Evolutionary Process of State Formation in the 'Bhum' Territories Situated in the Fringe Areas of the Chhotanagpur Plateau with Special Reference to Mallabhum: An Archaeological Approach

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Abstract

There are eighteen bhum territories (so far identified) apparently emerged in the densely wooded region of the Chhotanagpur plateau and its adjoining areas in modern Orissa, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal during the early-medieval-medieval period. There the chiefs could organize more or less independent or semi-independent autochthon principalities or Rajyas which were supposed to be in some form of pre-state or sub-state condition. The paper accomplishes to identify the processes of state formation, so to say, the secondary state formation in the 'bhum' territories evolved in the fringe areas of the Chhotanagpur plateau with special reference to Mallabhum. Mallabhum, supposed to emerge in 8th century AD apparently in modern district of Bankura, The chiefs were successful in forming separate identities in administrative set up while performing crucial role in organizing the major religious cults through the processes of Hinduization and Rajputaijation for the consolidation of social and moral authority there. This process of acculturation, for decades, exhibited preference for redistributive performances in the society at large. However, the independence of Mallabhum was, nevertheless, conditioned by the strategic dealings presumed by the rulers of Delhi.

Key Words: Chhotanagpur plateau, bhum, chief, state formation, Hinduization, Rajputaization, acculturation.

The focal point of analysis of this write up is to identify the processes of state formation, so to say, the secondary state formation in particular and the reconstruction of the regional history of the '*bhum*' territories evolved in the fringe areas of the Chhotanagpur plateau region (22° - 25°30'N and 83°47' - 87°50'E[2]) with special reference to *Mallabhum*. This sort of attempt applied in the present work is essentially a derivative of the pan-Indian notion of state formation during pre-colonial period. Since the middle of the nineteenth century the plateau region of Chhotanagpur has been explored by several British administrators and colonial indologists,

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Indian archaeologists and historians as well. In recent years, Dilip K. Chakrabarti, R. K. Chhottopadhaya and others have undertaken field survey in the core and fringe areas of the plateau. In the context of the study regarding state formation, particularly the secondary state formation in Europe, Africa as well as India, discussions regarding the emergence of statehood (in different dimensions), the legitimization process of the state-power, the synthesization of the elements of political suzerainty with the religio-cultural processes of the *bhum* territories in the Chhotanagpur plateau region received attention in the scholarly world.

The methodology followed in the present work is essentially a documentation of considerable published and unpublished archeological records related to the evolution of *Mallabhum* in the Chhotanagpur plateau region followed by brief field investigations in some related areas.

The term '*bhum*' actually denotes 'a territory apparently defined by the limits of political control'[3]. Paramananda Acharya mentions this terminology and this vocabulary still remains 'among names of the jungly and hilly frontier districts, we find so many ending in *bhum*'[4]. So far eighteen *bhum* territories have been identified by Paramananda Acharya comprising *Manbhum, Mallabhum, Samantabhum, Gopabhum, Nagbhum, Senbhum, Singhbhum, Dhalbhum, Sikharbhum, Tungbhum, Surbhum, Aditbhum, Bagbhum, Bhawalbhum, Bhanjabhum, Brahmanbhum, Barabhum* and *Birbhum* evolved as forest principalities in the Chhotanagpur plateau region mostly during 10th century AD to 18th century AD.[5] Along with the *Acharanga Sutra*, the *Brahmanda* section of the *Bhavisyat Purana*, the Oriya translation of the *Bhagabata*[6] and many other epigraphic records mention *bhum* territories as early in the medieval period.

The *bhums* were ruled by the tribal *chiefs* who were successful in maintaining their indigenous administrative machineries in the remote forest-clad undulating terrains of the Chhotanagpur plateau. They could organize more or less independent or semi-independent autochthon principalities or *Rajyas*, which were supposed to be in some form of pre-state or sub-state condition. Their relationships with the neighboring principalities and to a certain degree with the distant and hierarchically superior administrative and revenue machinery of Delhi constituted the kernel of their internal dynamics.

Among eighteen *bhum / bhumas* this article seeks to concentrate on *Mallabhum*. Having its capital in the city of Bishnupur[7], *Mallabhum* had its extension not only on the tracts of *Sikharbhum, Gopabhm, Senbhum,* and *Bagbhum*[8] but also entirely over the modern district of Bankura and the adjoining district of Hooghly, which might be once within the territory of

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[3] Acharya, P. (1945) '*A Note on the 'Bhum' Countries in Eastern India*'. *IC*, No. 2, Vol. XII,   October-December, p. 38

[4] Sanyal, H. (1987) 'Mallabhum'. In, Sinha, S. ed. *Tribal Polities and State Systems in Pre-Colonial Eastern and North Eastern India*, p. 37. Calcutta.

[5] Acharya, P. (1945) *op. cit.*, pp. 37- 46.

[6] Sanyal, H. (1987) *op. cit.*, p. 98.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[8] Chattopadhyay, R.K. *et al.* (2009) '*Archaeological Sequence of a Region: Bishnupur/Vishnupur Sub-Division, District Bankura,* West Bengal'. *Puratattva*. No. 39. p. 80.

Mallabhum[9]. The *Malla rajas* extended their boundary by acquiring the territories of modern Damin-i-Koh in Santal Parganas, some parts of present East and West Medinipur and a part of the eastern section of modern Barddhaman[10]. The *bhums* have evolved in the heart of the *Radh / Rarh* region[11] of present day West Bengal. *Mallabhum* was surrounded by *Gopabum* and *Senbhum* on the north, *Samantabhum* on the east, *Manbhum* and *Shikharbhum* on the west and *Tungabhum* on the south.

Bishnupur, lying in the dense forests between the rivers of the Dwarakeswar and the Silai, and the rugged character of the natural environment in the peripheral zone of the plateau along with the non-permanent and non-penetrative nature of the then central administrative power of Delhi constituted the geo-political ground, which acted as an umbrella, defending the existing social structure of the local lineages of these forest principalities for a considerable period of time. Till 16th and 17th centuries AD, the Mughal governors did not interfere much into the affairs of *Mallabhum*, a vassal principality of the Mughals, paying a fixed tribute or *peskhash*[12]. This sort of policy of Mughal governors, in general, could provide major opportunity to *Mallabhum* to emerge as a major *rajya* for a considerable period of time. However, this *bhum* territory, afterwards, began to confront regularly the demand for arbitrarily increased *peshkash*[13] by the Mughal power since the beginning of the 18th century on the one hand and the expansionist attitude of the *zamindars* of Barddhaman gaining the support of the Mughals and the havoc caused by the Marathas (1740-1748) finally brought the end of the Bishnupur *raj* to mere spectator of history.

Nonetheless, the *Malla* polity, evolved as a major *rajya*, was primarily divided into four administrative divisions[14] namely, the *samanta* territories, the *talukdari* area, the *ghatwali* area, and the *khalsa* area. Several kinds of land grants were given in the *khalsa* area. The *jagir* and *chakran* grants were provided to the employees as salary or allowance; the *devottar* and *vaishnavottar* grants were the maintenance grants for the *devatas* and the *vaishnavas*[15] respectively. The *vaishnavottar* grants were given to the Brahmins for their maintenance. Non-Brahmins were often provided with *mahatran* grants as a token of respect to them. In local tradition of *Mallabhum*, the subordinate *chieftains* are known as *samantas*, paying tribute to the *Malla rajas* as a gesture of the nominal allegiance. The *talukdari* and the *ghatwali* areas were occupied by the *talukdars* and *sardar ghatwals* respectively under different conditions. The *Malla* rulers developed highly centralized machinery for managing the resources of the state. The employees of the *raja* directly managed the administration of the *khalsa* area. *Mandals* or *Majhis* were there to govern the internal matters that grew up in between the *raja* and the village men. In the tribal villages, the headmen were there to manage their internal affairs. The *mukhya* acted as the caste headman of such villages.

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[9] Acharya, P. (1945) *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[10] Roychoudhury, H. C. (1943) 'Physcal and Historical Geography' in Majumder, R. C. ed. *The History of Bengal*, Chapter I, Vol, I, p. 20.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12]Grant, J. (1955) 'Historical and comparative analysis of the finance of Bengal.' in Firminger, W.K. ed. *The Fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company*, (Reprint),p. 397. New York.

[13] Sanyal, H. (1987) *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

The *sardar ghatwals* would enjoy some sort of autonomy in the respective social system. Lands were given to the Brahmins for their services of the *sholoana* to the deities of the village; temples were built with the permission of the *raja*. The *rajas* of *Mallabhum* had consecrated a large number of deities and had built several temples and granted large quantities of rent-free land as *debottar*, *vaishnavottar*, *brahmottar* and *mahatran*[16]. The temples, the *Vasinava mathas* and *akhras* were the centers of religious and cultural activities in the villages. The role of the *Mallla* rulers in the organization of the major religious cults of *Indra*, *Siva*, *Durga*, and *Visnu* was a crucial factor in the process of consolidation of the social and moral authority of the ruler.

Initially, the *Mallas* are known as the devotees of *Siva*, but later they became *Vaisnava* adopting *Gauriya Vasinavism*. In course of the development of *Gauriya Vasinavism*, there emerged a synthesis of the liberal approach assuming the *Bhakti* movement on the ideology of *Smarta Puranic Brahmanism*[17]. *Gauriya Vasinavism* created a link between the *raja* and the people[18]. In view of that, Hitesranjan Sanyal summarizes that the *Malla* polity initiated an effort to balance the two contradictory forces in a single system. There was an inevitable need for a centralized power structure and at the same time, the impact of the existing autonomous forces in the social structure can hardly be ignored. The *rajas* enjoyed 'common consent' behind the execution of the *chiefly* authorities in *Mallabhum*.

To trace the sequence of emergence or the origin of the *Malla* ruling lineages there is a dearth of knowledge regarding the formation of political structure[19] in *Mallabhum*.

In *Mallabhum* the autochthon population consisting of the *Mal* and the *Bagdi*, were the tribes intimately connected with each other and the latter respected the former with high esteem. It appears that the *Mallabhum raja*, often recognized as the *Bagdi raja* of Bishnupur, enjoyed the seat of the *Malla* (the cognate group of the *Mal*) ruling authority for many centuries. Another significant fact is that the *Malla rajas* assumed the title of *Singh* and it was done not by descent. The genealogical account of the *Singh* dynasty of Bishnupur has been outlined by scholars like R.C. Dutt[20], W.B. Oldham[21] and others on the basis of the chronicles preserved by the Bishnupur *Raj* family. According to the genealogy of the *Malla* dynasty, Raghunath *Singh* was the founder king[22] of the Bishnupur *Raj*. According to Hunter[23], the parentage of Raghunath *Singh* can be traced from the *kings* of Jainagar near Vrindavan. The chronicles of origin, however, do not help ascertaining either whether the *Malla rajas* were originally *Bagdi* or descended from a high born *Kshatriya* family; the *Malla rajas* 'claim to be Kshatriya'[24]. There lies a gap in assessing

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[20] Dutt, R.C. (1882) '*The Aboriginal elements in the population of Bengal'. CR*, Vol. LXV, No. CL, pp. 233-251.

[21] Oldham, W.B. (1894) *Some Historical and Ethnical Aspects of the Burdwan District*. pp. 185-86. Calcutta.

[22] Banerji, A.K. (1968) *West Bengal District Gazetteers: Bankura*. p. 89. Calcutta.

[23] Hunter, W. W. (1876) A *Statistical Account of Bengal*. Vol. 4. pp. 276-78. London.

[24] Sanyal, H. (1987) *op. cit.*, p. 79.

sources of evolutionary stages reasonably and it assumes to be a central problem in tracing the history of the evolution of Mallabhum[25]. There is a mythical link found between the autochthon rulers and the 'kshatriyah' norms being brought about by the Brahmanical agency in an unknown time and the provision of providing virtual legitimacy to the newly conceived dynasty replacing the *Bagdi rajas* of the region. There is a legendary story behind the incarnation of Raghunath *Singh*, the founder of the *Malla* dynasty. This mythical account, perhaps, acts as a device to fulfill the missing link of transferring the authority and culture from the hands of the aboriginal people to the persons holding the surname of North-Indian ruling dynasty as well as importing the cultural outlook in a forest-clad tribal tract situating almost beyond the Gangetic influence. Dutt holds that 'they had made out about their respectable royal descent when they became powerful in western Bengal and assumed Hindu civilization'. The genesis can be assignable prior to the advent of the *Islamic* rule in Delhi. The history of long independence of *Mallabhum* worked as the seal of their *Kshatriyahood*. Belonging to the *Bagdi* ancestry, the *Malla rajas* were keen in their recognition as *Kshtriya* kings operated in a situation where both the heritage of the indigenous social and cultural forces (as represented by the tribal people and the lower castes) and the influence of the organized and systematized social order flourishing the ideology of Smarta Puranic Brahmanism had strong relevance. It may be that the flood plains were crucial for the augmentation of political ideologies; the sculptural activities played important part in spreading the process of *acculturation* [26] and *Rajputaization* [27] among the indigenous people. There are numbers of temples built under the patronage of the *Malla* rulers in between 8th and 12th centuries AD[28]. "… Vishnupur, covered by a Hindu dynasty … was founded in eighth century and endured until the eighteenth … ."[29]

So far as the political history is concerned, following *Ramacharita* of Sandhyakaranandi[30] *Mallamahi,* the land of the *Mallas* (the wrestlers) was ruled by the *Malla* princes since 8th century onwards[31]. *Mallabhum*, emerged as a powerful[32] kingdom in western Bengal, not only in its capability of maintaining the military might for a long period but also in the consolidation of their political power and achieving the technique of gaining consent of the people behind its rule. The *rajas* were engaged in the administrative works, revenue earning and in making provisions for producing agricultural surplus. Apart from that, the idiom of socio-political and religious splice reveals that the processes of *Hinduization* and *Rajputaijation*[33] were in practice there for decades. The secluded tribal people had maintained their self-sufficient and autonomous social

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[26] Sinha, S. (ed.) (1987) *Tribal Polities and State Systems in Pre-Colonial Eastern and North Eastern India.* p. ix. CSSS. Calcutta.

[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 304-05.

[28] Sanyal, H. (1987) *op. cit.*, p. 74.

[29] Mukherjee, R. K. (1940) *Indian Land System.* Vol. II. p. 157. Calcutta.

[30] Singha. M. L. (1384 BS) *Paschim Radha Tatha Bankura Samaskkriti.* pp. 52-53. Visnupur. (in Bengali).

[31] *IAR* (1983-84) pp. 92-93; *IAR* (1984-85) pp. 92-95.

[32] Sanyal, H. (1987) *op. cit.*, p. 73

[33] Sinha, S. (1995) 'State Formation and Rajput Myth in Tribal Central India'. In, Kulke, H. ed. *The State in India 1000-1700*, p. 305. New Delhi.

organizations, while, the majority of the population was organized under the caste system which was involved within the hierarchal social order on the other. The royal authority was engaged in the religious activities like the construction of temples, adherence of different ritualistic practices, keeping contact with the *Vaisnavite* centers of northern India, encouraging music and after all exhibiting preference in the redistributive performances in the society at large through the process of evolution. These factors could activate the signals of 'stimulus diffusion' of the state formation process in the homelands of the tribal people in *Mallabhum*. The principality of *Mallabhum* was positioned in an intermediate level between the segmentary structure of the tribal polity on the western uplands and the highly organized and centralized land revenue system and military administration of the *Mughals* on the east.

Regarding the processes of secondary state formation in *Mallabhum*, from archaeological point of view, due to space constraints, very few representative sites are being mentioned in the following:

Bishnupur: The modern subdivision of Bishnupur, being a major secular and religious site, lies on the eastern part of the present district of Bankura. Here the archaeological significance can be traced from the subsequent lines of the natural hollows. The *Malla rajas* had built arrangements for holding surface drainage which helped forming lakes, popularly called *bandhs*[34], used during the period of crisis. In Bishnupur, there were the relics of a complete structural set-up of the fort found surrounded by moats. The remnants of the secular structures are there within mud-made large boundary wall. There were two huge doorways, two storey galleries meant for the lodging of the troops, a dungeon for the disobedient and the unruly insurgents. The *Dalmadal / Dalmardan* cannon is a rust-free canon being 3.8-9 and 12/1.2 feet in length.

The relics of the palace and the masses of dilapidated brick-built edifices reveal that the buildings were set up in a central place of the fort. The residential buildings were made of white marbles. The relics of the structures reveal a total arrangement of a prosperous settlement; apart from the residential abode, there were special arrangements relating to the play of drama; provision of green rooms and decorated rooms were also there. There were storehouses and imperial coffer, armories, barracks for the accommodation of soldiers, stables for the horses and the elephants. There is brick-built large compound wall encompassing the palace. There were inner apartments encircled by another wall. The buildings were multi-storied. There were the imperial secretariat building and the court situated on the north-eastern side of the royal house.

In Bishnupur, a large number of 'magnificent' extant temples, made either of laterite or of brick. The period in between the end of the 16th century and the end of the 18th century witnessed a drive in the temple-building activity. There are some wonderful temples[35], namely, the *Jor-Bangla* temple *Radha-Shyam* temple *Lalji temple, Krishna temple, Balaram* temple, *Nilkunjabihari temple* and *Kesar Ray* temple found within the campus of the fort. The holy places dedicated in the names of *Malleswara* and *Madan-Gopal* are there in the northern side of the

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[34] Chattopadhyay, R.K. *et al.* (2009) op. cit., p.80.

[35] Biswas, S. S. (1992) *Bishnupur*. Archaeological Survey of India. pp. 1-5. New Delhi.

citadel. The *Rash-mancha*, *Shyama Rai* temple, *Madan-Mohan* temple**,** *Nandalal* shrine are the earliest extant religious edifices located on the southern region of the fortification. There are other shrines[36], viz., *Kalachand* temple, *Radha-Madhab* temple, *Radha-Gobindo* temple, *Jor Mandir*, found scattered over a larger area situated on the south and south-west of *Lalbandh*. In all these temples the *sikhara* structure, the Orissan styled *nagara-sikhara* structure, the *ekaratna*, the *pancharatna*, the *navaratna,* the *thatched roof* structure, *do-chala* structure joined by *char-chala* structure and *at-chala* structural style represent a unique 'Bengali style of architecture'. The cultural heritage of the *Malla rajas* has been reflected in the construction of palace, fort, temples and excavation of tanks along with other socio-religious contents.

Dihar: (J. L. No. 136) Dihar lies on the left bank of the river Dwarakeswar. At the top of the mound, there are the *Sailesvara* or *Sallesvara* and the *Sandesvara* or *Saresvara* temples of c. 10th century AD[37] with disappeared *sikharas* built of lateritic conglomerate popularly called 'kankar'. The terracotta art specimens along with potsherds and stone - sculptural fragments have been discovered in course of field investigations. Albeit the art specimens are considerably inferior to those of Pakhanna yet a comparatively higher standard of imaginative skill has been displayed in the fabrication of animal figurines which include rams, elephants and other anonymous animals. Several stone beads have been collected by Singha[38] from Dihar which include carnelian (spherical), agate (etched barrel shape, hexagonal), crystal (disc shaped micro bead), chalcedony, jasper (pentagonal, collared spherical), garnet, amethyst, opal, blue feldspar, marble, greenstone (disc shaped micro bead), crystal and other types of stone. From 1983-85 and 1990-95, excavation works have been organized by the Department of Archaeology, the University of Calcutta, by A.C. Pal in Ma Bhavanitala mound, Hirapur mound and Manasatala mound[39]. The comprehensive stratigraphy of the excavations at Dihar reveals:
Phase I: BRW using EVF phase (pre-metallic).

Phase II: BRW using EVF phase (pre-metallic) associated with metal (copper and iron).
Phase III: Early historic or historical assemblages showing continuity of BRW.
 Phase IV: Early- medieval.
Phase V: Medieval (pre-*Malla* or *Malla*).

Phase VI: Medieval / Late medieval (*Malla* rule).

The significant findings comprise human figurine fashioned up to shoulder, terracotta female torso, a piece of terracotta animal figurine, artifacts, metals, stones, bones. The reports reveal a chrono-cultural status of EVF phases and its significant impacts 'as a

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[36] Bandyopadhyay, A. K. (1971) *Bankura Jelar Purakirti*. pp.79-96. Paschimbanga Sarkar. (in Bengali).
[37] Bandyopadhyay, A.K. (1971) *op. cit*., pp. 52-53.
[38] Singha. M. L. (1384 BS) *op. cit.,* pp. 68-108. Visnupur. (in Bengali).
[39] Chattopadhyay, R.K. *et al*. (2010) 'Dihar Excavation 2008-09: An Interim Report'. *Pratna Samiksha*. New
   Series. Vol. I. pp. 9-33.

nucleated settlement complex responsible for the spread of EVF communities in the adjoining areas'.

Pakhanna/Pokharna: (J. L. Nos. 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65) The village is situated under the police station of Barjora on the south bank of the river Damodar. Ample evidence of the early historic phase like three specimen of terracotta female figure (mother goddess of pre-Mauryan era) and proto-historic BRW, one beautiful female figurine, terracotta tablet and miscellaneous objects like net sinkers-beads- toy carts-rams-dabbers-balls-rattles-pottery stands-lamps, bones and ivory objects, a pretty stone image of *Simhavahini* or *Durga* and other indistinct substances like ring wells have been recorded during the excavation and exploration of this site.

One beautiful female figurine holding a *suk* or parrot is identified as *Apsara* or *Yaksini* and this gracefully adorned model has been portrayed by Biswas as 'the lady with a bird'[40]. It now remains in the collection of the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art.

Major excavation works at Pakhanna have been undertaken by the department of Archaeology, the University of Calcutta, from 1996-97 to 1999-2000[41] by C. Gupta, A.C. Pal, M. Mitra and A. Datta. Again, R. K. Chattopadhyay and A. Datta undertook another phase of excavation work during 2001-03. The excavation work at Bhairabdanga (PKN 1) revealed habitational activities along with the extension of industrial complexes tentatively ascribable to a sequence of Mauryan, Kushana, Gupta and post-Gupta periods. Excavation at Satbaridanga (PKN 2) showed disturbances in the cultural deposits and destruction of the cultural remains due to the consequences of flood. However, the collected artifacts are indicative to a tentative chronological order beginning from the Mauryan to the early-medieval Pala-Sena period. Excavation work at (PKN 4) Kalyanpur exhibits antiquities from the early historic periods in spite of the presence of disorder in the settlement site. Apart from the artifacts, the remains of a human skeleton appear to be the major discovery from the site. Despite the presence of NBPW, black polished ware, grey ware, buff ware and pale red ware the overall tenet of the cultural period can hardly be put forward due to the absence of the publication of the excavation report. The excavation works at Garherdang / Rajargarh (PKN 3) and Itepara (PKN 5) carry evidences of numbers of terracotta ring wells in the riverbank as well as the settlement areas suggesting the possibility of the development of a net work of irrigation system around the concerned region. However, at Gaherdang and Itepara, the remains of occasional brick structures seek to demonstrate that the bricks are the 'Gupta brick' type. The specimens of mud walls, furnaces/ovens/kilns, metal workshops, ring wells etc attempt to display the 'complex structural phase' of the earlier period which cannot be dated 'due to the lack of associated cultural materials'.

Some other sculptural specimens of Hindu religious cult of early-medieval period, dated

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[40] Biswas, S. S. (1981) *Terracotta Art of Bengal.* pp. 31,156. Delhi.
[41] *IAR*, (1996-97) pp. 177-78; *IAR*, (1997-98) pp. 200-03; *IAR*, (1999-2000) pp. 97-98.

11th-12th century AD, have been recorded from Rakkhakalitala, Dharmarajtala (Hattala), Manasatala (Kalyanpur) and Sivtala (Poddarpara). Thus an image of *Mahisamardini* from Rakkhakalitala, some fragmented parts of pedestal as well as some unnamed images from Dharmarajtala (Attala), a *Jaina* votive *sputa*, i.e., *Caumukha* or *Chaturmukha* as well as a fragmented image of *Visnu Lokesvara* from Manasatala (Kalyanpur), an old *Siva Linga* and a fragmented image of *Surya* have been recognized. Allied with it, some structural ruins have been found near the riverbank and around the modern habitational areas. Gopalpur, an adjacent village of Pakhanna, retained habitational remains of early medieval period. The stone sculptures (measuring 8cm - 3cm in length and 4cm - 1cm in breadth) collected from this site are kept in Swarupnarayan temple and in Gajantala or Sannyasidanga. The votive images and miniature sculptures, comprising the image of *Visnu* and *Surya*, two unidentified images of seated pot-bellied deities, two *arghya-pattas* (*Visnu pattas*) and one ram head were, presumably, used as temple offerings[42].Regarding the early historic remains, it is observed that in this site, remarkably there were at least 'two points' carrying the marks [43] of 'earliest discernible phase' through the discovery of 'black- slipped potteries' in association with carinated *handies*, incurved bowls, terracotta ring wells and others which belonged to 200 BC. The discovery of 'brick bats' in a large scale from this site demonstrate the linkages of the period around 4th century AD which is 'known to possess an early historic phase'. According to the Susunia inscription of early 4th century AD, Pokharna was the capital of King Chandravarman. There is an old mound upon which grew a modern village where nothing is possible to trace from the densely occupied place.

Apart from Bishnupur-Dihar-Pakhanna, the cultural magnanimity of Brahmandiha, Deulbhira, Ekteswar, Hadal-Narayanpur, Harmasra, Jorda, Sarengarh, Sonamukhi, Salda and several other sites in the surroundings are prune with archaeological vestiges. In spite of that it will be unwise if I did not mention that the present work is not extensive in nature. Unfortunately, in the archaeological survey, there are limitations to gather substantial data to explain the secular aspects of state formation, i.e., the monumental structures related to the administrative functions, the core area of the ruling authority, which are significant for the reconstruction of the state power.

Although, *Mallabhum* has been studied in the context of the incomplete nature of available data, the analyses so far done of the sites help drawing some inferences:

The database reveals the sociological, political, religious and ideological idioms which may open avenues for reconstruction of political history of territorial *chiefdoms*. The secular-religious vestiges may unfold the possibility of linking the parts of this region in its entirety to a process of 'secondary state formation'[44]in the *bhum* territories. However, the elite and

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[42] Bandyopadhyay, A.K. (1971) *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.
[43] Chakrabarti, Dilip K. (1993) *Archaeology of Eastern India*: *Chhotanagpur Plateau and West Bengal*. p.153. New Delhi.

[44] Chakrabarti, Dilip K. (1993) *op. cit.*, p. 209.

royal dimensions have been expressed with reference to the erection of temples, monasteries and legitimization of folk deities, as well as religious ideologies. The nature of the secular as well as the non-secular archaeological remains provides enormous facts to interpret the settlement activities associated with *Mallabhum* which had gradually evolved from tribal settlement to *Rajya* in terms of secondary state formation. The necessity to protect private property[45], the surplus production[46], acculturation[47], *Rajputaization*[48], *Hinduization*[49], social stratification[50] etc constituted the pre-conditions that led to the formation of a secondary state structure in *Mallabhum*.

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[45] Skalnik, P. (1978) 'The Early State as a Process.' In, Claessen, H.J.M. and Skalnik, P. eds. *The Early State*, p. 597. The Hague.

[46] Sinha, S. (1995) 'State Formation and Rajput Myth in Tribal Central India' in Kulke, H. ed. *The State in India 1000-1700*, p. 314. New Delhi.

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