



REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-57458

Title: *Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo and His Contribution to Balangir: A Regional Historical Analysis.*

Recommendation:

- Accept as it is
- Accept after minor revision.....**
- Accept after major revision
- Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

| Rating | Excel. | Good | Fair | Poor |
|----------------|--------|------|------|------|
| Originality | | ✓ | | |
| Techn. Quality | | ✓ | | |
| Clarity | ✓ | | | |
| Significance | ✓ | | | |

Reviewer Name: Dr. Faheem Abdul Muneeb

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

Reviewer's Comment

The manuscript presents a regional historical analysis of Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo and his contribution to the socio-economic, administrative, and cultural development of Balangir. The topic is relevant and valuable, particularly within the context of regional historiography and the study of post-princely state transitions in Odisha. The paper successfully highlights how regional leadership shaped local developmental trajectories during the transition from princely administration to democratic governance in post-independence India.

The study is clearly organised and maintains a coherent focus throughout. By examining Singh Deo both as the ruler of Patna State and later as Chief Minister of Odisha, the manuscript provides a layered understanding of his role in Balangir's transformation. The paper appropriately situates Balangir within its historical context of economic backwardness, drought vulnerability, and infrastructural limitations, thereby allowing the reader to appreciate the significance of the interventions discussed.

Scientific Contribution and Analytical Depth

One of the principal strengths of the manuscript lies in its thematic breadth and regional focus. The paper effectively covers multiple dimensions of development, including irrigation, agriculture, education, infrastructure, governance, and cultural preservation. The sections dealing with irrigation and agricultural modernization (pages 2–3) are particularly well-developed and convincingly demonstrate the importance of Singh Deo's efforts in addressing Balangir's structural dependence on monsoon agriculture. The discussion regarding the extension of irrigation benefits linked to the Hirakud system is especially significant in illustrating the connection between political leadership and regional development planning.

The manuscript also succeeds in showing how Singh Deo functioned as a political intermediary for a historically neglected region. The discussion of his role in raising issues related to drought, poverty, and regional underdevelopment within the democratic framework adds political depth to the study. Similarly,

REVIEWER'S REPORT

the sections on educational expansion and cultural patronage provide a broader socio-cultural understanding of his legacy rather than limiting the analysis to administrative achievements alone.

Another commendable aspect of the paper is that it does not present an entirely celebratory narrative. The inclusion of a section on limitations and continuing challenges (page 4) adds balance to the analysis by acknowledging that poverty, migration, and lack of industrialisation persisted despite developmental interventions. This strengthens the credibility of the manuscript.

However, while the study is informative and well-structured, its analytical depth could be further enhanced. Much of the discussion remains descriptive, outlining contributions sector by sector without sufficiently engaging with broader historiographical or developmental debates. The manuscript would benefit from a clearer analytical framework regarding regional leadership, state formation, or developmental politics in postcolonial India. At present, the paper reads more as a well-organised historical account than a deeply analytical historical argument.

Additionally, some claims regarding developmental impact—such as improvements in agricultural output or socio-economic transformation—would be stronger if supported with more concrete evidence, archival statistics, or comparative data. Greater engagement with primary archival material or district-level historical records would further strengthen the scholarly rigor of the paper.

Methodology and Use of Sources

The manuscript adopts a historical and interpretive approach, which is appropriate for the topic. The use of government reports, regional political studies, and administrative records provides a reasonable foundation for the analysis. The references cited are relevant to Odisha's regional history and political development.

Nevertheless, the methodological orientation is not explicitly articulated. The paper would benefit from a brief explanation of the research approach, source selection, and historiographical positioning. Furthermore, while the references used are appropriate, the bibliography is relatively limited. Incorporating more recent scholarship on regional politics, princely states, and development history would improve the academic depth of the study.

Structure, Style, and Presentation

The manuscript is logically organised and easy to follow. The progression from administrative foundations to democratic transition, irrigation, education, infrastructure, and cultural identity creates a coherent narrative structure. The conclusion effectively summarises the central argument and reiterates the significance of Singh Deo's contribution to Balangir's historical trajectory.

The writing is generally clear and accessible, though there are occasional issues related to sentence flow, spacing, and stylistic consistency. Some sections would benefit from tighter phrasing and more concise transitions. Minor grammatical refinement and careful proofreading would improve the overall readability of the manuscript.

The title accurately reflects the focus of the paper. However, since the manuscript specifically emphasises developmental transformation and regional governance, a slightly more precise title may better capture its analytical orientation. Suggested alternatives could be:

Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo and the Developmental Transformation of Balangir

Regional Leadership and Development in Western Odisha: The Contribution of Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo

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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Final Recommendation

Overall, the manuscript presents a meaningful contribution to the regional history of Odisha and offers valuable insight into the role of leadership in shaping local developmental trajectories in post-independence India. The paper is informative, coherent, and relevant, particularly for scholars interested in regional politics, princely states, and development history.

While the study would benefit from stronger analytical framing, expanded source engagement, and minor stylistic refinement, these issues are manageable and do not undermine the overall quality of the work.

Decision: Accepted with minor revisions.