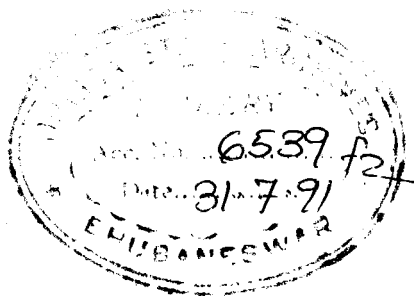


GAZETTEER OF INDIA

ORISSA

BALANGIR

RI-2/297



ORISSA DISTRICT GAZETTEERS



BALANGIR



By

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PREFACE

The ex-Feudatory States of Patna and Sonapur, which now constitute the district of Balangir, were included in the Gazetteer of Feudatory States of Orissa written by L. E. B. Cobden-Ramsay, I. C. S. in 1907. Though very brief, they contain valuable information for the compilation of the present work. Materials obtained from Heads of Departments of the Government of India and of the Government of Orissa, as well as from the District Officers, were processed in the Gazetteer Section. The draft of the Gazetteer was sent to the Gazetteer Unit Government of India, for approval. It was also placed before the Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee consisting of—

- (1) The Member, Board of Revenue.
- (2) The Revenue Secretary,
- (3) Padmabhusan Dr. P. Parija,
- (4) The Chief Editor, District Gazetteers.

After their approval the present volume is being published.

The spelling of place names follows the Hunterian system. To avoid repetition in the text, diacritical marks have been placed only in the Index.

This Gazetteer would never have been published but for the assistance of a large number of officers of the Government of India and of the State Government. We would be failing in our duty if we do not record our gratitude to Dr. P. N. Chopra, M.A., Ph. D., Editor, District Gazetteers, and the staff of the Central Gazetteers Unit, Ministry of Education, who have scrutinised the draft and given valuable suggestions designed to improve its

quality. It would be appropriate to mention here that a part of the expenditure on the compilation and printing of District Gazetteers is being met by the Government of India.

The Gazetteer Section is particularly indebted to Dr. Basanta Kumar Behura, Professor of Zoology, Utkal University, Dr. Harihar Patnaik, Lecturer in Botany, and Shri Bijoy Krishna Mohanty, Deputy Director of Mines, Government of Orissa and Shri Satyanarayan Rajaguru, Geognophist, Orissa State Museum. The Gazetteer owes much to the valuable assistance they have rendered.

Bringing out the Gazetteer of Balangir district on the Republic Day of 1968 has been possible on account of the ungrudging devotion to work by Compilers:—

- (1) Shri Amulya Kumar Satpathy,
- (2) Shri Mahendra Chandra Das,
- (3) Shri Vasanta Kumar Das,
- (4) Shri Gour Prasad Patnaik,

and by the Superintendent and staff of the Orissa Government Press who have sacrificed their leisure and personal comfort in order to get the work ready.

The map has been prepared and printed by the Deputy Director of Surveys and Map Publication, Orissa to whom the Gazetteer Section is indebted.

Dr. Nabin Kumar Sahu who was State Editor till recently has left the Gazetteer Section. He has personally contributed Chapter II on History of the district and Chapter XIX on Places of Interest. He also collected the pictures.

Republic Day, 1968

NILAMANI SENAPATI

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL

1. Introducing the District

The district of Balangir is flanked in the north-west by the Gandhamardan hills, a name of Ramayan fame, and in the north-east by the rock-infested Mahanadi. It is traversed by many hill streams and is interspersed with evergreen woodlands, the shelter of Bison and Sambar. It is the nature's cradle for the Kutia Khonds, Binjhals and Gonds. The district is famous through centuries for the Bhulias and Kosthas, master-craftsmen who work excellent motifs on cotton and tassar fabrics. It is the land of Tantric culture, being the seat of the famous seven maidens¹, who excelled in esoteric practices of Tantrayana (*see* Patnagarh—Chapter XIX). In Balangir at Ranipur-Jhariar there exists the temple of 64 Yoginis—one of the four such temples in India². It is also notable for having experimented in the past a republican form of Government that was overthrown by Ramai Deo, a Chauhan youth, whose mother hailed from Mainpuri in north India. Ramai founded the kingdom of Patna in the 14th century, which within a short span of its militant career became the head of the cluster of eighteen Garhs. The ruins of forts not only in the urban areas like Patnagarh, Titilagarh and Sonepur but also in the remote localities like Tusra, Jhariar and Binka speak of the past glory of the kingdom. The Chauhan rule ended with the merger of the States of Patna and Sonepur with Orissa on the 1st day of January, 1948. They together form the district of Balangir.

2. Origin of the name of the District

The district of Balangir like many other districts of Orissa is named after the headquarters town of Balangir. This town was also the headquarters of the feudatory State of Patna, since the eighties of the nineteenth century. According to tradition, Balangir was established by Balaram Deo, the brother of Narasimha Deo, the 12th Raja of Patna. As Balaram Deo is known to have flourished about the middle of the 16th century, the origin of the town of Balangir has also been attributed to that period. It is said that the town being founded by Balaram Deo was named after him as Balaramgarh, from which the present name Balangir has been derived. There is, however, no recorded evidence to support this theory. It may be that the name

1. Their abode came to be known as Kuanri-Patana (the camp of maidens) from which the kingdom was called Patna.

2. The other three temples of 64 Yoginis are at Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, Hirapur near Bhubaneswar in Orissa and Bheraghat near Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh.
[14 B. of R.—2]