the instrumental attitudes in the operation of caste mechanism. His categorical statement is more liable to be questioned that is "the peasant concept of the good life is the minimum expenditure of physical labour" as they have a culture of "minimum level of material welfare and nutritional safety", what he calls "indolence ethic".¹³ This implicitly suggests that the peasantry has the autonomy control over the situation in which the peasants live and they can change the standard of living. He invalidates the above views of Foster and Powell that peasants are devoid of the controlling power of their world. On this particular issue of "indolence ethic", Arnold is very critical of Seavoy and comments that "it is shortsighted, superficial and almost abusive in its failure to comprehend peasants dilemmas and constraints."¹⁴ Arnold argues that it is not the objective of peasant

12. Ibid., p.250.

13. Ibid., pp.22.,11.

14. Arnold, Famine, p.58.

households to minimize the labour expenditure rather it exists in different forms depending upon their socio-economic pattern of existence. The analysis of Seavoy is identical to the myth that they are "lazy natives" which has no value in local culture and one of the stereotypes of colonial explanations.

Seavoy would have been probably right, had he put it in this way that there is less expenditure on physical labour of peasantry owing to the low wages which provide a threatened subsistence. This sort of situation can be considered as protest or resistance, what James Scott calls as "every day forms of resistance".¹⁵ It is because the peasants cannot fight directly against their landlords, they do it everyday by providing minimum physical labour.

Scholars unanimously suggest that the peasantry suffered from the subsistence crisis even in normal times or, were always under pressure in colonial countries. What did they do and how did they defend themselves from subsistence problems? In the domain of subsistence crisis two alternatives can be noticed - "self-help" and outside help. Scott has suggested that the means of

15. J.C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985.

"self-help" is the most reliable strategy than depending on someone else's assistance at the time of scarcity. This is either by having one meal each day or switching upto poorer foods or accepting some sort of subsistence packages like petty trade, small crafts and casual wage labour.¹⁶ The latter alternative is to have a tie or bond with the landlord which is called as "Patron-Client relationship".

Now, it is important to study in historical perspectives, how peasants maintained their normal processes of life in traditional societies. As a universal fact, in traditional societies a modest mechanism was working, which aimed at providing a minimal subsistence insurance for villagers. K. Polanyi states that the primitive society was more human than the monetized economy, as there existed the threat of individual starvation.¹⁷ E. Wolf observes that there existed one sort of social equilibrium in pre-capitalist times to maintain a balance of transfer of surplus to the rulers leaving a minimal security for the cultivator. It did not reduce the risks

16. Scott, Moral Economy of the Peasant, pp.26-7.

17. Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation, Beacon Press, Boston, 1957, pp.163-4; cited in ibid., p.5.

rather improved their stability.¹⁸ Scott explains it in terms of "subsistence ethic". It is a right to subsistence rooted on the socio-economic practices of peasant society.¹⁹ In arguing the theory of egalitarianism, Scott states that wherever it works it provides everyone a place to survive but not necessarily equal place to all. Its strength varies from place to place and operates as dominating force in areas where well developed traditional village forms exist like Tonkin, Annam, Java, Upper Burma. Areas like lower Burma and Cochin China have weakest form of traditional village society.²⁰ Thus, this egalitarian form of village has autonomy and is coherent to provide adequate subsistence guarantee. To quote Scott, "all village families will be guaranteed a minimal subsistence niche in so far as the resources controlled by villagers make this possible."²¹ Evans-Pritchard is of the view that "no one in Nuer village starves unless all are starving."²²

18. Cited in Ibid.

19. Scott, Moral Economy of the Peasant, p.6.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p.40.

22. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Kinship and Marriage Among the Nuer, OUP, Oxford, 1951, p.58; cited in Ibid., p.34.

Powell argues that how a situation of extreme scarcity stands as an outstanding pillar for peasants in establishing social relations.²³ In a case study of the Mestizo peasant village of Tzintzuntzan, Foster explains the reasons why the peasants establish contractual ties and how its maintenance helps in defending themselves from the crisis. He identifies two types of contracts which are antagonistic to each other in its principles. The first one is called "colleague contract" in which both the involved parties belong to the equal socio-economic status for the same kind of goods and services. Another contract which places different kind of people of distinct socio-economic status and the exchange takes place in different kinds of goods and services asymmetrically, what is called "patron-client relationship".²⁴

What has to be noted here is that all the "human patrons"²⁵ are outsiders except the local priest and no social hierarchy exists there. It has been suggested that the patron-client bond strengthens social ties among

23. Powell, op.cit., p.411.

24. Foster, op. cit., p.1281.

25. The term "Human Patron", has been used as the author finds two types of patrons - human beings and supernatural beings. Ibid., p.1282.

the peasants and their patrons. It creates some sort of loyalty to the patrons. The human patrons are employers, politicians, government employees and god-parents etc. Let us take the example of god-parents tie that how this bond helps the clients at the time of crisis and how it develops in strengthening social relationship. For example, when Lucio got married, his mother's nephew agreed to be the marriage god-father of Lucio, who was a doctor. It led to a strong obligation of the new god father to help Lucio in providing free medical attention, possible loans and advice. This was reciprocated through providing gifts, inviting him to family meals in Tzintzuntzan.²⁶ One of the most striking example of god parent relationship is one which took place between the governor of the state of Michoacan and Tiburcio Zuniga, a potter. Here we find that the governor had two distinct ties, one with the father and another with Tuburcio.²⁷

The evolution of patron-client model has been largely the realm of anthropologists. This structure based on the personal deference and a sense of obligation evidenced mostly in Latin American and African countries.

26. Ibid., p.1283.

27. Ibid., pp.1283-4.

But its existence is not less developed in Southeast Asia, as in Europe. The elements of this ties are most prevalent in the traditional tenancy system, not in the colonial system of revenue, categorically pointed out by James Scott. The most apparent character of patron-client relationship is that the patron has to be superior in wealth, power and influence than the client. It occurs in an agricultural settings that the landlord becomes the patron and the client has to be either the landlords tenant or sharecropper. Three distinguishing characteristics are suggested such as, imbalanced reciprocity, a direct qualitative bond and impersonal relationship. James Scott's definition as follows:

The patron-client relationship ... in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (person) uses his own influences and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance including personal services, to the patron.²⁸

Eric Wolf argues that it is the culmination of the instrumental friendship of the unequal in capacity to provide goods and services which reflects the high disparity in every domain. He emphasizes on the point how friendship

28. J.C. Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in South East Asia", APSR, 66(1), ¹⁹⁷² p.92.

gives way to the establishment of patron-client bond.²⁹ Pitt Rivers explains it in terms of "lop-sided friendship".³⁰ J. Scott states that this sort of bond works as a "social insurance", based on "mutual assistance" and "shared poverty" in Southeast Asia.³¹

Jajmani System and Famine

Identical to the model of patron-client relationship there exists in India a traditional system known as "Jajmani System".³² Earlier, this institution was under the title of "village community".³³ Jajmani System has

-
29. Eric Wolf, "Kinship, Friendship and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Societies" in Michael Banton, ed., The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies, New York, 1969, p.16.
30. J. Pitt-Rivers, The People of the Sierra, Criterion Books, New York, 1954, p.140; cited in Powell, op. cit., p.412.
31. Scott, Moral Economy of the Peasant, p.27.
32. E.A.H. Blunt, who has introduced the term of Jajmani, was a Superintendent of the Census Operation in 1911 in the United Provinces and assigned to make an investigation into certain specific aspects of the caste system.
33. Dumont has stated that this institution was not unknown and British administrators were aware of it. See, Goodline's detailed study, Report on the Village Communities of Deccan, Bombay, 1852; cited in Dumont, op. cit. p.372, n.42 d.

been a very debatable subject among anthropologists. Let us first clear the concept, as yet many scholars confuse the readers. For example, S. Epstein, who writes that "according to Sanskrit Indian usage, 'Jajman' refers to a client, who receives religious services and gives gifts in return for them. But, following Wiser, the term Jajmani has come to be accepted for the system as a whole".³⁴ It may be the reason that the author who has introduced the term of Jajman, has used it in a wrong way: "The Chamar's clients are those from whom he receives dead cattle, and to whom he supplies shoes and other articles of leather".³⁵ W.H. Wiser is right of accepting the whole traditional system as Jajmani.³⁶ To be specific, the person who enjoys or utilises the services is known as "Jajman" (Patron). This term has been derived from the Sanskrit word "Yajamana" which means "sacrifier". And the person who renders service is called as Kamin (client), these are priests, washermen, barber, drummers, etc.

34. Scarlett Epstein, "Productive Efficiency and Customary Systems of Rewards in Rural South India" in Raymond Firth, ed., Themes in Economic Anthropology, Tavistock Pub., London, pp.230-31.

35. Blunt, op. cit., p.242.

36. W.H. Wiser, Hindu Jajmani System: A Socio-economic System Interrelating Members of a Hindu Village Community in Services, Lucknow Publishing House, India. p.xxiii,

Jajmani system is an economic network largely based on service relationship, operates within the framework of caste system. Money has no role, as the rewards are paid annually in the form of fixed quantities of agricultural products, what can be called as cultural economy. It has, of course, religious implications. One of the classic definitions follows:

The system corresponding to the prestations and counter-prestations by which the castes as a whole are bound together in a village, and which is more or less universal in India. ... opposed to monetary economy.... the closed economy of the Indian village in which essential goods and especially services are found, ... this fact corresponds, therefore, to what has long been called the 'village community', in the economic sense of the phrase.³⁷

Basically two kinds of castes are involved in this traditional system of Jajmani - "Dominant castes" and "Dependent castes". The dominant castes are considered as Jajmans (patrons) not only belonging to the landowning classes but also to the higher castes who enjoy immense economic and political powers. The relationship between caste and profession which is the major feature of Jajmani hardly works for them, as they control the means of subsist-

37. Dumont, op. cit., p.97.

ence. The latter constitutes the subordinated social groups in the caste hierarchy (except Brahman) and the almost landless people. H.A. Gould analyses Jajmani as "a matter of land owning, wealth and power controlling castes providing a structurally fixed share of their agricultural produce along with numerous "considerations", in exchange for craft and menial services rendered by the mainly landless impoverished, politically weak lower castes."³⁸ D.Pocock remarks that the maintenance of dominant castes position and their relationship with other castes persists by the political and economic power,³⁹ N. Patnaik, who has studied only the role of barber in service relationship of Dimiria, a village situated in a feudatory state of Orissa called Ranpur states that the Jajmans ("Saanta") belong to several castes such as Brahmin, karan, sudra, khandayats etc. But the dominant castes like Patnaik and Mahapatra never fail to maintain this system, as they are "very wealthy influential and famous in this locality."⁴⁰ Thus, the fundamental characteristic in this

38. H.A. Gould, "The Hindu Jajmani System", SJA, 14, 1958, p.431.

39. Pocock, op.cit, p.89.

40. N. Patnaik, "Service Relationship between Barbers and villagers in a small village in Ranpur", E.P.W., 14 (May) 1960, pp. 742, 738.

traditional economic system is the high disparity in wealth, status and power with asymmetrical and vertical dimensions. This system is more religious oriented than economic.

Thomas Beidelman who has made a note-worthy comparative study of Jajmani without a field work, criticizes vehemently Wisner's egalitarian analysis of the system. He argues that this system is based on gross inequalities in the distribution of power and wealth. He tends to claim that Jajmans belong to ritually high castes, although ritual rank is not the chief support of their role but political and economic power. Wisner argues that Jajmani system is somewhat like the old feudal system but actually it is not as it lacks the major feature of feudalism - "mutuality".⁴¹ Claiming it as feudal system, Beidelman provides a categorical statement that it is "a feudalistic system of prescribed, hereditary obligations of payment and of occupational and ceremonial duties between two or more specific families of different castes in the same locality."⁴² Dumont says that it is not an egalitarian one as rank is clearly distinguished and the function is completely antagonistic

41. Wisner, op. cit., p.VIII.

42. Beidelman, op. cit., p.6.

in nature.⁴³

In this light, Blunt and Wiser could be criticized. Blunt is wrong in saying that the involvement in the system is a responsibility, neither party is free from the relationship,⁴⁴ as we have already stated that the dominant castes hardly do the servicing job. Wiser's claim suffers from invalidity that it is a system in which various local castes cooperate with balanced powers and are interdependent for their mutual benefit. To quote Wiser:

They are the Jajmans of those other castes. In return each of these castes has a form of service to perform for the others. In this manner, the various castes of a Hindu village in North India are interrelated in a service capacity. Each serves the others. Each in turn is master. Each in turn is servant.⁴⁵

An important aspect of the Jajmani is overlooked by Wiser and Beidelman, the question of hierarchy. Claiming this relationship as hierarchical and asymmetrical, Dumont states that the Jajmans need the caste services of the

43. Dumont, op. cit., p.102.

44. Blunt, op. cit., p.260.

45. Wiser, op. cit., XXIII.

Kamins, but they rarely provide caste services in return.⁴⁶ The study of N. Patnaik also shows that no Jajmans in Orissa involve in service relationship.⁴⁷ This not only ensures the exploitative and coercive nature of the system but also excludes certain social groups. For example, the barber does not serve the lower castes like sweepers, washerman and weavers in Orissa.⁴⁸ This hierarchical character leads to the existence of one-way service relationship. The dominant castes are served, but do not serve or reciprocate relationships.

It has been suggested that all the servicing castes are the servants of the Jajmans as per the principles of the system. The Brahman priest is also included in it. Pocock writes that "from the point of view of the Jajman, all are his servants, all receive their appropriate

46. Dumont op.cit., p.101-2.

47. N. Patnaik, op.cit., p. 738.

48. Ibid.

shares of the produce".⁴⁹ Similarly, Beidelman citing Cohn's analysis relating to the ambivalent bond writes that

"theoretically, the Brahmins rank above the Thakurs; actually, in Senapur, they do not.... The Thakurs felt that while the Brahmins were spiritually superior, they were still the servants of the Thakurs and were paid and fed by the Thakurs."⁵⁰

Now the significance of the mode of payment in the Jajmani system has to be taken into account that whether the fixed amount of reward in the form of kind is remunerative to provide adequate subsistence to the client or not. We have the view of Dumont and Wiser in the concept of Jajmani payments which is determined by the independent principles of the market. But, the major difference is that Wiser claims that the payment is made by the Jajman in terms of certain concessions to provide him (client) the "*minimum subsistence*" but not in terms of value for value recieved.⁵¹ Whereas Dumont states that the payment is made on the notion of the ideology of purity and hierarchy, not according to the economic

49. Pocock, op. cit., p.79.

50. Beidelman, op. cit., p.19.

51. Wiser, op. cit., p.42.

mechanism of the market.⁵² Dumont builds his argument by saying that everybody is guaranteed a living right, but are not provided an equal living right. Simply, Brahmin receives more for his services than leather workers because his service was more important in terms of ideology of purity.⁵³

In explaining the mode of payment Patnaik clearly says that the payment is fixed regardless of the economic condition of the client and is paid on a yearly basis which is called "Barika Baratana" (barber's wage or salary). In addition, he obtains other payments separately on occasions of marriage, death, offering food to the manes, ear piercing and for carrying loads of food and other items to relatives. For example, on the occasion of marriage barber gets a piece of new cloth known as "Kula Paka" and payment known as "Biva Khata" - 5 1/2 seers of rice or 11 seers of paddy.⁵⁴

Are the peasants or clients aware of the exploitative nature of these social institutions or organized individuals? If the peasants are aware of their

52. Dumont, op. cit., p.105.

53. Ibid., p.102.

54. N. Patnaik, op.cit. p. 741.

exploitation why do they continue their ties with them? Scott argues that all these institutions, which are expected to stand against the monster of subsistence crisis, play an *ambivalent* role in peasant life. He also notes that the contribution of the patron to client legitimizes his (patron's) expropriate share to the peasants resources.⁵⁵ Epstein analyses the reasons why the agricultural labourers in Mysore were reluctant to break their tie with their landlords rather accepted poor wages. It is because of the expectation of protection at the time of crisis.⁵⁶ Similarly, some of the interviewees of Hilbert agree on the point that they would get more wages else where than the traditional landlords. They do not wish to put a stop to the established tie as they need help at the time of acute hunger.⁵⁷

The major contributing factor for the existence of exploitation in the patron-client or Jajmani relationship is the high disparity between the involved

55. Scott, Moral Economy of the Peasant, p.28.

56. Epstein, op. cit., p.246.

57. Paul G. Hilbert, Konduru, Structure and Integration in a South Indian Village, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1971, p.89; cited in Greenough, "Famine and Peasant", p.219.

parties. The degree of the exploitation depends on economic stability or the bargaining position of the client. As the client generally depends on the patron for his livelihood, he never wishes to discontinue the bond because of his expectation of the protection at the time of crisis. This exploitation makes them more vulnerable to famine. If this exploitation was really prevalent, it must have made those social groups who involved in service relationship vulnerable to famine. Now it becomes significant to find out whether Jajmani system was working at the time of famine or not.

Scott states that the inter-class bonds of patron-client relationship started breaking in pre-colonial Southeast Asia, especially during the crop failure or war. But in 1920s and 1930s the colonial countries witnessed the rupture of ties like in Central Luzon, Lower Burma and the Mekong and Tonkin Deltas.⁵⁸

As already stated that the fixed amount is accepted as an expectation to obtain subsistence

58. J.C. Scott, "The Erosion of Patron-Client Bonds and Social Change in Rural Southeast Asia", JAS, 32(1), p.6; also in Moral Economy of the Peasant, p.40.

requirements, even in bad harvests, but what happens is that the patron or the jajman neither ensure their subsistence at the time of crisis nor he provides any thing more than the fixed amount in good harvests. So, the client suffers at the time of famine. We have contradictory views as Wiser's analysis shows that this system works during the bad seasons whereas Beidelman and Gould emphasize on the point that extreme economic differentiation takes place at the time of good harvests.

Epstein argues that the maintenance/continuity of the customary system of Jajmani depends upon the extent of agricultural output. It breaks at the time of famine, when there is a remarkable decline in agricultural productivity.⁵⁹ Greenough states that "Many patron-client relations in rural India are not truly welfarist in function; they are intended to operate in a relatively prosperous economic environment with limited fluctuations and do not stand up against serious stresses such as droughts and famines."⁶⁰ It is Arnold who remarks that the famine witnessed the collapse of moral and social relations. The workers especially the

59. Epstein, op. cit., pp.246-7.

60. Greenough, op. cit., p.221.

landless labourers and peasants were denied employment during the famine of 1876-78. For example, in Guntur taluk, Krishna district, untouchable labourers were avoided by caste villagers in November 1876, as their services were no longer required. No customary relationship was maintained. It is also pointed out that the raiyats were most reluctant to feed their labourers. In Yedavalli in Kurnool district the rich peasants in spite of helping the poor labourers or villagers even buried their grain on account of fear of robbery.⁶¹ N.S. Jodha's study also assembles the similar situation in Rajasthan where the Rajput landholders simply refused to have any obligations towards their client.⁶²

In analysing the impact of Bengal famine of 1943-44 Bhawani Sen, in his eyewitness account states that the ritual specialists suffered considerably as their ritual ceremonies were avoided. He categorically mentions that the washerman and musicians in the Vikrampur area (Decca district) were badly affected. These specialist social groups were in the fixed relationship

61. Arnold, 'Peasant Consciousness', pp.78-81.

62. N.S. Jodha, "Famine and Famine Policies: Some Empirical Evidence", E.P.W., X, 1975, pp.1613-4.

in the Jajmani system.⁶³ T.G. Narayan pointed out that marriage ceremonies were observed without hiring musicians in Tippera district in 1943.⁶⁴

One of the main arguments of Greenough and Scott claims that the reciprocity and moral economy in the patron-client relationship has no class identities and class conflicts in Asia. Countering this Arnold says "there was no reciprocity in any meaningful sense because the relationship was founded on inequality between the two sides. It was relationship of superordination and subordination, not of mutual and equal exchange."⁶⁵ The interest of the patron was retained in every way, it may be socially, culturally, as well as materially. The relationship existed was of power, command and control. For example, the practice of landlords and rich peasants in Chingleput willingly provided loans to their labourers at the time of agricultural cultivation, marriages or deaths to get the labourers into the clutches of debt and to fulfil

63. Bhowani Sen, Rural Bengal in Ruins, trans. N. Chakravarty, PPH, Bombay, 1945, p.14; cited in Greenough, "Famine and Peasant Victims", p.224.

64. T.G. Narayan, Famine over Bengal: 1990-2000, cited in ibid.

65. Arnold, "Peasant Consciousness", p.78.

their customary obligations. The awareness about their exploitation led the Paraiya labourers in Chingleput to withdraw collectively from the fields at the beginning of the agricultural year (June-July) in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Ultimately, the labourers were assured of good treatment and customary payments. These were the forms through which direct confrontation was avoided and social antagonism mediated.⁶⁶

Thus we can conclude that the Jajmani system during the colonial period started crumbling prominently at the time of famine. It was mainly due to the fact that the Jajman was also facing the economic problems & hence to sustain themselves they refused to perform their obligation towards their clients. The impoverishment of the traditional landlords was the consequent result of the structural mechanism of colonial rule.

Traditional Ties & Productive Efficiency

Let us study how far the traditional ties are contributory in the improvement of productive efficiency and overall economic development. This would also reveal the shortcomings of the Jajmani system. It would extend

66. Ibid., p.79.

to enquire whether these traditional institutions stand against the famine drought or not.

Epstein has made a comparative study of two villages in Mysore in South India, where contractual ties and traditional bonds exist, to explain whether the traditional ties are facilitating the improvement of productive efficiency and economic development or vice-versa. One village is called Wangala where traditional ties work and another village is Dalena where the diversification of economic activity exists.⁶⁷

He finds two types of hereditary links. On the one hand, the hereditary relationship between peasant masters and their untouchable labourers. On the other, it is between peasants and certain functioning castes such as washermen, barber, and blacksmith, whose services are continually required. There exists contractual ties between peasant caste households and village artisan castes like village craftsmen, the goldsmith, potter, etc.*

In his study, Epstein has proved that how traditional ties are the impediments in the development of

67. Epstein, op. cit., p.234.

* Ibid. p. 232.

economy and productive efficiency. For example, a blacksmith who has traditional ties with the peasant households in Wangala village, is required to repair iron ploughs instead of wooden ploughs, as agricultural development has taken place. To repair it he needs to learn the greater skill. But if he is given only a fixed amount of customary due. Is it fair that he has to do more work with greater skill and not entitled to receive more reward and that too in a different economic environment? The problem is that he is neither given enhanced wages nor he is not allowed to discontinue his hereditary ties unless he arranges a substitute in person. That's what happened in Wangala village that the Blacksmith got rid of this tie by arranging another person from a different village.⁶⁸

Another problem in the context of Jajmani is that the customary reward would have to be paid to the clients irrespective of the fact whether his service is used or not. Wiser has stated that "workers were entitled to their rights from every villagers, according to the rules of the village communities; and if the villagers declined to employ their services to which they were entitled, they

68. Ibid., pp.234-5.

must still pay the bullcottee hucks (reward in kind)."⁶⁹
Thus, the customary rites are obligatory for all.

In addition to this, an attempt is made to show how caste system is an impediment in the path of economic developments. It has been said that this caste system is creating some sort of "vanity" that it is derogatory to their status to change their caste-trade or caste occupation. They, therefore, accepted neither a new trade, new occupation nor exerted to improve their own. Hence, their vanity caused a total neglect of new industries.⁷⁰ Citing a moving example of weavers, B. Mohanty argues that the weavers were suffering from the economic decline in normal times in 19th century, owing to the stiff competition from imported clothes, Yet they were reluctant to change their occupation due to the caste prejudices. She further points out that the leading men in their caste had a key role in changing the caste occupation.⁷¹

The Dipika, while dicussing about the problems of caste prejudices suggests that Oriyas would continue to

69. Wiser, op. cit., XXVI.

70. Vrittanta Patrika, (NNPM), 4 April 1889, p.81.

71. Mohanty, "Orissa Famine of 1866", p.62.

suffer from poverty as long as they refuse to get involved in trade and commerce as a source of income owing to caste beliefs and occupations. Citing the examples of overseas trade it argues that this is the major source of prosperity. Hence if Oriyas would adopt this sort of profession keeping aside their belief that the cross of sea would result in the loss of caste Orissa would see prosperity.⁷²

Unlike Wangala, Dalena village is more economically developed as no hereditary ties exist. The economic activities have been diversified and the farmers have free access to employ any labour on contractual basis. No obligation works there to provide minimal subsistence. Epstein's comparative study claims that agricultural production (paddy) per acre is higher in Dalena than ⁷³ Wangal. Thus, one can conclude that the existence of hereditary labour relations and fixed annual rewards act as a dominating force to maintain the status quo and an obstacle to economic growth and expansion.

72. U.D., 16 March, 1889. p.101.

73. Cited in Epstein, op. cit., pp.240-41.

As traditional occupational groups we are the victims of famine , it is important to study who are those social groups involved in the Jajmani system and what sort of social status they acquire? These social groups are priest, drummers, shoe-makers, garland-makers, barber, fishermen and washermen, etc.

The priests involved in officiating the ritual festivals and ceremonies acquire supreme position in the social hierarchy. But other specialist castes obtain a reversed position in the hierarchy as they are involved in the impure occupations. For example, the drummers who are concerned with the musical functions in family ceremonies and even in priestly functions get a lower social status. Similarly, a washerman who has to take care of dirty clothes at the time of birth, death and menstruation is reckoned among the lower castes.

What is important to know is that how this system provides a lower social status to a particular caste when it is involved in its specialized caste occupation. M. Marriot explains how one particular act can be looked upon impure and pure. Especially, if it is the object of a specialization it will be impure and if it is practised within the household it is pure. In this light, Bh. Mukherjee comparing the relative status of two

Bengali castes remarks that one caste called Kaibarta who is a farmer do fishing for their family, is not inferior where as the Namsudra who survives only on fishing is inferior.⁷⁴ In South India, a barber gets a lower social rank as he is involved in a funeral ceremony as a funeral priest. But in north India he has a higher status when he appears as a helper or servant of the Brahman in family ceremonies and serves as a messenger for auspicious events.⁷⁵ In Oriya society, barber who works as a Kamin is one of the clean castes. It may be he does not serve the potter, oilman, and washerman on the occasion of marriage and death. He does not touch weavers, oilman and fisherman. But, barber cuts hair and shave the weavers, or after taking the precaution of weaving a coloured napkin which protects the barber from being defiled when he touches an untouchable.⁷⁶

The oil pressers are also given a lower status, as they crush the grain which gives life, Similarly the ploughman who ploughs the field gets an inferior rank

74. Bhabananda Mukherjee, "Caste Ranking among Rajbanshis in North Bengal" in Bala Ratnam, ed., Anthropology, pp.206-12.; cited in ibid., p.93.

75. Dumont, op. cit., pp.57-58.

76. N. Patnaik, op.cit. p. 740.

as it (plough) wounds the earth and the creatures which live in it.⁷⁷ Brahmins do not involve in it as they find it degrading to their social position.⁷⁸ Dumont says that there exists a loose association between the agricultural profession and caste. Agriculture is a neutral occupation as majority of castes are involved in it.⁷⁹

It is Blunt who provides a brilliant contribution for the first time in studying the structural changes in the pattern of occupation. Using ample statistical data from the official census, Blunt demonstrates the proportion of members of a caste follow the caste profession and the vice-versa. As agriculture is the most important occupation in India, 90% of farming castes follow it and 43% of non-agricultural castes also follow the same, owing to their ruination of old occupation in the new socio-economic environment (e.g. weavers) and 42.2% of people follow their own professions. Blunt also informed that though there was a decline in traditional occupations, there was a fair amount of

77. Dumont ^{op. cit} pp. 370, n.41c.

78. Ibid., p.371, n.41 f.

79. Ibid., p.96.

village specialists involved in certain occupations relating to religion, 76% of sweepers follow their professions, 75% of goldsmiths, more than 60% of confectioners and grain parchers, 60% of barbers and washermen, 50% carpenters, weavers, oil-pressers and potters.⁸⁰

So far as Orissa is concerned we find that the service relationship is breaking as it is not a remunerative occupation to provide minimum subsistence. N. Patnaik's study shows how this service relationship is breaking and there exists no more hereditary ties in Dimiria village. For example, out of four barber families, one has gone to Calcutta to do coolie job. And all remaining families work for daily wages, though they involve in service relationship.⁸¹

80. Blunt, ^{op.cit} pp.95-6.

81. N.Patnaik, op.cit, p.737.

CONCLUSION

If we look at the historiocity of famines, it is not a modern phenomenon. But it had a distinct character in its victimization and frequency during the colonial era. Two major themes have been evolved in the domain of political economy of food crisis: (a) dislocation in distribution system or man made errors (b) natural disaster. The famine of 1888-9 was a "class famine"¹ as it did not affect the whole population rather it affected certain social groups.

Keeping in mind the whole discussions and understanding, we could conclude that famine was not a cultural event rather a structural problem in India. This contradicts the popular perception that famine was a curse or a blessing of god. If it is not so, why it was selective in its victimization? However, the lower caste people were the hardest hit or worst victims of famine.

It has been analysed how the social institutions like Jajmani system were responsible for creating a selective

1. For details about the typology of famine - general local and class famine, see Alamgir, P. 14, op.cit.

vulnerable group of famine victims. It was British rule which intensified the vulnerability of those social groups in disrupting the traditional life of self sufficient village economy. The structural mechanism of colonial rule -- the land revenue, the commercialization of agriculture, the economic drain, and the construction of railways--was strongly accountable for it. The most important problem was the evolution of social relations between the landlord and his clients/landless labourers. The change in the relationship led to the refusal of many landlords to perform their obligation towards their clients or hereditary labourers. One point has to be noted that there were some traditional landlords who wanted to help their clients but failed to do so due to their own economic problems. For example, the Orissa famine of 1866 witnessed that the old zamindars demonstrated more willingness to help their raiyats than new landlords. The new landlords mostly being outsiders and absentee zamindars had hardly philanthropic attitude to provide charity or help to their raiyats.

As we know that a crisis is a time of testing, famine certainly exposed the social taboos, of Indian society which was not only responsible for the societal problems like social discrimination and subordination but also for

incidences of numerous premature deaths. We find a peculiarity in Ganjam, that the objection to cooked food at the public kitchen appeared from all famine victims irrespective of caste including the lower caste. It has been also emphasized how the government dealt with the problems of caste prejudices in the distribution of relief programme and its neutral attitude towards caste and religion.

It can be suggested that famine was an integral part of social development. For example, the Ganjam famine of 1865-66 made the Ganjam society more rigid and complex, even led to an emergence of new caste called "Chattrakiya", who acquired a lower status. But the famine of 1888-89 did not create such high degree of societal problems rather many people accepted cooked food at the public kitchen. So, we find a relaxation in the principles and norms of caste system with passage of time. It also proves how a cultural evolution took place in a descent way. In this light we could take into account a statement made by some oldest and most influential Khond chiefs in Ganjam: "We have always sacrificed human beings. Our fathers handed down the customs to us. They thought no wrong, nor did we. On the contrary we felt we were doing what was right. We were then the subjects of the Raja of Goomsur. Now we are the

subjects of the Great Government whose orders we must obey. If the earth refuses its produce, or disease destroys us, it is not our fault. We will abandon the sacrifices, and will, if permitted like the inhabitants of the plains, sacrifice animals".²

It is found that the dietary habits played a significant role in intensifying the famine situation in Ganjam. What is important to remark is that Ganjam witnessed a paradoxical situation that the famine victims simultaneously accepted inedibles as the means of survival but refused to eat the ragi. The government was strongly responsible for it, as government did not compromise with the dietary habits of the victims rather adjusted with the cost dynamics of foodgrains. It was, ofcourse, a constant and deliberate policy of the government throughout the colonial rule.

Our study shows that the famine victims were not "passive" and "fatalist." If it is not so, then it is questionable how one could explain the occurrence of food roits, lootings and migration etc. It can be pointed out that the incidence of food riots and the distribution by private charity never coincided. The occurrence of food

2. Maltby, op.cit., p. 76.

riots and lootings also revealed the socio-economic conflicts and tensions in the society.

Thus the foregoing analysis demonstrates that the famine of 1888-89 had socio-cultural significance in the annals of Ganjam district. It had also an administrative importance in the famine policy, administration in colonial India due to the following reasons:

- a) the substitution of rice for ragi as the standard food grain of the district
- b) the inadvisability of a rigid adherence to any fixed scarcity rate.
- c) the inadvisability, when it was found necessary to commence work for the relief of the labouring classes, whether professional agency or civil agency works, of insisting upon a system of daily payments.
- d) the abolition of money doles as a form of relief.
- e) an increase in the scale of wages allowed for third class labourers
- f) increased European supervision for famine officers
- g) authority over zamindari karnams

The famine relief works once started, led to the improvement of the means of communication viz. the East Coast Railways, and the irrigational projects like the Rushikulya project etc.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES:-

Records:-

Revenue and Agricultural Department Records, Govt. of India, N.A.I., New Delhi

- (a) Famine proceedings
- (b) Board of Revenue Proceedings
- (c) Emigration Proceedings.

Home Department Records of Govt. of India, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Foreign Department Records of Govt. of India, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Loose Records of Madras Govt., OSA., Bhubaneswar

Reports:-

General Administration Reports of India, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Madras Administration Reports, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Madras Land Revenue Reports, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Madras Police Administration Reports, N.A.I., New Delhi

Madras Sanitary Commission Reports, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Madras Forest Administration Reports, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Reports of the Indian Famine Commission, 1898, New Delhi.

Census Reports of Madras, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Census Reports of Ganjam, N.A.I., New Delhi.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, Madras, 1, 1985.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol.XII, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1908.

The Ganjam District Manual, by T.J. Maltby Lawrence, Asylum Press, Madras, 1882, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Madras Distt. Gazetteers, Statistical Appendix for Ganjam, Madras Govt. Press, Madras, 1905, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Ganjam District Records : Guide to the Records of Ganjam District from 1774-1835, Madras Govt. Press, Madras 1934, N.A.I., New Delhi.

Final Report on the Major Settlement Operation in Ganjam Ex-Estate Areas, 1938-1962 by N.C. Behera, Orissa Govt. Press, Calcutta 1963, N.M.M.L., New Delhi.

Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of the Province of Orissa, 1890-1900, by S.L. Madox, Govt. of Bengal, 1900.

Newspapers:-

- The Indian Mirror, (Daily) Calcutta, NMML, New Delhi.
- The Madras Mail, (Daily), Madras, NMML, New Delhi.
- Native News Papers of Madras, NMML, New Delhi.
- The Sambalpur Hiteisini (Oriya Weekly), Bamanda, OSA, Bhubaneswar
- The Utkal Dipika, (Oriya Weekly), Cuttack, OSA, Bhubaneswar.

Secondary Sources

Alamgir, M., Famine in South Asia: Political Economy of Mass Starvation, O.G. & H, Cambridge and Massachusetts, 1980.

Ambirajan, S., Classical Political Economy and British Policy in India, CUP, Cambridge, 1978.

Arnold, D., "Dacoity and Rural Crime in Madras, 1860-1940", J.P.S., 6(2) 1979: 140-67.

_____, "Looting, Grain Riots and Govt. policy in South India, 1918", p.p. (Aug), 1979: 111-45.

_____, "Famine in Peasant Consciousness & Peasant Action: Madras 1876-78" in Ranjit Guha (ed) Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History & Society, vol.III, OUP, Delhi, 1984: 62-115.

Apata, S.K., "Ganjam Famine (1865-66) and the British Policy," O.H.C.P., XVI, 1990: 186-191.

Arnold, D., Famine: Social Crisis and Historical Change, Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1988.

_____, D., "The Book Review," J.P.S., 12(4), 1985.

Aykroyd, W.R., The Conquest of Famine, Chatto & Windus, London, 1974.

Baily, F.G., Caste and the Economic Frontier, M.U.P., Manchester, 1957.

Bandyopadhyay, P. Indian Famines and Agrarian Problems : A Policy Study on the administration of Lord George Hamilton Secy., of State for India 1895-1903, Star Publication, Calcutta, 1987.

Beidelman, T.O. A Comparative Analysis of the Jajmani System, Association for Asian Studies, New York, 1959.

Berremen, G.D., "Caste and Economy in the Himalayas", E.D.C.C., X(4), 1962, 386-94.

Bhatta, B., "The Famine of 1888-89 in Ganjam District", O.H.C.P., XVI, 1990: 145-156.

Bhatia, B.M., Famines in India : A Study in some aspects of the economic history of India, 1860-1965. A.P.H., Bombay, 1967 (1963).

Blair, C., Indian Famines, Charles Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1974.

Blunt, E.A.H., The Caste System of North India with special reference to the United Provinces of Agra & Oudh, S.Chand & Co., Delhi, 1969 (1931).

Booth, A., "Food Riots in the North-West of England, 1790-1801" p.p.74, 1977: 84-107.

Bose, N.K., ed., Data on Caste : Orissa, Calcutta Anthropological Survey, Memoir, No.7, 1960.

Caldwell, B., Jajmani System: An Investigation, Hindustan Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1991.

Chattopadhyaya, D.P., Lokayat: A study in Ancient Indian Materialism, PPH., Delhi, 1959.

Curry, B. and Hugo, G., eds., Famine: As a Geographical Phenomenon, D. Reidal Publishing Company, Holland, 1984.

Das, B. & Pati, B., "The Eternal Famine: Poverty, Food Scarcity and Survival in Kalahandi (Orissa)", H.S., Centre for Contemporary Studies, NMML, New Delhi, XC, 1994.

Das, G.C., 'A note on the Famines of India'. O.H.R.J. 8 (Oct) 1959-Jan 1960:209-17.

Dreze, J. and Sen, A. (eds.) Hunger and Public Action, Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1989.

_____ (eds.) The Political Economy of Hunger, Clarendon Press, Oxford, vol.s 1-3, 1990.

Dumont, L., Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System & its Implications, Univ. of Chicago Press., London, 1980.

Dutt, R.C., Indian Famines: Their Cause and Prevention,
P.S.King.London: 1901.

_____, The Economic History of India, Vol.2,
Publication Division, Ministry of Information & Broad-
casting, GOI, 1970.

_____, Open Letter to Lord Curzon and Speeches and
Papers, Gian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1986.

Dumont, L. and Pocock, D., (eds.), "Pure and Impure,"
C.I.S., III, 1959: 9-39.

Durhaam, W.H., "Advances in Evolutionary Culture Theory",
A.R.A., 19, 1990: 187-210.

_____, "Applications of Evolutionary Culture Theory",
A.R.A., 21, 1992:331-356.

Epstein, S. "Productive Efficiency and Customary Systems
of Rewards in Rural South India" in Raymond Firth (ed).
Themes in Economic Anthropology, London, 1967: 229-52.

Foster, G.M., "The Dyadic Contract in Tzintzuntzan, II:
Patron-Client Relationship", A. A, 65, 1963, 1280-94.

_____, "The Dyadic Contract: a Model for the Social
structure of a Mexican Peasant Village". A.A 63, 1961:
1173-1192.

_____, "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited
Good", A. A, 67(2) 1965: 293-315.

Ghosh, A.K., "Famine" in J.Eatwell, M.Milgate and P. Newman
(eds.) The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics,
MacMillan, London, 1987.

Gough, E. Kathleen, "The Hindu Jajmani System", EDCC, IX
(1) 1960:83-91.

Gould, H.A., "The Hindu Jajmani System : A case of
Ecc .Particularism" SWJA, 14, 1958: 428-437.

Greenough, P.R., Prosperity and Misery in modern Bengal :
The Famine of 1943-44, O.U.P.Inc., 1982.

_____, "Indian Famines and peasant Victims: the case of Bengal in 1943-44," M.A.S. 14:2(1980) 205-235.

Gupta, Dipankar, ed., Social Stratification, OUP, Delhi, 1993.

Habib, I., The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1556-1707) A.P.H., New York, 1963.

_____, "Colonisation of the Indian Economy, 1757-1900," S. S. March 1975: 25-53.

_____, "Studying A Colonial Economy Without Perceiving Colonialism" M.A.S. XIX (3) 1985: 355-81.

Harrison, G.A., (ed.), Famine, OUP, Oxford, 1988.

Hunter, W.W., The Annals of Rural Bengal, London: Smith Elder, 1868.

_____, Famine Aspects of Bengal Districts, Simla, 1873.

_____, History of Orissa, vol.2, 1872.

Jena, K.C., The Ascendancy of the British Raj in Orissa, Punhi Pustak, Cuttack, 1982.

Jodha, N.C., 'Famine and Famine Policies: Some Empirical Evidence', E.P.W., X, 1975: 1609-23.

Klein, Ira, "When the Rain failed", IESHR, XXII, 1984

_____, "Deaths in India, 1871-1921", J.A.S., XXII (4) 1973: 644-5

Kulkarni, S.N., Famines, Droughts and Scarcities in India: Relief Measures and Policies. Chugh Publications, Allahabad, India, 1990.

Lardinois, R., "Famine, Epidemics and Mortality in South India: A Reappraisal of the Demographic Orissa of 1876-78," E.P.W., 16 March 1985: 454-65.

Lemma, A. & Malaska, P., Africa beyond Famine: A Report to the Club of Rome, Tycooly Publishing, London & New York, 1989.

Loveday, A., The History and Economics of Indian Famines, G.Bell Press, London, 1916.

Mahar, P.M., "A Multiple Scaling Technique for Caste Ranking," M.I., XXXIX(2) 1959: 127-47.

Marriot, McKim, "Caste Ranking and Food Transactions: A Matrix Analysis" in M.Singer & B. Cohn eds., Structure & Change in Indian Society, Chicago, Aldine 1968: 133-70.

Masefield, G.B., Famine: Its Prevention and Relief, O.U.P., London, 1963.

McAlpin, M.B., Subject to famine: Food crisis and Economic Change in Western India, 1860-1920, P. U.P., Princeton, 1983.

Mishra, H.K., Famines and Poverty in India, New Delhi, A.P.H., 1991.

Mishra, P.K., Political Unrest in Orissa in the 19th Century: Anti-British, Anti-feudal and Agrarian Rising, Calcutta Punthi Pustak, 1983.

Mitra, A., "The Meaning of Meaning", E.P.W., 27 (March) 1982.

Mohanty, B., "Famine and Its Impact on the Agrarian and demographic structure with special references to Orissa for the period 1866-1920" Thesis, D.U., New Delhi, 1988.

_____, "Migration, Famines and Sex Ratio in Orissa Division (1881-1921)", IESHR Oct to Dec. 1992: 507-28.

_____, "Orissa Famine of 1866: Demographic and Economic Consequences" E.P.W., Jan 2-9, 1993:55-66.

Morris, M.D. "Towards a Reinterpretation of 19th Century Indian Economic History", J.E.H., XXIII (4) 1963: 606-18.

_____, "Needed: A New Famine Policy," E.P.W. 10, (Annual Number) 1975: 283-94.

_____, "What is a Famine", E.P.W. 9(Nov) 1974: 1855-64.

- Mukherjee, P., "The Orissa Famine of 1866," OHRJ 6 (Apr. 1957) : 69-95.
- Mukhopadhyay, T. "The Jajmani Relationship in Rural West Bengal", in A. Lipski, ed., Bengal East & West Asian Series, Michigan State Univ. Press, East-Lansing, 1969: 139-49.
- Naoroji, Dadabhai, Poverty and UnBritishrule in India, Pub. Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 601, 1962 (1901).
- Naoroji, Dadabhai, Speeches and Writings, ed. A. Moin Zaidi, New Delhi, 1985.
- Nash, Vaughan, The Great Famine and its Causes, Agricole reprints Corporation, New Delhi, 1986.
- Nolan, Peter, "The Causation & Prevention of Famines: A Critique of A.K.Sen", J.P.S., 21(1) 1993: 1-28.
- Orenstein, H., "Exploitation and Function in the Interpretation of Jajmani", S.W.J.A. XVIII (4).
- Patnaik, G. 1980, The famine and some aspects of the British Economic Policy in Orissa, 1866-1905, Vidyapuri Balubazar, Cuttack, 1986.
- Patnaik, N., "Service Relationship Between Barbars and villagers in a small village in Rampur" E.P.W. XII(20) 1960: 737-42.
- Patnaik, U., "Food Availability and Famine : A longer View", J.P.S., vol.19 (1), 1991: 1-25.
- Pocock, David F., "Notes on Jajmani Relationships" C.I.S. 6(Dec) 1962. 78-95.
- Powell, J.D., "Peasant Society and Clientelist politics", APSR, 64 (June), 1970: 411-25.
- Raju, B. David & Gangaiah, K., "The Famine of 1876-78: Missionary Works and Conversion in Guntur, Nellore Districts" SIHCP 13, 1993:
- Rangaswami, A., "The McAlpin Capers" E.P.W. Sept. 1, 1984.

Ray, S., "Political Economy and Food Crisis: A Case Study of Kalahandi," M.Phil, Diss. D.U., New Delhi. 1991.

Rose, R.B., "18th century Price-Riots & Public Policy in England", IRSH VI (1961) pp.277-92.

-----, "Eighteenth-Century Price Riots: The French Revolution and the Jacobian Maximum" I.R.S.H. IV, 1959 pp.432-45.

Samal, J.K., Orissa Under the British Crown 1858-1905, S. Chand and Co., New Delhi. 1977.

Scott, James C. "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia", APSR 66(1) 1972: 91-113.

Scott, James C. "The Erosion of Patron-Client Bonds & Social change in Rural Southeast Asia", JAS, 32(1) 1972; 15-37.

-----, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985.

Scott, James C., Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, The Journal of Peasant Studies, 13(2) 1986:5-35

Scott, J.C., The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

-----, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985.

Seavoy, R.E., Famine in Peasant Societies, Greenwood Press, New York. 1986.

Sen, A., Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation, OUP, Delhi., 1986 (1981).

Sen, A., "Famines as Failures of Exchange Entitlements: A General Approach & Its application to the Great Bengal Famine" Cambridge Journal of Economics (1977), pp.33-59.

Sen. A., "Starvation and Exchange Entitlements". EPW Special number (Aug) 1976:1273-80.

Sharma, S., The 1837-38 Famine in U.P.: Some Dimensions of Popular Action, IESHR, 30.3 1993.

Sharma, Sanjay, "Dearth, Famine and the Colonial State : The 1837-38 Famine in U.P." Unpublished M.Phil. Diss. Dept. of History, University of Delhi, 1991.

Shipton, Parker, "A African Famine and Food security: Anthropological Perspectives", in ARA, 19, 1900.

Singh, K.S., The Indian Famine of 1967: A Study of Crisis and change, PPH, New Delhi, 1975.

Singh, K.S., "Famine, Nationalism and Social Change: The Indian Scenario," IHR, 14(1-2), 1987-88: 186-205.

Srivastava, H.S., The History of Indian Famines, 1858-1918, Shri Ram Mehra, Agra, 1968.

_____, "The Indian Famine of 1876-79," JIH 44 (Dec.1966: pp.853-86,

Stevenson, H.N.C., "Status Evaluation in the Hindu Caste System", JRAI, LXXXIV (1-2) 1954: 45-65.

SWARO, DASARATHI, "The Role of Christian Missionaries in the Famine of 1866 in Orissa", PP, 99, 1980: 46-56.

Thompson, E.P., 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18th Century' PP, 50 (Feb.) 1971: 76-136.

Tilly, Louise A., "The Food Riot as a form of Political Conflict in France", J.I.H. 11 (1971): 23-57.

Walter John and Wrightson Keith, "Dearth and Social Order in Early Modern England", PP, 71, 1976: 22-42.

Weingrod, Alex, "Patrons, Patronage and Political Parties", CSSH, 10 (July) 1968: 377-400.

Wiser, W.H., Hindu Jajmani System: A Socio-economic system interrelating members of a Hindu Village Community in Services, Lucknow Publishing House, UP, 1969, (1936).

Wolf, Eric. "Kinship, Friendship & Patron Client Relations in Complex Societies", in M.Banton, Ed., The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies, New York, 1969: 1-22

Wolf, Eric, 1956 "Aspects of Group relationships in a Complex Society: Mexico", A.A. 58: 1065-78.

—————, "Types of Latin American Peasantry: A Preliminary Discussion," A.A., 57, 1955: 452-71.

Wong, R.B. "Food Riots in the Qing Dynasty" J.A.S., 41(4), 1982: 767-798