



GAZETTEER OF INDIA

ORISSA

BALESHWAR



ORISSA DISTRICT GAZETTEERS



BALESHWAR

By

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PREFACE

The first District Gazetteer of Balleshwar (old spelling was Balasore) was written by L.S.S.O.' Malley and published in 1907. Since then, significant political, social and economic changes have taken place in the country. In the context of far-reaching changes, the general scheme and contents of the present series of district gazetteers have been adapted to the needs of the altered conditions. Hence, the present series of district gazetteers are not mere revisions of old gazetteers but a comprehensive account on various aspects of the district.

Historically, strategically and culturally Balleshwar is one of the most important districts of Orissa. In fact, till the British occupation of Balleshwar in 1803 it was the cockpit of Orissa. Innumerable traces of forts and military strongholds available from post-Gupta period to the 19th century A.D., testify the military significance of this border district.

Its proximity to the presidency of Bengal, facility of communication through the Orissa coast canal since 1886, the establishment of modern press, publication of Balleshwar Sambad Bahika as early as 1868, the initiation of modern education, etc., aided the growth of consciousness in a more conspicuous manner. The role of Fakir Mohan Senapati, Radhanath Rai and their compatriots for development of Oriya literature, for reformatory movement of Oriya literature, and for cultural resurgence, and the institution of National Society in 1878 and subsequent establishment of Balleshwar Town Hall paved the way for a wider awakening in the general syndrome of Indian era of movement for independence. Balleshwar also joined from the beginning in the Oriya movement for unification of all the Oriya-speaking territories under one administration. The impact of the philosophy of violence for independence movement had had its manifestative results in Balleshwar during the period of the First World War and the role of Jatin (Bagha) became an episode of all India fame.

By the time of Gandhiji's Civil Disobedience Movement, Balleshwar was in the forefront of disobedience movement against the British Raj. The historic Salt Satyagraha at Inchudi earned for Orissa a national fame. The most distinctive feature of Balleshwar's role in the national movement was the active participation of the common men and women in great numbers irrespective of caste and creed. It is this remarkable phenomenon which accounts for the episode of Eram where during the crucial days of the Quit India movement the tragedy of the nature of Jallianawallabagh was enacted, killing the largest number of men at any single place in any single repressive measure in the whole of India. Eram stands as a testimony to the spirit of national struggle which the common people of the district had developed through the final phase of the Gandhian movement.

While Balleshwar entered the final phase of the freedom struggle, a revolutionary upsurge in the princely state of Nilagiri for elementary civil rights for the down-trodden people gave a signal for the movement all over the Garhjats and drew the attention of national leadership as a crucial feature of the liberation movement. It began the process of integration of the feudatory states with the Union Government of India in which Orissa, particularly Balleshwar, led the way for others in India.

Baleshwar, the cradle of Orissan renaissance, is not only rich in legacies of the modern period but also abounds in archaeological remains of the ancient period. Though a systematic exploration is yet a desideratum, the inscriptions, coins and other antiquities discovered so far throw considerable light on the political history, artistic achievements and cultural life of the people through centuries.

The district until recently had the distinction of having been called the 'Granary of Orissa' with stretches of green paddy fields, a network of rivers, blue hills, extensive meadows and an exciting beach. The sight of green expanse of paddy fields with patches of hamlets thickly shaded with trees has its serene appeal to the eye of an visitor. A popular health resort Chandipur on the billowing bay displays a unique aspect; the sea-water recedes kilometres away just to stage a come back after an interval. Presently, it has attracted the attention of the whole world for the successful experimentations of test ranges, such as, Agni, Prithivi, Akash, etc. The administrative headquarters, Baleshwar, is the principal town with remains of antiquarian interest. It was also "a great sea-town", as it is called in Bruton's account, "where to much shipping belonged and many ships and other vessels built". According to V. Ball, a famous Geologist, Baleshwar was probably the first place where modern Indian method of manufacturing iron was practised. Bhadrak is the chief commercial town of the district and famous for goddess Bhadrakali. The temple of Sainthia which contains a strip of the bedding of Sri Chaitanya is a relic of great sanctity for the Vaishnavities. At Paliabindha is a temple dedicated to Lord Biranchinarayan which indicates the efflorence of Sun worship in this area. Chandbali and Dhamara were the important ports of Orissa. Pipili was once the important port on the Orissa coast and contained settlements of Portuguese and Dutch. Historically, Jaleshwar is one of the most interesting places in the district with the remains of a large fortress. Poet Dinakrushna Das lived here about three hundred and a half century back. Near the village Tukaroi in 1575 A.D., occurred the great battle of 'Mughalmari. Raibania is famous for the ruins of an important old fort which protects Orissa from several foreign invasions. Gohiratikiri in Dhamnagar police-station saw the tragic fall of the last independent Hindu king, Mukundadeva, being murdered in the battle field by his treacherous generals and Orissa finally passed into the hands of the Muslim rulers of Bengal in 1568 A.D. At Kaupur, there is a hot spring called Debarkund which is regarded as sacred. Kuldiha is a famous hunting ground high above the hills amidst the reserved forest. Nilagiri is famous for the manufacture of stonewares and utensils. Remuna is famous for Krishna worship. Chandaneswar and Aradi are famous Saivite centres of Orissa. Kupari, Ayodhya, Solampur, Khadipada, Kasba, Jayampur and Abhana are the places of interest where distinct traces of Buddhism are still observable. Charampa, Pundal, Baleshwar town, Bhimpur and Jaleshwar were the important Jaina centres of the district. So, the stream of main Indian religions, such as, Hinduism, Buddhism, Saivism, Saktism and Vaishnavism flourished in this part of Orissa since early days.

The contribution of Baleshwar towards the growth and sustenance of Oriya language and literature is immense. In the mid-nineteenth century, when systematic efforts were worked out by some Bengalis to abolish the Oriya language altogether, the people of Baleshwar under the leadership of Fakir Mohan Senapati and with the august compassion of John Beames, the then Collector of Baleshwar, fought for preserving the identity of Oriya language. Fakir Mohan and Radhanath heralded a new age in Oriya

literature and their mighty defence to Oriya language against heavy odds is a story by itself.

In the field of music, dance, drama and theatre, the district has unique contributions. Mughal Tamasa of Bhadrak area is a typical style of farce and satirical play on the decadent and sensuous habits of Mirzas.

In compiling this volume all available references which include various survey and settlement reports, Annual Administrative Reports on the Nilagiri ex-state, Feudatory States of Orissa by 'L.E.B. Cobden-Ramsay, L.S.S.O' Malley's Balasore District Gazetteer and other old-time records have been made use of.

The drafts of Baleshwar District Gazetteer was approved by the Gazetteers Working Committee consisting of following members :

Member, Board of Revenue, Orissa	.. Chairman
Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Revenue Department, Government of Orissa	.. Member
Chief Editor, Gazetteers, Orissa	.. Member
Dr. Khageswar Mohapatra, Professor in Oriya, Viswa Bharati, West Bengal	.. Member
State Editor, Gazetteers, Orissa	.. Member Secretary

After scrutiny and approval by the Working Committee, the draft chapters were sent to the Gazetteers Advisory Committee for approval. The Gazetteers Advisory Committee comprises the following members :

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Shri Bijay Krushna Mohanty, Director of Mines, Government of Orissa	.. Member
State Editor, Gazetteers, Orissa.	.. Member Secretary

My thanks are due to the Chair-persons and Members of the Working Committee and the Advisory Committee for sparing their valued time to go through the chapters in detail.

To give the readers an idea on the physical aspect of the district and important places a general map prepared by the Directorate of Survey and Map Publications, Orissa, Cuttack, has been given at the end of this volume. In the case of place names the system followed by the Survey of India, New Delhi, and the Director of Land Records and Survey, under Board of Revenue Orissa, Cuttack, has been adopted. The photographs are supplied by different organisations. We are thankful to these organisations. Diacritical marks are given in the glossary only.

We thank the local officers of both Central and State Governments, Heads of Departments; and those non-official persons and organizations who have rendered ungrudging assistance for compilation of this volume. Our thanks are due to Dr. Kishori Mohan Patra, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of History, Utkal University, for writing the Chapter II (History) of this Gazetteer. The Chapter XI (Revenue Administration) was written by the Chief Editor, himself. Shri Amulya Kumar Satpathy, who retired as Joint State Editor was in charge of this district gazetteer. The draft chapters of this gazetteer were sent to the press for printing during his tenure of service. Shri Gour Prasad Patnaik, Joint State Editor, Gazetteers, took the pain to go through the entire draft and made proof-corrections at the final stage of printing.

The following staffs of the Revenue (Gazetteers) Department have worked wholeheartedly and ungrudgingly in the preparation and publication of this volume; Shri Amulya Kumar Satpathy, Joint State Editor (Retd.); Shri Basanta Kumar Das, Joint State Editor (Retd.); Shri Gour Prasad Patnaik, Joint State Editor; Shri Prafulla Behera, Oriya Translator; Compilers—Shri Ramakanta Mishra, Shrimati Bijoylaxmi Praharaj, Shrimati Umamoni Senapati, Shri Chittaranjan Das, Shri Bidyadhar Palai, Shri Subodh Chandra Mohapatra and Shri Subrat Kuanr; Shri Saret Chandra Mohapatra, Section Officer; Shri Rabindra Kumar Swain and Shrimati Gayatri Senapati, Assistants to Oriya Translator; Shri Durga Charan Mohapatra and Shri Braja Kishore Parida, Senior Assistants; Shri Satyananda Mahapatra, Head Typist; Senior Typists—Shri Akshaya Kumar Barik and Shri Haribandhu Ghadei; Junior Typists—Miss Binapani Bose, Shri Pinaki Satpathy and Shri Dwarikanath Maharana; Shri Sudarshan Sahoo, Diarist-cum-Recorder; Shri Laxmidhar Patnaik, Driver, and all the Class IV employees of this office.

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Bhubaneshwar,
the 21st June, 1992.

NRUSINHA CHARAN BEHURIA

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