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## **GENESIS OF VOLUNTARISM IN ODISHA: A SOCIO-ARCHAIC TRACE**

### **Introduction**

In recent years the debates about activities of VOs have become more explicit, forceful and flashing than ever before in India. It is now wedged in a triangle of contrary opinions. On one angle, there is extreme view like “NGOs turning to sleeper cells-working against the public interest and plotting against the government in potential collusion with foreign powers” (Singh 2017); while at other angle there is counter view that bureaucratic elite Government selectively ‘marshal the data’ with intentions of pushing out the NGOs from developmental landscape. While these two trends of opinion harp more on empirical citations, at the third angle there is an analytical frame which emphasizes that improving the functioning of democracy needs enlivening of ‘civil society’ and ‘social capital’ ( Swain and Blomkvist 2001). Even the mighty problems of poverty and unemployment can be reduced to “zero” by activating the citizens and civil society through the systems of ‘social business’ and ‘social banking’ (Yunus 2018). On the face of the failure of State and market to deliver the services, social scientists from both the liberal and communist regimes more or less subscribe that voluntary sector contributes towards deepening of democracy. (Frumkin.2002:1-2). The neo-liberal ideologies in both the regimes have also reinforced such realizations. Indian policy makers, on their part have come to realize that VOs are a potential ‘collective force’ and it is through proper scientific assessment that they can be utilized in nation building.

The social scientists, carrying forward this focus on civil society maintain that in between State and citizenship society there exists an autonomous space of ‘civil society’ and mediating institutions in the context of a democratic polity (Beteille 1999). These mediating institutions draw their essence from ‘social capital’ which in itself refers to the body of social values, cultural practices, pattern of relationship and degree of mutual trust in a society. It is this ‘social capital’ that fosters or deters the collective pursuance of shared goals.

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Voluntary organizations emerge, grow and sustain on the 'social capital' of a particular society. As such, the concept of voluntarism becomes a 'historical category' which needs to be analyzed at micro level with reference to its 'historic and contextual' specificity. Functioning of voluntary organizations is better explored in the light of their genesis, source of inspiration and rationale for collective action in specific socio-cultural contexts. Since Odisha exemplifies a distinct regional society in the pluralistic culture of Indian sub-continent, the present work has been devoted to find out the nature and course of voluntarism in Odisha during earlier periods of its history in the context of indigenous socio-cultural processes.

For the purpose, the authors have framed an operational definition of the voluntarism as the study of voluntary actions today crosses the disciplinary boundaries. Voluntarism, in its action frame, connotes the commitment and willingness of an individual or a collective to contribute from own resources towards common welfare. It arises from the perceptions of a need and insufficiency of the system to cater to that need. Voluntary action includes any self-initiative either by an individual or a collective which is undertaken with the objectives of 'public good' (Tandon Rajesh 2002). Though voluntary action is taken up by choice and is non-coercive in nature, in course of its continuance, it fosters a social milieu which reinforces the voluntary drive in the man.

With this operational definition, the present authors have relied upon the archival sources, historical accounts, epics, folk-songs and little traditions as the primary source of data. Participant observation of the activities of some popular voluntary organizations and focused group discussions with people from cross sections of society having interest in voluntary sector have been also conducted. The data so collected have been put to interpretative analysis and inferences have been drawn on the basis of logical reasoning.

### **Odisha Scenario**

Odisha exemplifies an ancient and authentic regional society. (Acharya, 2008). A perceptive reading of the scant and scattered intellectual reflections about Voluntarism in Odisha points to a trend of opinion that the organized voluntarism in the province started under the spell of British and Christian Missionaries (Mohanty and Singh, 2001: 6-7, Naik, 2012: 1-5).

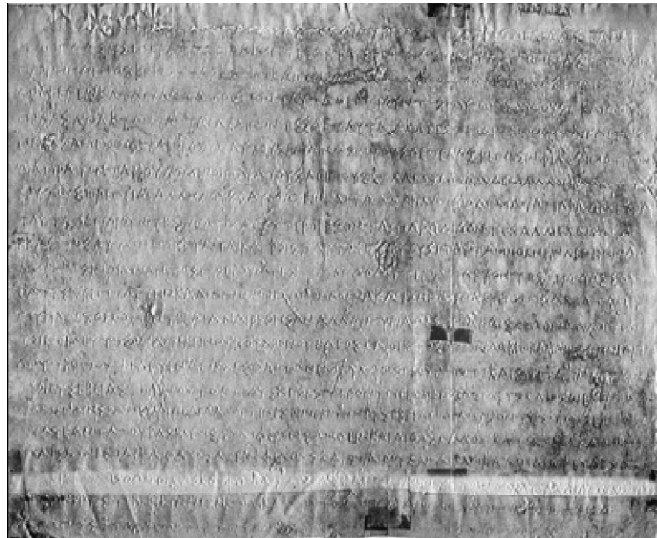
But a microscopic look into the earlier social history of Odisha evidently reveals various trends of organized voluntarism in different phases of Odishan history. In fact, the true tale of Odisha's administration, polity, economy, culture and heritage cannot be told without referring to the spirit of voluntarism, philanthropy and patriotic adventurism of the people in general; and, reformative actions of many voluntary groups in particular. The present article lights upon some such striking socio-cultural processes in Odishan history.

### Voluntarism in Odisha up to 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

The antiquity of Odisha is in obscurity. Of course, the scholars like Dr G C Mohapatra cite prehistoric Stone Age, copper implements and primitive abodes that can be referred to this part of Indian Sub-continent (Panigrahi 1981:3). These areas presently are located in various parts of the districts like Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Puri and Cuttack. But these antiquities have hardly been put to any systematic historical analysis on the basis of which some logical inferences can be drawn about voluntarism during that period.

Though Odisha, in its ancient name *Kalinga* can be found in maritime literature, yet it comes to definite historical record from the time of Kalinga War of 261 B.C. (1981: 11). Details of the war are not known till the date. Ashokan Rock- Edict-XIII gives a brief reference to its arresting effects from which some account of the war operations can be glanced (Thapar, 1961, 1973). The edict reads that in 8<sup>th</sup> year of his coronation the *Piyadassi*(beloved of the God, the King) conquered Kalinga in which-

A hundred and fifty thousand people were deported, a hundred thousand were killed and many times that number perished. Afterwards, now that Kalinga was annexed, the Beloved-of-the-Gods very earnestly practiced Dharma, desired Dharma and taught Dharma. On conquering Kalinga the Beloved-of-the-Gods felt remorse, for, when an independent country is conquered the slaughter, death, and deportation of the people is extremely grievous to the Beloved-of-the-Gods, and weighs heavily on his mind.



**Figure 1: Kandahar Rock Edict of Ashok in Greek, Afghanistan 1963. Edict-XIII**

The devastations of the war were such that it struck a war like Monarch with remorse and he himself became horrified at the immense bloodshed caused in the war. He forbade his war-like career and sheathed his sword forever (1981: 12). Another such edict written in *Bramhi* script mentions that “*In conquering indeed, an unconquered country, the slaying, death and deporting that occur there, considered extremely painful and serious by the Devanampriya*”. Historians personify “*Devanampriya*” with Ashok (1981:29. Acharya, Pritish, 2018).

One folk-talk says, ‘The sacred land of *Kalinga* transformed *Chandashoka* to *Dharmashoka*. Before attacking *Kalinga* the emperor Ashoka was a war loving imperialist and a killer. He killed his ninety nine brothers and tortured all the opponents brutally in course of his ascendancy to the throne of Magadha. He killed thousands of people in various wars. For all these acts he was being called *Chandashoka* (the killer Ashoka). After winning the Kalinga War, he accepted Buddhism and was transformed to a peace lover & preacher for which he was named *Dharmashoka* (an adherent of religion).

Such archaic evidences lead us to infer that there was large voluntary participation of the people in the war activities. There is no definite evidence to know whether *Kalinga* was a monarchy or a republican dominion at the time of Kalinga war. No rock edict mentions about the King whom Ashoka defeated in war. He has always referred to *Kalingans*. Some social anthropologists like Dr. R.K. Mukherjee opine that Kalinga was a republican country and it had an extensive area and a vast population during the time of Kalinga War (Shantaram, 2018).

***Inference 1-*** Whatever might be the political system of that time, it can reasonably be inferred that people shared spirit of voluntary militarism



**Figure 2: Hatigumpha**

and they faced the war bravely against the aggressor. Without people's voluntary militarism, the war would not have become so titanic and devastating. The degree of patriotism among the mass was so high that even the victor himself had to change his policy to win the heart of the people for consolidating his rule. He sheathed his sword and embraced Buddhism forever. Though we cannot give a detail account of voluntary activities during this period, it can be asserted with a degree of certainty that military voluntarism for protection of the territory of the motherland. The welfare activities of Ashoka and the administrative directions engraved in other rock edicts also testify the existence of voluntarism in civil matters.

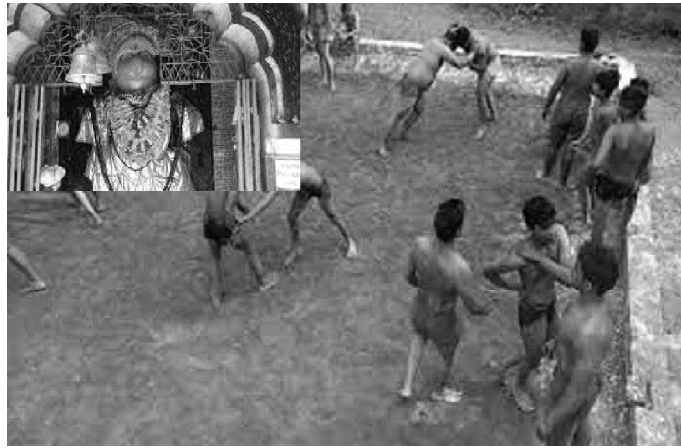
After Ashok's rule, the history of Odisha again enters to darkness and nothing definite is known about the then polity, culture and economy of the State. The next light spot is provided by a long but mutilated engraving in the *hati-gumpha* (elephant cave) of Khandagiri-Udayagiri hills (located in Bhubaneswar, the state capital) engraved by the King Kharavela of *Chedi* dynasty. The historians and epigraphers have difference of opinion about exact timing of the reign of Kharavela which varies from 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. to 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. (1981:29). The inscription in *hati-gumpha* chronologically records the events of 13 years reign of the mighty King Kharavela. Some lines in the engraving indicate about the voluntary participation of the people in the military and welfare activities. It records that Kharavela, in 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign made an expedition towards *Patiliputra* in north, the main goal of which was to restore the military fame of *Kalinga* that was demolished by Ashoka. In his expedition the *Kalingans* joined him in large number as warriors. After conquering the *Magadhan* King Bahasatimitra, Kharavela brought back the seat of the *Jaina* which was taken to *Magadha* by a Nanda king. This *Magadhan* King is identified as emperor Ashok who caused Kalinga war in 261 B.C.

The rock engraving also mentions that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of his reign, Kharavela promoted socio-cultural festivals with active participation of the people. A number of programs on dance, song, instrumental music and feasts were organized through collaborative efforts of the people and the King. There has also been reference to organization of *samajas* (peoples' forums like *santhasamaj*, *Jainasamaj* etc). The King, in order to encourage the voluntary participation of the people in welfare activities, remitted the taxes in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of his reign. Jainism was the ascending religion of that time. The King also engaged himself in many socio-religious events for encouraging voluntary activities of ascetics who were spiritual guardians of the masses.

**Inference-2.** The above cited evidences lead to the logical corollary that State supported voluntarism at community level was present in Odisha during 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. Since in those days the King was the State and he enjoyed the powers of sovereignty, the very participation of the King in voluntary activities showed some or other degree of state recognition.

***Inference-3.*** It goes without saying that military operations are the rigidly organized operations and the voluntary militia who participated in it must have carried forward the organized activities.

After Kharavela the early history of Odisha again remains incomprehensible for some centuries in the lack of any systematic historical evidence. From early Christian century till 1563 there has been rise and fall of various dynasties in this land. The historical records and pilgrims' accounts of these centuries indicate the fact that people of *Kalinga* had always been alert and responsive to the cause of their nation.



**Figure 3: A *Jagaghar* in Puri, Odisha**

The voluntary spirit of militarism for safeguarding the sovereignty of the nation got blended with theocratic impulses from 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards. During the reign of King ChodagangaDev the tradition of *Jagaghara* started in Puri<sup>1</sup>. The *Jagagharas* otherwise known as *Jaga-Akhadas* are the places where the local youth practice the martial art. The centers are the wrestling arenas. The traditional dance and music like *Gotipua* are also drilled here. This dance form is based on balancing of the physical movement wherein the dancer gains complete control over his physical movement. Each *Jagaghara* has one presiding deity and song of its own which stirs bravery and heroism among the members. This tradition emerged from common voluntary efforts of some servitors of *Srimandir* (temple of lord *Jagannath* at Puri), local community and *Nagas* who volunteered to assist the royal army in protection of the *Jagannath* temple and *JagannathDesh* ( *the country of Jagannath* ). These *Jagagharas* also serve as cultural and entrainment community centers for the youths. They are a part of many ritual traditions of *Srimandir* and social functions in Puri.

The king (Anangavimadeva-III, (1211 A.D. to 1238 A.D.) declared himself as *Devadasa* (the servant of the *Jagannath*, lord of the Universe). With this declaration the King demonstrated that his prime duty was to serve the people who were children of God *Jagannath*. It was from this time that the theocratic impulses dominated state rule throughout Hindu reign in Odisha. During such periods, the people voluntarily accepted authority of the King as *chalanti-pratima* (moving image lord *Jagannath*) and rendered voluntary military services to keep up the dignity of the *Jagannath desh* (the land of lord *Jagannath*). During Ganga period there developed a mighty, large and well-organized military system.

**Inference-4.** Odishan collective voluntarism turned theo-patriotic and was institutionalized during 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

Gradually, towards the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D. these theocratic ideas got firmly rooted in the minds of the people. A belief grew up among the Odias that dying in the battlefield for the sake of motherland was the surest way to attain *Mokshya* (salvation from rebirth). In the epics of Saraladasa's *Mahabharata*<sup>2</sup> there is the description that to sacrifice one's life in battle field while fighting for the motherland is the supreme act that fetches the person so dying a safe place with God in the heaven and exonerates him from all sins incurred during this life.

**Inference-5.** The ideal of patriotic militarism became the highest 'culturally defined goal' in Odisha towards 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D. sanctified by the Sanskrit citation *Janani Janmabhumscha Swargadapi Gariyasi* (Mother & Motherland are higher than heaven) and a number of similar verses from Odia *Mahabharata*.

Besides the regular Military Force, the Kingdom had a large associated Army composed of local militia who served the King voluntarily, and in many cases, hereditarily over generations. Among the local militia were the farmers who were engaged in agrarian activities during the time of peace and took up weapons at the call of aggression on the motherland. A special type of voluntary groups called *Paika-Akhadas* emerged at community level during that time to support and carry forward the community militarism. These *Paika-Akhadas* were "warrior gymnasiums" (Wikipedia 2018). They functioned like training and practicing centers of war techniques with the sole objective of protecting the sovereignty of motherland. People participated in it voluntarily. In present days these *Paika-Akhadas* are also functioning as practice centers of *paika* art, music and dance.

The kings from their side also honored those voluntary fighters who exhibited extraordinary bravery and gallantry in the wars with distinguished military titles. A vast number of Odia populace today bear these 'military titles' as surnames which their ancestors received from the *Gajpatis* and local Kings. An overall survey of the State reveals 21 such major military

adornments held by a large chunk of population in different parts of Odisha (Table-1 in Appendix A).

***Inference-6.*** The organized and institutionalized military voluntarism of the people added in great measures towards *Kalinga* consolidating as a mighty empire and *Kalingan* Empire extending from river *Hoogly* in North to river *Godavari* in the South.

Certain trends of group level voluntarism are also traceable during 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. in the matters of economic activities and cultural extension of *Kalinga*. One popular folk talk in Odisha says, *KalingareSunaPhale*(the gold is available in *Kalinga* like fruits in the trees). This saying is also corroborated by arguments of some historians that economic prosperity and shining sovereignty of *Kalinga* attracted avarice of the *Magadhan* Emperor, Ashok to attack the Kingdom.

The cultural extension of *Kalinga* was spearheaded by the *Kalinga Sadhabapuas* (the business community of Odisha); through a competitive overseas trade relation with South East Asian countries that started even before 350 B. C. (Wikipedia, 2018). Such trade link of *Kalinga* with many countries was considered a threat to commercial and cultural interest of *Magadhan* Empire which was said to be another important cause of Ashokan aggression (Santaram 2018). The *Manjusrimulakalpa* of 6<sup>th</sup> century also mentions the Bay of Bengal as *Kalingodra* (Kalinga Sea), signifying the prominence of *Kalinga* in the maritime Images trade (Wikipedia, 2018)<sup>3</sup>. This is further substantiated by Ptolemy's (the Greek Geographer) account of Odisha in 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. <sup>4</sup>. YaunChwang's (the Chinese pilgrim) accounts of Odisha in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D and the reports of Arab and Persian writers of 9<sup>th</sup> and

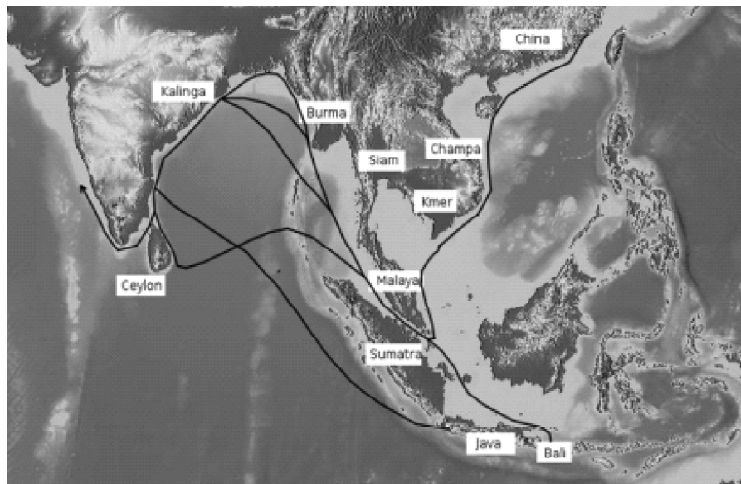


Figure 3: Maritime Sea Route from Kalinga . Source- Google



10<sup>th</sup> century A.D (1981: 93). These sources have described about sea ports and sea-born trades of Odisha. The 'little traditions' of *Baliytra* (the trip to Bali) and *Boitabandana Utsav* (worshiping of boats voyaging for foreign trade) celebrated with much pomp and fair in coastal Odisha till the date bear testimony to such activities. The 'little tradition' of *Khudurukuni Osa* prevalent in coastal Odisha provides folk evidence.

The factors that motivated people for maritime trade were not simply the economic gain or the profit. The voluntary for showcasing Kalingan art & culture was the motivating factor that drove the people for hazardous sea voyages. Going on sea voyages for foreign trade was socially regarded a glorified and heroic act. It was a higher order of 'culturally defined goal'. Moreover, the foreign wealth which *sadhabas* brought was being viewed as wealth of the state while safeguarding the individual ownership of the traders. In other words, the doctrine of democratic welfarism was the guiding principle of state rule. Through this trade *Kalingan* culture spread to the lands like Cylone, Burma, Malaya, Peninsula, Saim, Kambuja, Java, Sumatra, Boneo and Bali.

**Inference -7.** The fact that Odishan economy and culture maintained high prosperity in spite of the rise and fall of ruling dynasties and *Kalinga* could establish its trade colonies in far off lands corroborates a kind of 'shared prosperity' and 'inclusive growth' in the state. It also corroborates the voluntary participation of people in socio-economic matters without which it would not have been self-sustaining. In foreign trade, there was a perfect harmony between individual interests with group action aimed at accomplishment of shared objectives.

Voluntarism is also very much distinct in the growth of Odia literature. Odia linguists have a consensus that Odia alphabet & script is the amalgamation of Sanskrit, *Prakrita* and *Pali* that evolved to its present form over a long period of time.<sup>5</sup> But the growth of Odia literature can be traced back to 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. During this time a native Odia Kapilendra Dev usurped the Ganga dynasty and became the mighty king of Odisha from 1435-1467 A.D. An Odia becoming the King of *Odra-Desha* (another ancient name of Odisha) after centuries filled the Odias with new sense of self-identity, self-dignity and enthusiasm.

By this time the Odia alphabet and language had evolved to a phase of literacy use. Some form of oral Odia literature was also prevalent in shape of folk song and folk-dance like *Ghoda-Nacha* (horse dance), *Sakhi-Nacha* (doll dance) *Danda-Nacha* (the dance undertaken as penance to please the Mother Goddess). But formal written Odia literature was yet to develop. This was the felt need of that time. The than learned persons mostly the *Brahmins* were Sanskrit lovers and did not prefer to compose the scriptural texts in Odia language. Scriptures in *Sanskrit* was supportive to the *Brahminic* dominance in religious and ritual matters. Such a situation stimulated

voluntarism for development of formal and written Odia literature. SaralaDasa, a *Sudra* by caste and *Varna* (a caste in the lower strata of Hindu society) took up the cause voluntarily and responded appropriately to call of the time. His poetic genius laid the foundation stone of Odia literature. SaralaDasa composed three great poetic works namely *VilankaRamayan*, *Mahavarat*, and *DandiRamayan*. Among all these, the *Mahabharat*, his *magnum opus*, contains more than 100,000 verses each consisting of 2 lines and covering 18 volumes of printed pages. The *VilankaRamayan* contains about 28 hundred verses and the *ChandiPuran* contains 5500 verses. The former covers 80 printed pages and the later 155 printed pages.

Of course, some Sanskrit loving orthodox Brahmins resisted this Odia version of the sacred text by the person of a lower caste for some time. But the resistance could not continue long before the rising tide of voluntarism for growth of mother tongue.

***Inference-8.*** The regime of a native Odia during 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. 'freed the jean of voluntarism out of bottle' ushering in growth of Odia literature which was the felt societal need of that time.

The voluntary venture of SaralaDasa shook off the caste prejudice regarding composition and citation of sacred texts. The learned men across the caste hierarchy conjointly contributed towards growth of Odia literature giving rise to an age of *Panchasakha* (Five Friends) in classical Odia literature. They were Jagannatha Dasa, BalaramaDasa, YosabantaDasa, AnantaDasa and Achyutananda Dasa.

Jagannatha Dasa composed the epoch making literary works like *Bhagabata*, *Gupta Bhagabata*, *DarubramhaGeeta* and 8 other long verses. He was a learned *Brahmin* (the topmost caste in the caste hierarchy). Through a judicious combination of Sanskrit and local Odia words he coined a standard Odia literature. The simplicity of his verbatim and meters made the work quite acceptable to people. Rapidly it gained popularity leading to formation a separate socio-cultural institution named *Bhagabata-Tungi* in almost all villages of Odisha. *Bhagabata* "is not only an excellent creation in Odia literature but has been a guiding light of socio cultural life of Odias. The establishment of *Bhagabata-Tungi* in all villages across Odisha and regular recitation of the verses of *Bhagabata* has defined the life & living of Odias over the centuries" (Das, 2016).

Each and every member of this *Panchasakha group* has contributed voluntarily towards growth of Odia literature in welfare of the entire humanity. None of these personalities bear the surname of his caste. They offer themselves as *Dasas*(servants) of different deities who are being worshiped in different regions of Odisha. These deities symbolize the 'collective consciousness' and identity of the respective regions. From all their writings it become evidently clear that they have taken the pain of composing such voluminous epics even

against *brahminic* resistance for enriching Odia literature. They themselves have mentioned in these works that they are person of no significance and they have composed the epics for welfare of all people and all creatures.

**Inference -9. (i)** Voluntarism for growth of Odia literature shook off the caste prejudices in the matters of sacred texts. It also enriched social solidarity with a kind of ‘we-feeling’ among Odia speaking people. The community feeling of being an Odia and contributing towards growth of Odia literature transcended the parochial feelings and to some degree contributed towards weakening of social segregation between castes and sub-castes.

**(ii)** The institution of *Bhagabat-Tungi*, an off shoot of voluntarism in Odia literature played a major role in the process socialization and social control during that time.

On the whole, a five pronged voluntarism is traceable in the history of Odisha up to 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

- Expansion of *Kalingan* art & architecture in far off lands.
- Contribution towards economic growth and prosperity of the State.
- Patriotic militarism for protecting territory of the sacred motherland.
- Safeguarding religious sovereignty of *Jagannatha* Cult.
- Growth & expansion of Odia literature.

### 16<sup>th</sup> Century jerks to Voluntarism

Towards 16<sup>th</sup> century, this spirit of voluntarism got a serious jolt because of many socio-cultural and socio-historic reasons. The prominent causes can be broadly categorized under two following heads.

- (i) Emergence of *Sahajiya-Vaishnavism*** and its’ royal patronage under the spell of *Gitagovnda* of Jayadev and *Goudiya-Vaishnavism* propounded by SrichaitanyaDev was protuberant cause of gradual decline in Odishan Voluntarism during 16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. These two forms of *vaishnavism* were different from the basic tenants of old *Jagannatha-Vaishnavism*. *Jagannatha-Vaishnavism* stirred the spirit of heroism and bravery for the motherland and religion. It kept the people united to fight against any foreign aggression on the motherland and *Jagannatha* Temple. The people voluntarily took up rigorous practice and penance to skill themselves in martial art. But *Sahajiya-Vaishnavism* was a type of *bhakti* movement of *Krishna* cult (Sethy, Minakshi 2015). It taught for passive and complete submission before the lord accepting the conditions of life as His will. Recitation of *Gitagovinda* and *Nama-snakirtana* with dance and music were inducted into daily *nitis* (daily rituals) of *Jagannatha* Temple by orders of the King (Banarjee, 1930)<sup>6</sup>. Such rituals in their social effect diluted

single minded devotion to lord *Jagannatha*. The dilution of single minded faith in *Jagannath* also eroded the social solidarity among Odias to an observable extent.

- (ii) **The second factor was continuous warfare of PrataprudraDev and his final defeat.** The continuous warfare of King PrataprudraDev against Vijayanagar Empire and other forces in far-flung territories in northern and southern India had exhausted the army and voluntary local militia. The wars were no more being fought for protection of Motherland's territory. They were imperialist acts. Because of gradual change at ideological and religious level, dying in battle field while fighting was no more being perceived as a sacrifice to attain salvation. The defeat of PrataprudraDev in the hands of Krishnadev Raya finally in the year 1519 A.D. shook the people's faith on the King as 'moving image' of Lord *Jagannatha*.

**Inference-10.** Under the spell of *Sahajiya-vaishnavism*, the theocratic militant voluntarism came to be replaced by enraptured exaltation through *Bhajans* and *Kirtans*. This also led to dilution of religious conviction because of diversified religious interests. With dilution of religious faiths, the strength of social solidarity started declining. Such a situation permeated with general decay in moral character brought about sharp decline in the theo-patriotic voluntarism of the Odias which led to gradual downfall of *Kalingan* Empire.

Finally Odisha lost its independence to Afghans after the death of King MukundaHarichandan of Bhoi dynasty in 1568 A.D. The Muslim rule suppressed and oppressed all the acts of patriotic voluntarism in this land for the sake of strengthening their rule. This continued for about two centuries during which people were conditioned to accept life's condition as their fate.

The intervening Maratha rule (1751-1803 A.D.) though was not very hostile to the socio-cultural framework of Odishan society was also not helpful for restoration of collective voluntarism. Recognizing the 'common sentiment' and peoples' commitment for *Jagannatha* Temple, the Maratha rulers did not want to bring any change in age old traditions of the temple. On the other hand, they assigned some land and villages to the temple for meeting the expenditure towards rites and rituals (Santaram, 2018). The same principle was also followed by them in management of other old Hindu temples that were centers of peoples' emotions. This was a strategy of Marathas to keep the common sentiment in good humor and not to re-invoke the patriotic militarism. By pacifying the community sentiment the Marathas "used this land as a spring board for fulfillment of their economic ambitions" (Sodhganga, 2018).

**Inference-11.** The theo-patriotic voluntarism of Odias went on declining throughout 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The voluntary activism remained confined to organization of ritual activities and religious functions. Religious

life got shrouded with rites and rituals. These occasions provided the platform for common get together and community life.

### **Voluntarism at the turn of 18<sup>th</sup> Century.**

The declining trend of patriotic voluntarism of Odisha touched its bottom at the turn of 18<sup>th</sup> Century. This was clearly manifested in British occupation of Odisha at the begging of nineteenth century. The British contact with Odisha began during 1<sup>st</sup> half of 17<sup>th</sup> Century. As was usual, the East India Company established its first factory in Odisha at Hariharpur in the year 1633 A.D. The Company initiated its diplomacies to occupy the region after the battle of Buxar in 1765. Since then, various British lords from Lord Clive to Lord Cornwallis tried to get possession of Odisha through negotiation with *Maratha* rulers. But all their attempts had failed (Hunter, 1872: 39). The British with their own assessment of the low level of people's commitment towards the Maratha rule finally decided to conquer Odisha through military power.

The British were very much aware about collective sentiment of people associated with *Jagannatha* temple at Puri. They knew it well that any attack on the temple would raise the old theo-patriotic voluntarism among the people and in that case it would be difficult for them to snatch possession of Odisha from Maratha rulers. In consideration of this cultural reality, Wellesley while giving orders for occupation of Odisha on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1803 specifically instructed Lt. Col. Campbell to employ all possible means to preserve the honor and dignity of *Jagannatha* temple and all religious edifices. He was instructed to safeguard the sanctity of the rituals, security of the *Brahmins and other priests* along with their families and properties. (Dhir, 2016).

Accordingly, the British General followed the same course of action in his conquest of Puri. After crossing the Chilika Lake, British army marched up to Manik-Patana (this place bears great religious importance for Odia community and stands witness to the Kalingan victory) without any resistance. But he halted there and sent conciliatory message to the priests of *Jagannatha* temple assuring them full protection. With the assurance from Harcourt, the priests of *Jagannatha* temple welcome the invaders and Puri was occupied on 18th September, 1803 without any fighting and bloodshed. After that *Barabati* Fort was occupied by them on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1803. Prafulla Das (1997), the noted freedom fighter and social activist rightly observes that during British conquest of Odisha "was an easy task for them". British troops occupied many places without any resistance. Only two Europeans and thirteen Indian soldiers were killed and sixteen European and thirteen Indian soldiers were wounded in whole operation. "By bribing the feudal kings of Odisha, cajoling the smaller ones and threatening the common men with show of power they overpowered the province of Odisha in no time as if it was a walkover match" ( Das 1997:47-48).

**Inference -12.** The gap between Kalinga war, Kharavela's conquest of *Magadha* on one side, and almost un-resisted British occupation of Odisha on other corroborates that the patriotic voluntarism of Odias was benthonic at the turn of 18<sup>th</sup> century. It also substantiates the fast eroding 'social capital', 'social solidarity' along with voluntary participation of the people in State matters at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Inference-13.** During that time, the collective voluntarism centered round arrangement of *Namajangya, Astaprahari, Snakirtans* and safeguarding the purity of *Jagannathism*. It was mostly passive and theocratic in nature. This type of indigenous voluntarism was functional in keeping up the unitary strength of Odia culture, vale system, social structure and language against the onslaught of Islam and Christianity for centuries. It saved Odishan culture and identity from complete demolition during that period.

#### **Reawakening of Voluntarism during early part of 19<sup>th</sup> Century.**

Consolidation of British Rule in Odisha breed a type of 'cultural apprehension' among people that the western culture would retract the basic fabrics of Odishan Culture and British would substitute *Jagannathism* with Christianity. This apprehension steadily took the shape of a 'perceived threat' in minds of the people. A silent cultural movement stirred at community level for maintaining purity of the Odia culture and religion. The collective voluntarism of Odisha that was subdued by alien rule for more than two centuries gradually started resurging at the call of the culture and religion.

**Inference- 14.** Cultural apprehension of losing separate identity of *Jagannath* religion and Odia culture led to resurgence of collective voluntarism during early part of 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

At such times, the British policy of exploitative land revenue & land settlement caused lot of loss to the farmers and landlords. The policies of salt monopoly and police oppression evoked peoples' dissatisfaction and annoyance. Such situations of injustice and deprivation reignited the social activists and the voluntary workers. They started mobilizing people against unfair policy of the British. The land lords also provided financial and moral support to the activists. The 'cultural-apprehension' against Christianity provided the socio-cultural backup to their activities. Gradually people's dissatisfaction and anger empowered by voluntary activism spiraled in to the great Paika Rebellion (1817 A.D.) which was said to be 'the first ever organized revolt against British Rule'. The revolt continued in different phases for almost 8 years up to 1824 A.D. The social activists carried the message of revolution to other parts of the State. The revolt spread out. Some such major revolts were *Kondh-Meli* (organization and revolt of the tribe Kondh) in Ghumusr from 1835 to 1837, Sambalpur Revolt led by Vir Surendra Sai from 1829 to 1848, *Banki-Meli* (organization and revolt in Banki area at present in the district of Cuttack)

during 1840, Angul-*Prajameli* (peoples' movement in Angul area) during 1848. These rebellions sent red-signals to the British administration. Of Course, they managed to quell the revolts through their strategies of 'Divide and Rule' along with threat of gun. But the adamant British Raj was made aware of the effectiveness of people's strength empowered by rising voluntarism.

**Inference-15.** The movements during early part of 19<sup>th</sup> Century were completely indigenous in nature and they sprouted from the local civil causes. Mainly they arose from people's sufferings because of government tyranny and exploitative policies. The immediate objectives of these voluntary movements were restoration of people's rights. Voluntary participation of the people and stubborn spirit of the leaders provided strength to the revolts.

All these happened before Odishan voluntarism came under the influence of Christian Missionary. Of course, the Christian Missionaries reached Odisha during February, 1822. But their philanthropic, educational and evangelical works though beneficial in some pockets was quite limited and failed to make any substantial impact in removing general misery. It was principally because; they claimed to represent a superior culture and criticized all native institutions. Though Britishers introduced the doctrine of equal citizenship in India, they were not inclined to implement the "claims of equal citizenship between themselves and their native subjects" (Beteille, 1999: 2588). It was only propagated by the Missionaries to show superiority of Christianity against the old caste system in Hindu society. The collective conscience and 'social mind' of the Odias did not accept such attitude of the Missionaries. The early Christian converts also formed a small exclusive community without much social charisma or leadership. The geographical area of operation for Missionaries in Odisha was also limited. In the independent princely estates the Missionaries could not carry on any activity effectively.

### Findings

On face of the evidences, analysis and inferences presented in the preceding paragraphs the present authors deduce the following observations/hypotheses which can be taken up for further examination in other studies.

- Odishan Voluntarism is unique with a distinct evolutionary trend of its own. It is rooted in basic socio-cultural dynamics of ancient and medieval Odisha. Historically speaking, Odishan voluntarism can be traced back to 350 B.C.
- Hitherto available evidences show that Odishan voluntarism emerged from secular issues of expansion of Odishan art and culture got extended to protecting national territory, safe guarding cultural purity, defending religious sovereignty, maintaining linguistic identity and contributing towards growth of Odia literature. The scope of Odishan

voluntarism during pre-missionary era ranged from charity to mobilization and direct field action.

- Odishan voluntarism is a melting pot of individual charity with socially shared objectives for 'public good'. Arrangement of common feeding centers and primary health services for the poor and needy in *nama-sankirtans, melas, melanas, bhetghat, yatras* and other socio-religious functions are some such shining examples wherein individual charity driven by the doctrine of *Dana*(giving) and socially shared goals of safeguarding cultural identity are harmonized.
- Odishan voluntarism exhibits a type of equilibrium between 'social capital' and economic prosperity of the state as exemplified in maritime trade.
- Odishan voluntarism represents a case of synchronization between individual gain and national interest. For example, the foreign wealth that the individual traders brought from maritime trade was being viewed as the wealth of the State while safeguarding the individual ownership of the traders.
- Odishan voluntarism during ancient and medieval times was also a perfect blending and assimilation of spiritual goal of salvation at individual level with national goal of territorial protection.
- Odishan voluntarism is marked by a higher degree of humility, modesty and non-assertiveness. The voluntary leaders do not boast of themselves nor do they go for self-advertisement. A prohibitive folk-saying in Odia *NijaDindimaNijePitana* (do not bit your own drum) seems to have been by imbibed them. They derive self-approbation, silent serenity and self-satisfaction from their services.
- The trend of Odishan Voluntarism, in Durkheim's terminology, is a course of evolution from 'mechanical to organic solidarity'. In Odisha, the voluntary associations among the individuals emerged from the 'collective consciousness' on social issues underwired by religion. Religion of *Jagannath-Vaishnavism* reinforced a type of mechanical solidarity (Durkheim 1912:201) among the people and propelled the group action for public good. In modern times, with coming in of modern State, Constitution and Citizenship this type of voluntarism is gradually turning towards 'organic solidarity' with increasing degree of professionalism.

The calamity prone geo-climatic conditions of Odisha intensify the need for self-help community action. Major parts of Odisha are caught within the draught, cyclone and flood prone areas in disaster risk map of India. Odishan coast is the hunting ground of tropical cyclones (Mohapatra, 2014). The devastation and miseries caused by the natural



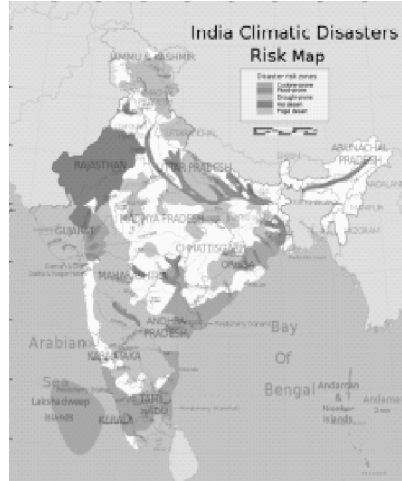


Figure 4: Disaster Risk Map of India

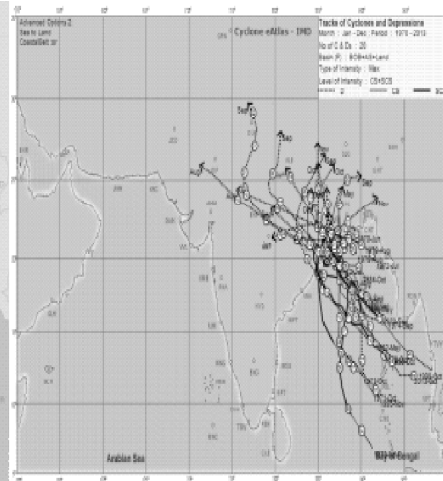


Figure 5: Cyclone tracks in Odisha

disasters keep the ‘community voluntarism’ in active form for immediate response to emergencies.

- As an exogenous force, Christian Missionaries stimulated the indigenous voluntarism in a number of ways. In zealous response to the Christian Missionaries some Hindu Missionaries like *MahimaCult* and *BramhooSamaj* grew up and became powerful social force in Odisha during 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Mohapatra and Ratha 2018).

## Conclusion

In divergence from other parts of India, Odishan voluntarism during ancient days was not a mere offshoot of the religious doctrines of *Dana*, *Jivedaya*, *Seva* etc. Many scholars have argued that Indian voluntarism during pre-missionary era was mostly individual acts being undertaken as a part of the fulfillment of religious obligation (Dube 1976, Narayan and Rao 1989, Lawani 1999:29, Mowli 1999:8-9, Iyengar 2000, Tandon 2002:2). On the other hand, Odishan voluntarism during pre-Christian era is marked by social impulses of spreading the prominence of Kalingan art and culture, bringing wealth to Kalinga through foreign trade, self-help through community action for mitigating effects of natural disasters, protecting the territory of sacred motherland from foreign aggression, growth of Odia literature and breaking the caste taboos in matters of sacred text. Religion of *Jagannathism* provided a social base of solidarity to these impulses. On the whole, it can be said that the traditional ‘social capital’ of Odisha nurtured the impulses of community action because of which *Kalingan* art could rise to the level of distinction and *Kalinga* could be established as a wealthy & prosperous land. *Jagannathism*,

the religion of majority in ancient and medieval Odisha fostered the ideals of bravery, patriotism and economic pursuit for prosperity of the motherland. Community solidarity and village self-sufficiency linked with division of labour institutionalized through caste system were basic realities of Odishan social life ( Srinivas 1993)<sup>7</sup>. These treasures of the 'social capital' in this part of the country have not been formalized and codified in shape of any document or study for which it has not received due attention in analysis of voluntarism in Odisha. It is quite natural that the scholars who have reflected on voluntary activities in Odisha have relied upon the available documents for which many analyses about role of voluntarism in Odisha has highlighted the works of Christian Missionaries in both in coastal and hill regions (Mohanty and Singh, 2001: 6-7, Naik, 2012: 1-5).

In continuation of the genetic elements in Odishan voluntarism, most of the voluntary organizations in Odisha today are generalists and system-conformists. They want to complement and supplement the state efforts in developmental landscape and innovate within the system. Of course, no exhaustive and universally accepted information is available about the number of voluntary organizations and the sectors in which they are operating in Odisha today. The reported numbers from various Government of Non-Government sources varies from 1581 to 1, 33,573. A list of such sources along with the years is presented in Table No-2: Reported number of VOs in Odisha. (Placed at Appendix-A).

In the days of neo-liberalism, the traditional 'social capital' of Odishan society is getting transformed to 'modern social capital' (Putnam 1995). Concomitantly, the uniting base of voluntarism in Odisha is rapidly shifting from 'mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity'. The old type of unilateral voluntary activities based on community sentiment back by religious unity is rapidly changing towards new type of multilateral activities with a degree of professionalism. In this process of transformation the old essences of Odishan voluntarism viz. conformism, sublimity, innovation within the system, gradual reform, synchronization between individual goals and socially shared objectives have been continued in their new forms of organic relationships with the larger system.

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2. Though SaralaDasa’s *Mahabharata* has been composed along the lines of Sanskrit *Mahabharat* of Vyasa Deva, it is not a mere translation. It is the first formal Odia literature. The narration in the epic is tinged with values and ideals of Odia social life in common man’s language. The epic is regarded sacrosanct and its prescriptions are voluntarily adhered to by Odias.
3. Wikipedia 2018. “Maritime History of Odisha” [wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritime\\_history\\_of\\_Odisha](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritime_history_of_Odisha). Google Search (accessed on 8 March, 2018).
4. “Brief History of Odisha”, *Odisha Reference Annual, 2004*, Government of Odisha in Information & Public Relation Department, 12th Chapter: 24-25
5. State Museum Odisha, Bhubaneswar preserves an authentic depiction about evolutionary growth of Odia script (Visited on 3 April, 1986).
6. The inscription on the left hand side of *Jayavijaya* gate of the *Jagmohan* (audience hall) of *Jagannath* temple reads that in the fourth *Anka* Wednesday (approximately during July, 1499 A.D.) orders were issued for the performance of dance from the end of the evening *Dhupa* to *Badasinghara* (the bedtime). Banarjee, R.D. (1930) also mentions about this in his *History of Orissa, Vol.1*, Calcutta. *Madalapanji* (temple record) of *Jagannath* temple also mentions about introduction of this ritual in the temple.
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## Appendix- A

**Table 1**  
**The Royal Titles awarded by Kings for voluntary militarism**

Sl. No	The Title	English Translation
1	Routrai	Commander of the troop
2	Paschimakabata	The commander of the march in west direction.
3	Uttarakabata	The Commander of the march in north direction
4	Dakshinakabata	The Commander of the March in south direction.
5	Dandasena	The soldiers on the main royal road.
6	Samanta	The loyalist feudal master who pays yearly tribute to the king and render military aid. They have also to maintain a small troop of soldiers for the king.
7	Maha Samanta / Pradhan Samanta	These titles are superior to <i>smanta</i> in the hierarchy. PradhanSamanta is in the topmost strata under whom there are MahaSamantas. All these Smantas are required to fulfill their military obligations for the king.
8	Satru Mahasamanta	A concurred military chief who remains loyal and pays tribute to the victor king and fulfills his military obligation.
9	PratiSamanta	A military chief who as hostile to the king but however fulfills his military obligation under the large military strength of the King.
10	Samantasinghara	A feudal Master who defeats Samanta rebelling against the King and makes him loyal to the King.
11	Nayaka	A title similar to that of Samanta who renders military service in the war field and leads a troop.
12	Dandanayak	A title superior in hierarchy to Nayak who rendered some executive and judicial service for the king.
13	Patra	The councilor to aid and advice the king in military and administrative matters.
14	Mohapatra	A title superior to Patra in the hierarchy
15	Routa	A farmer who serves as soldier at the time of war.
16	Routrai	A title higher to Routa
17	Routaraja	The highest title in the Routa category. At times the title is borne by the king himself.
18	Dalabehera	The person who could lead a group of soldiers in right direction.
19	Singha /Rayasingha / Manasingha / Baliarsingha.	The titles signifying the valour and strength of a person who projected extraordinary bravery in war field. These titles are organized in the hierarchy.
20	Pahadasingha	A title signifying extraordinary military bravery of a person who inhabits the hilly track of the kingdom.
21	Pradhan /Khuntia / Dandasena /Dandapani/ Badajena /	These titles signify the recognitions conferred on the people associated with war and military operations.

*Source:* Voter List of the Various Constituencies in Odisha. Most commonly found titles have been mentioned here. Apart from these titles there were a number of other war related citations conferred by the King to the people who voluntarily helped war operations in one way or other.

**Table 2**  
**Reported Number of VOs in Odisha**

Sl No	Authority/Agency	Year	No of VOs reported	Source
1	Government of Odisha	1994	5816	<i>Inventory of Existing VOs in Orissa.</i> Available in Planning & Convergence Department, Govt of Odisha.
2	Government of Odisha	2005	4441	<i>District wise Inventory of Operating VOs in Orissa.</i> Available at Planning & Convergence Dept., Govt of Odisha.
3	Inspector General Registration, Odisha	2008	1,33,573	<i>Registration Circle Wise number of VOs.</i> Available at IGR office, Cuttack, Odisha.
4	Study Commission	2009	1.3 lakh	<i>The Indian Express, 7 July, 2010, Wednesday.</i> Available at Jayadev Bhawan Library & Reading Room, Bhubaneswar. Also available in <a href="http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream">shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream</a>