



# Famine, Moral Economy and Food Riots: Some Dimensions of Famines in Colonial Orissa & Ganjam

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**Abstract:-** The paper maps the crisis of famine that exacerbated the socio-economic conflicts and tensions in a society. It explores the outbreak of food riots, looting and even murders in a historical context. These were, of course, familiar and universal means of survival of famine victims. These activities are characterised by elites as “crime”. In fact, they were an expression of their sense of deprivation from subsistence rights. The paper is divided into two parts in which the first part briefly investigates the scholarships on the concept of ‘moral economy’ in the context of Orissa famine and the cases of food riots. Second part of the paper critically explores the historical sources of the food riots, moral dilemmas and the social composition of the food riots and it explains the food riots from the perspective of the concepts of crime, violence and morality.

**Keywords:-** Colonial Famines, Moral Economy, Food Riots, Ethical Dilemmas, Social Composition.

## Introduction

The study has taken into account two major famines as case study- Orissa famine of 1865-66 and the Ganjam famine of 1888-89. The area covers the coastal belt of Oriya speaking people, the Orissa division comprised of three districts (Cuttack, Balasore and Puri) and Ganjam district which were under the direct rule of colonial administration and were under Bengal presidency and under Madras presidency respectively.

The crisis of famine exacerbated socio-economic conflicts and tensions in a society, with the outbreak of food riots, looting and even murders. These were, of course, familiar and universal means of survival of famine victims. These activities are characterised by elites as “crime”. In fact, they were an expression of their sense of deprivation from subsistence rights.

Facts still remain to be explored whether the food riots were the outcome of tradition or the calamity like famine had preceded them. It can be argued here that the political and economic changes in the structure provided a wider possibility for such activities – the intrusion of colonial power. It was colonial rule, which generated different kinds of social relations between the landlords and peasants. This brought changes in the paternalistic attitudes or positive moral obligation. Here it is attempted to explore whether there was a relation between crime and economic condition; did crime decrease with the prosperity and rising standards of living? Whether rural and urban patterns of crime can be distinguished? And was crime really more common in the city than in the countryside or vice-versa and was it different in its pattern?

### The Concept of ‘Moral Economy’

Jaime Palomera also briefly investigates the concept of moral economy in different contexts. He notes, “The concept of moral economy was popularised by the seminal work of E.P. Thompson. In his 1971 essay ‘The Moral Economy of the English Crowd’, the historian focuses on the food riots in 18<sup>th</sup> century England, in an attempt to reveal the historical agency of ‘the crowd’ and to argue against ‘spasmodic views of popular history’ that naturalize and reduce people’s actions to automatic quasi-biological responses to hunger.”<sup>1</sup> Further, he notes the argument of James. C. Scott. He writes; “Thus, Scott sees peasant mobilizations not as a direct outcome of absolute surplus extraction, but as a violation (backed by the colonial state) of a social pattern of moral entitlements and expectations that used to define unequal yet tolerated power relations both among peasants within the village and with outside elites and patrons.”<sup>2</sup> Illustrating the argument of E.P. Thomson, Didier Fassin writes:

May be the trouble lies with the word ‘moral.’ ‘Moral’ is a signal which brings on a rush of polemical blood to the academic head. Nothing has made my critics angrier than the notion that a food rioter might have been more ‘moral’ than a disciple of Adam Smith. But that was not my meaning [. . .] I could perhaps have called this ‘a sociological economy,’ and an economy in its original meaning (oeconomy) as the due organization of a household, in which each part is related to the whole and each member acknowledges his various duties and obligations. That is just as ‘political’-or more- ‘political’-than ‘political economy.’ However, classical economists have appropriated the term.<sup>3</sup>

Fassin has, further, attempted to emphasise the hesitations and contradictions but also the analytical potential and the critical strengths of the concept of moral economy.<sup>4</sup> He reads as a critical opening that he summarises and defends. He writes,

“It is an opening because it conceptualizes moral economies at the level of entire societies and of specific social groups, always understood in their historical context. It is critical because it implies being attentive to tensions and conflicts between distinct moral economies to analyze what is at stakes. Ultimately, moral economies always involve political issues.”<sup>5</sup>

E.P. Thompson has discussed the food riots of early eighteenth-century England: “this resentment when unemployment and high prices combined to make conditions unendurable, vented itself in attacks

upon corn dealers, and millers, attacks which often must have degenerated into mere excuses for crime.”<sup>6</sup> Also, he mentioned the riots were “rebellions of the belly.”<sup>7</sup> Further he stated that, during the eighteenth century in England and France, grain riots were depicted as the typical manifestation of social protest which separated the strikes and labour disputes of the Industrial Era from the millennial movements of the Middle Ages. Alan Booth has argued that effectively all the food riots occurring through the 18th and 19th centuries were concerned with the “subsistence” crops of oats and wheat. He further argues that they became an integrated part of a wider conception of working-class resistance in England. By the close of the 18th century sustenance unrests had become increasingly organized; however, this was the consequence of the drastic publicity and engagement that essentially influenced the spirit and form of foodstuff conflicts in the region.<sup>8</sup> In his view, grain riots in eighteenth century England and France not only expressed discontent with actual deprivation, but also a reaction to structural changes in the political economies of the two countries. In the European context, Manfred Gailus has stated that food riots in Germany appear to have occurred in the crisis years of the 1790s in an industrialised society due to harvest crisis and food price inflation, and the subsistence issues played a role in numerous riots by small farming owners and labourers.<sup>9</sup>

David Arnold analyses food riots in terms of an attempt to remind the power holders (moneylenders, landlords and grain dealers) of their personal obligations. It was because of the subaltern perception that the denial of subsistence needs was an abuse of power.<sup>10</sup> E.P. Thomson explains it within the framework of “moral economy”.<sup>11</sup> James Scott highlights the “moral economy” argument in cultural perspectives. Accepting it as a popular protest, J. Scott argues that it never aimed at an equality of wealth and landholding, but the more “modest claim” of a right to subsistence.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, in the Asian context, R. Bin Wong defines that in the most basic sense, the “food riots” is an expression of competing claims on a limited food supply. Perhaps the most common targets for food rioters were wealthy households, whose large stores of grain could be sold or lent directly to the poor, marketed locally, and not purchased by merchants for sale elsewhere. Looking up to the supply side he has argued that “at the issue was not simply the quality of the harvest, but whether the people controlling supplies would make grain available on terms and in quantities demanded by people expecting their needs to be met.”<sup>13</sup>

Unequivocally pointing to the grain riot in Madras Presidency, David Arnold emphasised that “looting” and grain riots persist rampantly in India. Acknowledging the English word “loot”, he agrees with the appropriation of the dispute and to examine the nature, objectives and consequences of such forms of popular protest in modern India. But in simple terms, the “food riot” is an expression of competing claims on a limited food supply also.<sup>14</sup> He further argues for example, actual attacks on the person and property of individuals who withheld grain appear to have been most frequent in the customary sphere of circulation, while efforts to obstruct large-scale shipments out of a locality were generally directed at

merchants. Officials as well as merchants were the targets of protesters demanding that more grain be made available at lower prices. These expressions of protest are all embraced by the “food riot” label.<sup>15</sup>

Questioning the moral economy of food riots in Colonial India, Sanjay Sharma argues that these starvation-related crimes tend to target the richer sections in general.<sup>16</sup> In this light, P.R. Greenough has refuted the maxim that “hungry men must rebel” by arguing that there was no organised attempt of destitute and no attacks on Zamindars’ granaries, government store houses or merchants’ stocks. In Bengal, he further claims that there was no violence which he explains in terms of an extraordinary failure of will or a powerful religious inhibition – “fatalism”, “resignation”, and “karma.”<sup>17</sup> If Greenough’s analysis is appropriate, how could one explain the questions of Thompson that if people are hungry how could they modify their behaviour by custom, culture and reason?<sup>18</sup> Describing the food riots as minor forms of “social protest,” K.S. Singh remarked that they did not lead to any major uprising. He states that they were an effective condition but not the cause of a movement, which required leadership and organisation.<sup>19</sup>

Exploring the tribal and peasant struggles in colonial India, A.R. Desai has claimed that the Indian peasants were not ‘passive’, ‘fatalistic’, ‘docile’ and ‘unresisting.’<sup>20</sup> Kathleen Gough has made a brief survey of 77 peasant movements in India spread over two centuries and argued that the outbreak of peasant and tribal uprisings was primarily in response to economic exploitation and deprivation they experienced under colonial rule in India.<sup>21</sup> She has also explained the class nature of the peasant and tribal movements in India. D.N. Dhanagare has argued also similarly, while studying peasant revolts and resistance in India (1920-50).<sup>22</sup> In this light, the work of Namboodiripad prominently figures in presenting the class analysis of these movements.<sup>23</sup> The issue of food riots is an integral part of the broader paradigm of peasant revolts and resistance in India.

Colonial Orissa witnessed unprecedented occurrences of food riots, looting and thefts during the famine period of 1865-66. The common feature of these violent activities was to obtain food stuffs by hook or crook – rice, paddy, *ragi*, etc. These violent activities or crimes reveal the fact that the famine victims were not passive, if the food riots are treated as “a minor form of social protest”, where one can put the occurrence of significant crimes including the house burning that took place in both famines. During the famine of 1866 a house was burnt at Aulada in Balasore district when the owner refused to lend rice.<sup>24</sup> There were threats by the victims that “if you don’t sell your rice, we will burn your house”; the same was even communicated through a note. It happened at Bateswar that Netra Senapati found a note at his door in the afternoon. In fact, when he was taking a rest in the afternoon and not able to sleep for fear of hearing the sound of a man coming towards his house, he found none there except a note hanging on his door.<sup>25</sup> The District Superintendent of Police of Balasore mentioned in a special report regarding the case of arson at Aulada and pointed out that this incident and another case at Soro which occurred a few days ago, the outrages appear to have been committed through a refusal to lend paddy. The burning of Ranpur King’s palace was one of the major news items of *Utkal Dipika* on 18 May 1889. It was expected that this was



done by a famine-stricken person. It was also reported that heavy wealth was lost in these activities and it was rampant. The villagers kept vigilant in the night fearing burning and theft.<sup>26</sup>

## Crime and its Causes

E.I. Shuttleworth, the district superintendent of police of Balasore stated that the people, who formerly led an honest livelihood, were involved in dacoity, and other crimes. The main reason was that the past harvest had been more than scanty and people had nothing to eat which drove them into it. Citing the example of the dacoit cases committed within the Jurisdiction of Talpudda outpost, the District Superintendent of Police of Balasore was of the view that the prisoners Nos. 1 to 9 admitted the whole offence, and stated they had been driven to commit the dacoity through want.<sup>27</sup>

The district superintendent of police of Balasore wrote that inadequate grants for the relief work and relief operation (gratuitous) were a problem, which were not only disturbing the construction of roads but also increasing the suffering of the starved population. It ultimately helped in increasing the crime. Thus, the excess of grants would not only have rescued the starved population from want and crime but also the road construction work would have been completed, since labour was sufficiently procurable.<sup>28</sup>

The district magistrate of Balasore stated that the main reason behind the cases of arson and dacoity was the want of food and in fear of want. These dacoits, house breaking and thieving, are very prevalent throughout the district and “I, see no prospect of their being suppressed as long as the present scarcity exists.” He also reported that the district superintendent of police has done all that was in his power to prevent crime. The able manner in which the case of arson was taken up and investigated put a stop to the dastardly crime destroying the grain held by Mahajuns and although so many cases of dacoity have occurred, yet in no instance has any great violence been used towards the occupiers of the houses.<sup>29</sup> In one case, the dacoits, after having extended the premises, found a quantity of cooked rice in one of the houses. They bound the inmates and then sat down and deliberately placated their hunger by devouring the cooked food and after which they collected and made off with their plunder.<sup>30</sup>

The degree of beggary and *dhan* (paddy) dacoity was growing simultaneously. Even when the numbers of beggars were growing within the city of Puri, the villages were witnessing *dhan* dacoities. So, people could not dare to carry paddy or rice on the road, because if the beggars could see it they would certainly snatch it away. Again, the beggars were roaming in groups.<sup>31</sup> The Dy. Magistrate of Puri noted that the cases of shop looting and people being robbed were common in March and April 1866. He cites an interesting example that the *Mahaprasad* of a temple was taken away forcibly in broad-daylight.<sup>32</sup>

## Moral Dilemmas and Food Riots

B. K Matilal explains moral dilemmas:

Moral dilemmas are, in fact, very common in everyday life. Stories in classical and contemporary literature are full of such cases. Most moral dilemmas seem to remain unresolved in such stories. Very roughly, such dilemmas arise when the agent is committed to two or more moral obligations, but circumstances are such that an obligation to do X cannot be fulfilled without violating an obligation to do Y. Dilemmas present irreconcilable alternatives, and the actual choice among them become either irrational or is based upon grounds other than moral.<sup>33</sup>

If we follow the theorization of Matilal we can see that moral dilemmas are the affair of everyday life and it depends on the circumstances in which an obligation to do something can't be fulfilled without violating an obligation to do something else. We can see this moral dilemma of the people who were participating in the criminal acts and the acts like looting and dacoity. The sources suggest that people were facing existential problems due to the crisis of the famine in which on the one hand they were about to die because of hunger and on the other hand, they were compelled to participate in the immoral acts.

Interestingly, it is found during the famine of 1866 that the culprits who were involved in grain riots or lootings were admitting their crime honestly and happily entering the jail. It is because people did not have anything at home to eat and thought that at least they would be provided something to survive. Ramkshay Chatterjee, a government servant, received a theft case relating to Paddy in Puri Division. When the culprits were asked regarding the theft case, they honestly admitted the fact and expressed that they had stolen the paddy after two days of starvation. They also made a complaint against the petitioner, who was their neighbour, that he had plenty of rice with him and was not ready to give at any amount. The superintendent of police in Balasore was unable to understand how to handle the situation. Since the culprits were accepting their fault without any hesitation, he pointed out that the culprits were happily going to jail and there was no place in the jail to keep them. It is because people did not have anything at home to eat and thought that at least they would be provided something in jail to survive. To quote Ravenshaw, the then Commissioner of Orissa division:

On the contrary, hunger and want appear to have been the motives of crime and the perpetrators have taken little or no pains to conceal their identity. This has been further apparent from the number who, when arrested, have freely admitted their offence and given up what balance of the plunder remained in their possession.<sup>34</sup>

The honest acceptance of crimes and their happy admission in the jail led to heavy crowds and problems in jail. It was reported regarding the Balasore jail that it was built for the accommodation of 143 prisoners but at present 629 prisoners were adjusted. It was also reported that it was due to the great prevalence of crime in the state because of general scarcity and want in Balasore. It was found necessary to place several of them under tents within or outside the jail wall. For their proper custody they had to detach 80 constables from the Reserve to reinforce the jail guard.<sup>35</sup>

The Magistrate of Balasore informed in this regard that every care should be taken to prevent overcrowding in the jail. The food and clothing of the prisoners and cleanliness of the Jail were in special

care of Wood Ward, Dy. Magistrate in charge, and Dr Jackson, the civil surgeon. A good proof of his care and ability was visible in the healthy appearance of the prisoners. Cholera had raged for the past three months in Balasore and the village close to the jail. While only two cases occurred in the jail and both of which the patients recovered.<sup>36</sup>

Ravenshaw categorically stated that all the officers have worked to the best of their ability and assured that no one should feel that the state of affairs in the district was due to neglect or mismanagement. The main problem was the vast deal of work for officers.<sup>37</sup> The action taken by the police and magisterial authorities was prompt and effectual; nearly every existence of the cowardly incendiaries was arrested and prosecuted to conviction, and arson was almost entirely suppressed. In this context the statement of the Famine Commission Can be quoted:

I have examined the papers of all these cases, and found that in the majority of instances there has been no great violence committed; a body of some ten or twenty men surrounded the house to be robbed, and bind and sometimes assault the inmates after which they carry off all they can lay their hands upon, particularly grain.<sup>38</sup>

One peculiar feature in these cases is that they have been robbed by their immediate neighbours and the victims had no difficulty in recognizing and identifying many of the robbers. The district Superintendent of police of Balasore viewed that in some cases of dacoities, which have not only had the local population to deal with, but also persons later joined from among the Gujaratis of Mayurbhanj and Neelgiri.<sup>39</sup> On the nature of dacoits he mentioned that since they knew their neighbour who has a stock of paddy; they planned together, and when the village was wrap in sleep, they went in a body and robbed the premises and they knew that they will certainly be arrested; for many, when they were brought to the court, freely admitted the offence and stated that they were driven to it by want.<sup>40</sup> Several old and well known dacoits have been implicated and it is probable that in many cases the dacoity has been planned and headed by an old hand, whose presence has given encouragement and assurance to the others, but there has been a total want of any indication that most of these cases have been committed by regularly organised gangs and after careful preplanning and preparation.<sup>41</sup>

### **Social Composition of the Food Riots**

Talking about the social category of the food rioters, David Arnold is of the view that the untouchables and the laboueres belonging to the lower strata of the society committed pretty thefts including dacoity for means of their survival during dry seasons.<sup>42</sup>

The magistrate of Balasore while talking about the social position of the dacoits, he pointed out that the persons charged in connection with the crime were mostly belong to the lower strata of the society i.e., outcaste people and possessed a little land. They include mainly Pans and Kandaras, who were working for the better class of ryots. Owing to the scanty crops, these people obtained very less food grains and little employment at the last harvest (1865) and consequently did not receive the payment in Paddy, they have been accustomed to earn. Although these people saw no hope of finding sustenance in their villages, they

will not go elsewhere to seek employment. During the magistrate's tour, he strongly urged the hungry people to go to the Irrigation Company or to Calcutta for work and assured them to get remunerative wages. He received the reply that "let the irrigation works commence near our villages, and we will readily work in cutting the canals, but we will not leave our homes".<sup>43</sup> Thus, the people who involved in these activities of dacoity, looting, murder, etc., were famine victims, as they were economically poor, marginalised, hungry and looking for food for their survival during the famine period.

*Utkal Dipika*- the first Oriya weekly newspaper founded and edited by Gaurishankar Roy began during a crucial time of 1866 famine states that the poor and the lower caste people of Russel Konda and Gumsoor were involved in looting and rioting on 18th and 19th October of 1888. It was reported that the deprived Paiks of Ganjam who lost their inam land rights were desperate. Young people speedily joined in these activities, which came to 800 in number.<sup>44</sup>

Food riots taking place in an organised form were led by the professional thieves in Ganjam. This idea was spread through rumours that the *Sircar* (Government) had permitted looting and rioting.<sup>45</sup> The targets were the rich villagers, moneylenders, traders and landlords. The involved rioters were of poorer classes – the frustrated and desperate people, especially the agricultural labourers, deprived youth and peasants deprived of *inam* land rights (Paiks) and desperate youth.<sup>46</sup> Arnold claims that the untouchables and low caste labourers committed petty thefts and even dacoities for means of survival during the dry seasons.<sup>47</sup>

It is clear to understand that the food riots in Orissa had a distinct character, i.e., very violent. It may be due to the fact that the Zamindars were not concerned about the problems of their subjects or behave indifferent to the ongoing situation, which made it worse. These activities were collective efforts of the villagers. The fundamental feature of the riots was that they were grain-involved riots.

The administration Report of Bengal reveals that dacoit cases in Orissa division in the years 1866 and 1867 were 363 and 37 respectively; theft and housebreaking cases were 2742 and 1795 in 1866 and 1867 respectively and the cases of breaches of Special laws were 3151 and 864 in 1866 and 1867 respectively.<sup>48</sup> It is observed that there was a significant decline in crime in the post famine period of 1867. The year 1866 witnessed a sharp increase in crime due to the famine situation in Orissa division. It is found that the lowest rate of dacoity and highest rate of theft and housebreaking cases in Puri, i.e., 51 and 1172 respectively.<sup>49</sup> It can be stated that it had happened since Puri was the worst case of victims in the 1866 famine in Orissa division and rice was the main object of crime.

The following table shows the details of the crimes committed in Balasore, i.e., dacoities, thefts and burglaries between the 10th August 1863 and 11th April, 1866 only, since the new police came into operation. The crime of the first kind was dacoity which took place significantly compared to the other two categories. The crime rate started increasing from the month of October 1865 when the failure of paddy crops was confirmed. The cases of burglaries were almost normal during the famine period whereas the



cases of theft rate were not insignificant. This table presents a marked increase between Dec. 1865 and April 1866. During the first four months of 1866, more dacoities occurred than in the past three years.<sup>50</sup>

#### Comparison of Dacoits, Thefts and Burglaries (Aug.1863-April 1866)

	1863			1864			1865			1866		
Months	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Jan.	0	0	0	1	15	2	0	4	0	7	27	7
Feb.	0	0	0	1	11	3	0	11	2	29	30	13
Mar.	0	0	0	0	10	3	2	8	11	15	38	9
April	0	0	0	1	12	4	2	15	3	2*	4	3
May	0	0	0	1	7	0	1	15	6	0	-	-
June	0	0	0	1	5	2	1	15	1	-	-	-
July	0	0	0	0	4	2	1	17	4	-	-	-
August	0	7	3	1	7	3	0	15	9	-	-	-
Sept.	0	14	2	0	7	2	1	12	3	-	-	-
Oct.	0	14	1	0	3	2	2	24	2	-	-	-
Nov.	1	3	0	2	1	2	3	36	8	-	-	-
Dec.	0	11	0	0	4	0	4	22	3	-	-	-
Total	1	49	6	8	36	25	17	194	52	53	99	32

*Source:* T.E Ravenshaw, Officiating Commissioner, Office, Cuttack Division, Camp Balasore, 11th April, 1866.

Ravenshaw also mentioned some false charges of dacoities which were enquired into and ascertained to be false. The numbers of false charges of dacoities in 1864, in 1865 and in 1866 (from 1st Jan. to 17th April) were 9, 21 and 30 respectively. It shows the disposition of the people's practicability to use the police as an engine of persecution against their enemies, and at the same time the police have been properly handled by the district authorities. Ravenshaw categorically mentioned that the reports of these false cases have been properly checked and rejected as fraudulent and groundless. They have not been included in the statement table.

T.E. Ravenshaw reported about the occurrence of crimes during the period of 1<sup>st</sup> January to 4<sup>th</sup> April 1866 in Balasore district. The available data on crime reveals the action of the police and magisterial authorities. The 53 dacoities that took place from 1st January to 4th April 1866, in which 731 persons were involved and 566 have been arrested, of whom 161 were committed for trial, 55 only acquitted, 8 have died and 316 were pending inquiry. The value of property plundered amounted to rupees 3121-11- 7 1/2 (Rs. 3,121/-, Anna 11 and paisa 7 1/2) out of which rupees 1,076- 10- 6- paisa (Rs. 1,076, Anna 10 and paisa 6) was of grain. Of the total plundered, the police recovered Rs. 997-2-9 (Rs. 997, Anna 2 and paisa 9). There were about 10 police stations where complaints were registered in the Balasore District.<sup>51</sup> It can be observed that the places where more dacoities took place have suffered more, comparatively. The largest number occurred, viz., 16 in the Soro police jurisdiction to the south of the district, and next largest number of cases, viz. 10 occurred in Bustah Jurisdiction to the north. The areas under Dhamnugger police station seems to be affected less since only one dacoity case was reported.

The increase of crime was due to the scarcity of food and fluctuating price of rice. This is demonstrated by the figures given below in table.

The average price of rice before the famine in Orissa was about 30-32 seers per rupee. The figures reveal that the prices prevailing in the months February to April 1866 increased four to five times compared to the ordinary rate and from May to August, six to eight times and even ten times the average.

Table- 1.8 Price Rise (Inflation) in Orissa Division (Oct. 1865-Dec.1866)

Months	Oct o' 186 5	Nov .	Dec .	Jan. '18 66	Fe b.	Ma rch	Apl .	Ma y	Jun e	Jul y	Aug .	Sept	Oct	Nov.	Dec
Bala- sore	20	15 1/3	15 1/2	12	9 1/2	9 1/4	8	7 3/1 6	5 3/4	5 3/4	4 1/8	5 1/2	8 1/2	16 1/4	18 1/2
Cut- tack	18	11 1/6	12 1/2	12 3/5	9 1/8	9 1/4	6 3/4	5 1/2	9 1/4	4 1/2	5	5 7/8	7 1/4 1/8	12 1/8	12 1/2
Puri	13	9 5/6	12 3/4	11 3/4	9	8 1/8	6 9/1 0	6 1/2	5 3/4	5 7/8	5 5/8	6 7/8	7 1/2	00	00

Source: Report of Indian Famine Commission, Part III, 1885, para 44.

## Conclusion:

We find a different pattern and nature in colonial India compared to Europe. The incidence of grain riots was not directed at the colonial state in India whereas in Europe the popular anticipation advanced along with the State's role in the delivery of food grains, as Thompson has argued. In Europe, there was popular demand for reduction in prices and relief of scarcity, but in India nothing like that happened, since we had different political economy.<sup>52</sup> R.B. Wong analyses similar kind of food riots in China. He argues that the riots were to put pressure to block exports with the aim of lowering prices; and to demand the availability of loans. These riots were similar in form and content throughout Qing history during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century China.<sup>53</sup>

## Endnotes and References:

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