

Socio-Historical Study of Western Odisha

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ABSTRACT

Western Odisha stands out due to its many unique traits. Its speciality is in the socio-cultural components, even though it lacks a distinct political character. Districts like Kalahandi, Nuapada, Bolangir, Sonepur, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Sundergarh, and Boudh are included in Western Odisha. In addition, the geologists and environmentalists observed that “The locality is filled with mines and minerals, flora and fauna with a developed modern agricultural output.” This area is abundant of plains, rivers, hills, plateaus, deep woods, and mountains. Half of the land is made up of hills and mountains. While the northern mountains are a part of the Vindhyan and Chhotanagpur areas, the southern mountains are a part of the East Range Mountain. The majority of individuals living in this area are economically and socially disadvantaged. Twenty-three percent of Odisha’s total population lives in Western Odisha. In Western Odisha, the tribal community makes up 40% of the entire population. These individuals have an emotional connection to religious ceremonies and acts, which both directly and indirectly advance sociocultural advancement. In Western Odisha, folk dance has become more and more popular under many labels, adapting to the inclinations and skills of the local populace. The socio-historical existence of the inhabitants of western Odisha was highlighted in the article.

Keyword : *Western Odisha, Socio-Cultural, Political, Historical.*

INTRODUCTION

The field of historical geography advances due to the geographic relevance of locations in relation to historical events. The understanding of the present is in no way possible without following the genetic approach that goes into the question of how it came into being. These geography has a historical component. It takes into consideration the ecology in relation to human habitation, their homeland, occupation, economic activities and in one senses their variable character. The main goal of historical geography is to reconstruct the geography of a location during a bygone era. It is possible to reconstruct every feature of the geography of that era by piecing together fragments of dispersed material. The historical geography of Western Odisha is particularly important in this perspective.

A thorough understanding of the geography of any given land is essential for the scientific study of its history. The people’s physical characteristics have a significant influence on their socioeconomic and political future as well as their character. In terms of human habitation,

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homeland, occupation, economic activity, and, in a way, their erratic nature, the geographical feature addresses ecology. An examination of Western Odisha's geographical features is crucial in this context (Panda, 1997).

Western Odisha roughly is comprised of four undivided district such as Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Kalahandi, Bolangir and part of Phulbani districts of Modern Odisha. Following the districts of Odisha's recognition in 1993, the current districts of Sambalpur, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, Bolangir, Sonepur, Sundargarh, Kalahandi, Nuapada, and Boudh make up the four undivided districts. The approximate latitude and longitude of Western Odisha's region are 19°-3' North and 22°-32' North, respectively, and 82°-20' East and 85°-22' East. It is bounded on the north by Ranchi district of Jharkhand State, on the east Singhbhum district of Jharkhand State, Keonjhar and Angul district Odisha on the west and north west by the districts of Raipur and Raigarh of Chhatisgarh respectively. On the South east by Kandhamal district and South by Koraput and Rayagada district of Odisha and on the South west by Nabarangpur district of Odisha (District Statistical Hand Book, Sambalpur, 2020-21). The territory of Western Odisha formed the eastern part of South Koshala in ancient and medieval periods. South Koshala was famous for its flourishing culture, religion, society and economy from ancient time.

Geographically Western Odisha has vast inaccessible forests, extensive rivers, valley and mountainous terrain. It has been primarily a land of hills and forest inhabited by majority of tribal people. The earliest human civilization has developed in such hilly and forest clad region. The people of hilly areas dominated mostly by the tribal, exhibit a primitive life with less touch of civilization whereas those of the plains show a developed and progressive outlook. Whole Western Odisha is covered by forest clad hill ranges such as Gandhmardan, Barapahar, Jharghati, Khajuria, Padhanpat, Damdaruguda, Bankashyam, Panchadhar, Khandadhar, Karlapart, Tikiruguda as well as Fertile river valley of the Mahanadi, Brahmani, Ib, Jira, Jhaun, Bheden, Tel, Anga, Sukatel, Hati, Indrabati, Udanti, Utei, Sagada, Rahul, Nagabati, Mundra, Jonk, Sank, Koel etc. which offer a mixture of tribal and agricultural economy. Besides rivers, natural water falls of western Odisha help in irrigation and generation of hydroelectric power.

Some of the most notable waterfalls in Western Odisha are the Khandadhar in Sundargarh district, Padhanpat in Deogarh district, Phurlijharan, Khandabaladhar, and Rabandhar in Kalahandi district, Kentamari in Boudh district, Nrusingnanath in Bargarh district, Harisankar in Bolangir district, and Koili Ghugar in Jharsuguda district. The Patalganga in Nuapada district, Nrusinghanath of Bargarh district and Harishankar of Bolangir district are the important mountain springs of Western Odisha. Bansakela is the important not springs of Kalahandi district. Hirakud Dam of Sambalpur district is regarded as the longest dam in the world. It has a 4801.2 metre-long concrete-cum-masonry-cum-earth dam on the Mahanadi (Sahu, 1969). The Hirakud Dam project is a multipurpose river valley project with the objectives of power generation, flood, control, navigation and irrigation. Hirakud, Chipilima Upper Indravati, Ib, Thermal are power project of Western Odisha due to large number of thermal power plants located in the district. Rourkela is known as the steel city of Odisha. The steel plant at Rourkela was formed with German Collaboration (Sahu, 1975).

Western Odisha also rich in mineral ores resources such as bauxite, coal, beryl, graphite, dolomite, limestone, iron ore, manganese, ochres mica, quartz etc. All districts of Western Odisha occupies a unique position possessing major portion of the total reserves ores and minerals. Western regions have extremely hot summers and bitterly frigid winters. There, summer temperatures can reach 49 degrees Celsius, while winter lows are unbearably low.

Western Odisha has one of the largest tribal populations of Odisha. The tribe like Santala, Ho, Kharia, Koda, Munda, Kora, Oraons, Gond, Saura, Kui, Kondh, Sabar, Kisan, Brinjal, Dal, Bhuiyan, Paraja, Lodha live in the districts of Western Odisha. Some of the tribes men were made Zamindars, Umras and Gauntias by the kind of Western Odisha. Most of the Zamindars and Umras belonged primarily to Gond, Kondh and Brinjal tribes. There about 50 scheduled Castes in different part of Western Odisha. The important among whom are Dam, Ganda, Ghasi, Hadi, Khadala, Pana, Chamar, Betra, Dhoba, Keunta etc. The other high castes of these areas are Brahmin, Kulta, Dumal, Agaria, Teli, Mali, Sundhi, Bhulia, Kumbhar, Sunari, Gudia etc (Pati, 1982).

Western Odisha is predominantly an agricultural area. The most of the people dependent upon agriculture. Rice

is the main production of western Odisha. Pulses, Cereals, Oil-Seeds, Spices, Vegetables, Fruits, Sugarcane, Jute, Cotton are also produced here. The Bargarh district is referred to as Odisha's rice bowl. It has got the highest production of productivity of paddy in Odisha. Timber is the major forest produce and soil is a major constituent of these products. Among the minor forest product of this region are broom grass, bamboo, kendu leaf, Mahua flower and seed, antia bark, sabai-grass, honey, raisin, shellar etc (Gupta, 2010). Most of the tribal people depend upon the forest products for their livelihood.

This objective of the paper based on, to study the western Odisha in historical dimension in general.

Methods of the Study

The paper based on secondary source of the information. The information and literature collected from different journals, books, and website. The paper discuss in historical contexts of western Odisha.

Historicity of Western Odisha

Western Odisha is rich in pre-historic implements and pre-historic rock art. In 1876 V.Ball discovered four stone implements of Palaeolithic type in Odisha, three of which were from present Dhenkanal district and the remaining one from the district of Sambalpur. The implement of Samblapur was found near Bursapali to the north of the well known village Kudderbuga. The implement described by Ball is a hand axe of Deccan type, displaying crud techniques. At village Lasa in Kuchinda Sub-division two implements of polished stone Celt type has been discovered (Senapati, 1971). These implements signify a change in the life of the pre-historic men. The tools of early Stone Age were hand axes, cleavers, scrapers etc. in Sundargarh district. The tools of middle stone age were flakes. They have been at Bisholbury, Banjarh, Bhaludunguri, Bonaigarh, Bisra, Jagannathposh, Jhirpani, Khodia-Kudar, Khuntgaon, Tumkeleghat & Kurhadi. The tools found at Bonaigarh were in laterite quarries. Neolithic sites are also found in Bonaigarh Sub-division of Sundargarh district (Senapati, 1975). Pre-historic tools of all periods are found scattered in the river terraces, rock shelters and mountain peaks of Kalahandi district. Half a dozen shouldered Celts of the late Neolithic period collected from the Maraguda valley of the district (Mohapatra,

1986). Now many implements of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic age are discovered in river valley like Mahandi, Jira, Ang, Tel, Rahuletc (Senapati and Sahu, 1968). The early men were not only living in cave for the sake of shelter but also where developing a culture, which was unique in certain aspects. The rock painting of Gudahandi (Kalahandi) Joginath and Dumberbahal (Nuapada), Vikramkhola & Vshakothi (Jharsuguda), Ushakothi of Ulaphgarh and Maniknoda (Sundargarh) etc. in which different aspects of life are painted in different hues represent unique speed men and in the rock art heritage. Some of them have been considered as utilitarian where as other as symbolising tantric practices and still some others as musings of the early men in a transcendental stage of mind (Pradhan, 2001). The Vikramkhola rock shelter was first reported by K.P. Jayaswal in 1953, K.P. Jayaswal remarked that "The Character of Vikramkhola inscription belongs to a period intermediary between the script of Mahenjodara and Brahmi", while the pictographic of Gudahandi are considered to be identical with the picture-script of Harappan Culture. The rock arts represent a wide variety of art which include paintings and engravings figures non-figures etc. The rock art exhibit the initial creative expression of early men. Western Odisha was known as South Koshala in ancient times, which roughly comprised the modern district of Raipur and Bilaspur of Chhatisgarh state and undivided districts of Sambalpur, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Boudh, Sundargarh and Koraput of Odisha (District Statistical Handbook, Sambalpur, 1974). Western Odisha was originally formed the eastern part of South Koshala in ancient and Medieval time. Koshala was an important Mahajan of Aryabarta and continued as a single unit at least upto the time of Maurya (Pathak, 1963).

Interestingly there are different traditional accounts about the rise of South Koshala. The Mahabharata and Puranas refer to six Koshalas ruled by different dynasties simultaneously. All those comprised a vast tract of land around the Vindhya region and together they were known as Mahakoshala or Great Koshala. Whose extent was a square area of about 200 miles on each side of the Six Khoshalas (Uttara), Koshala (North), South-Koshala & Purva- Koshala fought on behalf of Kaurava Duryadhana in Mahabharat war. The other three are considered to be mere extension of original Koshala Kingdom. Again of the first three the North, South

Koshala survived for few centuries after Mahabharata Was. The First is identified with present Ayodhya region of Uttar Pradesh where Lord Rama ruled and second with Chhatisgarh-West Odisha tract (Mishra, 2010).

It is said that when Manu Vaivasvata divided his dominion among his ten sons, Ikshvaku his eldest son received Madhyadesa as his share and ruled over the territory with Ayodhya as his capital. He became the eponymous ancestor of the Ikshvaku and his kingdom came to be known as Koshala. Ikshvaku is said to have been blessed with one hundred sons of whom forty eight were rulers of Dakshinapatha (Vishnu Purana, Vaya purana p.8-11,). One of them named forest region of Chhatisgarh, which came to be known by his name as Dandakaranya (Padma Purna, V.B 130, Bhag 1x.6.4). The Ramayana reveals that Ram, during his exile spent ten years in the forest of Dundaka. According to Pargiter the long stay of Rama in that area gave rise to the name of Koshala in the South (Pargiter, 1922). The Padmapurana states that existence of two Koshalas (Padma Purana, VI.CCLXXI. p.54-55). After Sri Rama his kingdom was divided between his two sons. Lava became the ruler of Uttar-Koshala with its metropolis Sravastis while Kusha who married a Naga Princess ruled over Dakshina Koshala and made Kusasthalipura or Kushavatiputra his capital near Vindhya (Ramayana, VII, CXX.7, CXXI.5).

The Vanaparav of Mahabharata locates South-Koshala in the Northern part of Dakshinapatha and clearly distinguishes the territory of Koshala from the kingdom of Vidarbha. The area that includes the present-day districts of Bilaspur, Raipur, and Undivided Sambalpur is where Prof. H.C. Ray Choudhri places Dakshina Koshala (Panda, 1997).

J.P Singh Deo presents a tradition that towards the South of Vindhyas there was a city named Nagapattana which was ruled by a king named Kosala who was succeeded by Bhanumanti Kausalya the daughter of Bhanumanta was married to Dasaratha. Bhanumanta died without any male issue and therefore Dasaratha succeeded to the territory of Bhanumanta. To keep up the attachment of people with Kausalya this territory was named as Koshala. Probably to distinguish Koshala the new acquired territory was named as Dakshina Koshala (Singhdeo).

Greek geographer Ptolemy mentions that Chhatisgarh or Mahakoshala as the country of Adisathiri, bounded on the south by the Adisathron range of Mountains and having its capital at Sajeda or Modern Sirpura Cunningham gives South Koshala a separate name i.e. Mahakoshala due to its wider extent as compared to north Koshala. The above suggestion of Cunningham is supported by Hiralal, who write that in a country watered by Mahanadi, containing villages with names such as Mahasamuda, Mahabhoja, Maha Vinayaka, Mahendra, Maharastra etc. Perhaps it seemed appropriate to call Dakshina Koshala as MahaKoshala (Mishra, 2010).

The Buddhist work Avadanshataka mentions the war between North and South Koshala in about Five Century B.C, shortly after North Koshala was annexed to Magadha by Ajatesatru, while South Koshala maintained its continuance for a century more. The last Ikshvaku king Sumita was overthrown by Mahapadmananda of Magadha in 4th Century B.C and South Koshala was annexed to his empire. After decline of Nanda rule, South Koshala became independent (Mishra, 2010).

According to the Jain work "Jamva-Diva Pannatti," Kusavati (also known as Kusasthalipura), the capital of South Koshala, was connected to the Vaitadhya range, which had sixty Vidyadhara towns. These settlements were located in the region known as Vidyadhara territory, which was South Koshala (B.C. Law, Historical Geography of Ancient India, p. 199).

South Koshala was known as land of "Unconquered Frontagers" (Amtanam-a-Vijitanam) in separate Rock Editll (Junagarh Inscription) of Asoka Mourya in the 3rd Century B.C. The Western boundary appears to have extended up to the Amarkantak hill range. In the Hatigumpha inscription of Kharavela (1st Century AD) refers to Vidyadhara Country. After decline of Maurya rule a kingdom was founded by Abhichandra of Chedi dynasty in the foothill region of the Vindhya i Koshala. According to D.C Sircar and N.K Sahu, its capital Shuktimatipuri is said to have been located on the bank of the Suktel, a tributary of the Tel river, flowing through Balangir and Sonapur districts (Mishra, 2010). Gautamiputra Satakami in the beginning of 2nd Century A.D in his Nasik inscription is described as the lord of mountain like the Vindhya, Rksavata, Pariyatra Sahya,

Krisnagiri, Malaya, Mahendra, Svata giri and Chakora (Mishra, 2010).

The Puranas like Markendeya, Vamana, Brahmanada and Matsya mention the name South-Koshala in association with Mekala, Tosala and some other countries. Bharata's Natya Sasthra, as cribbed to early Christian time refers to Koshala with Tosala, Kalinga, Moshala and locates those countries between the Southern sea and the Vindhya. Vatsyayana's Kamasutra mentions the location of South Koshal as bordering to Strirajya on the West of Vajravantadesa (Vairagarh in Chanda district of Maharashtra) (Mishra, 2010). J.K Sahu has identified that Strirajya may be located in Bastar-Kalahandi region.

The coins have undoubtedly stated unveiling the history of this region. There are four coins of Mitra recovered from Kausambi, Ajodhya, Mathura and other places there have been dated to 2nd Century B.C. The scholars had the opinion that after downfall of Sungas, the dynasty was split into branches, those ruled over small principalities in different parts of the country. The rulers of one branch continued the Mitra Suffix with their names. The Mitra founded a small principality in Mekala-Koshala area. The rulers of the dynasty as known from the coins were Ravi Mitra, Sumitra, Chandra Mitra, Bhumitra. The rule of the Satavehanas in South Koshala is known from a few of their coins and epigraphic records (Mishra, 2010).

The Purana lists the nine Megha dynasty kings. Kharavela of Kalinga is a member of the Chedi or Maha Meghavahana dynasty, according to N.K. Sahu. Following the demise of their power in Kalinga in the second century A.D., they relocated to their ancestral homeland of Koshala. A type of Megha dynasty is linked to the gold coin discovered at Patangarh, which features an obverse image of a person riding a horse and a legend written in the characters of the third century A.D. called Sri Raghabhadevya. According to Mishra (2010), the Meghadynasty was in charge during the reign of Koshala Mahendra, whose name first appears as the first king of Dakshinapatha in the Allahabad pillar inscription.

We found a precise idea of West Odisha historical geography from the middle part of the fourth century A.D onwards. The toponyms and provenances of the epigraphic and numismatic finds, the traces and ruins of monuments and serendipities made available during

surface explorations are of inestimable help for the ancient and early medieval period. Archaeology and literature provide us with an idea of the geographic features bearing on the history of the later medieval and modern periods (Mishra, 2010).

The veils of mystery surrounding the history of South Koshala were lifted by the Samudragupta inscription found on the Allahabad pillar during the middle of the 4th century A.D. The Allahabad pillar inscription throws light on the history of South-Koshala. It has been mentioned in this record that, Samudragupta in course of defeated his Southern expedition Mahendra of Koshala, Mantraraja Korlla and Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara. These three kingdoms comprised mainly the Western and South Western parts of Odisha. Koshala by that time comprised the Chhatisgarh and district of Sambalpur in Odisha (Roychoudhury, 1950). Kosala has been identified with Sonapur region and Bolangir district. Dr. N.K Sahu identified Mahakantara with the district of Kalahandi and Koraput of Odisha and Bastar of Chhatisgarh.

The first dynasty to rule during the historical era was the Nala. In western Odisha, their reign began in the middle of the fourth century A.D. The Nalas, who claimed their descent from the Nisada King Nala, had their supremacy over the Kantara (Bastar, Koraput and Nabarangpur region) and Koshala (Chhatisgarh & Western Odisha region). The Vayu and Brahmamanda Purana refer to the rule of Nalas in Dakshina Koshala-the dynasty founded their rule Koshala and Vyaghraraja's mahakantara. The Two rulers were defeated by Samudragupta. The Nalas took the advantage of the defeats and established their rule. Their capital was at Pushkari, modern Padagarh in Nawarangpur district which has a stone inscription of Skandavaraman of Nala dynasty (N.K sahu, Utkal University, History of Orissa, Vol.1, p.433). The Nala rule declined after about 150 years in about 500 A.D.

South Koshala, Mekala, and Malava were briefly incorporated into the Vakataka Empire during the post-Samudra Gupta era, according to the Balghat plates of Vakataka king Narendrasen. From approximately 440 to 460 A.D., Narendrasen was king (Epigraphic India, Vol. IV, p. 281). The Arang plates of the Bhimasena sort, which date to the Gupta year 282, or 602 A.D., provide similar insight into South Koshala's past.

Hanaraj Sura was the dynasty's founder, while Bhimasena was a type of Rajarshitulya Kula. The dynasty was renamed the Sura dynasty after Maharaja Sura, the first ruler. The Arang grant of kind Bhimsena was issued from Suvarnandi which identified with Suvarnapura by S.N. Rajguru (Inscription of Orissa, Vol.IV, p.281).

The Parvatadvarak has were the worshiper of the Goddess Stambhesvari installed at a place called Parvatadvarak and the name of this dynasty is suggested after the sacred seat of the tutelary deity (Prachya Pratibha, Vol.V.No.1, pp.1-40). From the Terasingha copper plates, we know about the rule of two kinds of this dynasty in the Tel river valley during the first half of Six Century A.D. This Parvatadvarak as had their sphere of activities in the Kalahandi and Bolangir district of Western Odisha.

In the eastern region of South Koshala, a new dynasty came to power towards the end of the fifth century A.D. For almost 200 years, they governed the nation (J.K. Sahu, Historical Geography of Orissa, New Delhi, p. 71). This dynasty emerged under Chieftain named Sarabha. After Nalas the northern part of the dominion i.e. Koshala came under the Sarabhapuriya dynasty (Amararya-Kula) (Cir 500-700 A.D.). While Southern part i.e. Kantara came to be known as Tri-Kalinga under eastern Gangas in about 500 AD. The lost corpus of eighteen copper plate inscription of Sarabhapuriyas as indicated by the provenances and the place name in them and give a better idea about historical geography of Koshala of the time. In their days, it comprised the whole Nuapada of West Odisha in the South to adjacent regions of Chhatisgarh in other cardinal directions (J.K Sahu, Historical Geography of Orissa, New Delhi, p.71).

The Eran Pillar Inscription of the time of Bhanugupta dated in the Gupta year 119 i.e. 511 A.D referred to Sarabha, the Chieftain of Sarabhapuriyas. The identification of the place of issue of majority of Characters, the capital Suraphapura defers identification. According to N.K Sahu, the head quarters of Saraphapura named after Chieftain Sarabha, has been identified with Sarabhagarh in modern Sundargarh district of Odisha (L.P Pandeya, Processing of oriental Conference, p461).

Hiuen Tsang, a Chinese pilgrim, came to the kingdom in the morning of 639. He claims to have gone 1880 Li

from Kalinga's capital in a north-west direction to reach Kia-su-lo (Koshala), and that a mountain known as Po-la-mo-lo-ki-li was located 300 Li to the southwest of the nation. Some academics have argued that its placement in the Nuapara region is questionable and subject to criticism. Some scholars identify mountain Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li with the Gandhamardan on the border of present Balangir-Bargarh districts is a matter of doubt J.K. Sahu observed, the account of Hiuen Tsang clearly indicates that Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li was in the South west of Koshala, whereas Gandhamardan hill range was located on the north-east (N.K sahu, Buddhisim in Orissa, pp.99.101).

Surabhapuriyas were ruled over South Koshala for a long period of time, kings like Maharaja Narendra (Cir 525-555 AD), Mahendraditya (Cir-555-580 AD), Prasunnamatra (Cir 580-605 AD), Jayaraja (Cir 605-630 A.D) and Sudevaraja (Cir 630-655 A.D) were the powerful rulers the dynasty. Pravararaja, the younger brother of Sudevaraja-I established an independent kindom and made Sripura his capital on the bank of Mahanddi. After Sudevaraja, Mahadurgaraja and Sudevaraja-II ruled up to 685 AD (IHQ, XIX, P 139, J.K.Sahu, Historical Geography of Orissaref-92). The copper plate grants of Sudevaraja-II indicate that the territory under Sudevaraja-II comprised the modern districts of Raipur and Bilaspur in Chhatisgarh and Sundargarh and Kalahandi in Odisha.

Pravararaja-II was the last ruler of this dynasty who is known to us from his Thakurdiya grant issued in his 3rd regional year. He seem to have made Sripura his headquarters Pravararaja is probably died issueless and after him the kingdom of Koshala passed to the hands of Tivaradeva, son of Nannaraja who was a high official under Sarabhapuriya Tivaradeva founded a new dynasty called Panduvamsi or Somavamsi in Koshala (J.K Sahu, Historical Geography of Orissa New Delhi, p.74).

The Angura plates have been found at Amgura village in Boden block of Nuapada district. The place names Viz the gift village Rajya-grama and the administrative unit Samparaja bhukit have been identified with a village Rajha left bank of Indra river and Nuapara district respectively. The Khariar (Nehna) Charter's place names Viz, the gift village Navannaka, Sambilaka and the administrative division. Ksitimandahara have been identified with village Nahena- a village near Khariar

which has yielded a good amount of antiquities, and adjacent village Sandohel and Khariar respectively. A few gold coins of the rulers of the dynasty have also been discovered from Nehena and the Jonk river valley. Off course, present Nuapada district Sunder Rivers on the North, South and east respectively was an integral part of Surabhapuriya dominion. However the contention of some Scholar identify the capital Sarabhapura-the place issue or a donor of Charter with a place in Jonk it does not fit in with description on dependable sources.

The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang mentions in his account that Kia-sa-lo (South Koshala) was surrounded by his mountains, dense forests and marshy land. Its capital was 40 Li in Circuit and much bigger than that of Odra & Kalinga. According to Hiuen Tsang the ruler was the Kshatriya race. But he was quite respectful to Buddhist and cultural activities. There was more than one hundred monasteries and ten thousand Mahayana monks. Apart from those the Deva temples were numerous.

His account mentions that the great Mahayana Philosopher Nagarjuna lived in 2nd Century A.D in a monastery of Po-lo-mu-lo-ki-ti, situated to the south of Koshala about 300 Li from its capital under the patronage of king Satavahana (Sa-to-po-ho). After searching for Nagarjuna, a monastery atop a mountain, King Yin-Cheng carved a tunnel through the rock that allowed him to communicate with the monastery for roughly ten Li. The monastery features tall halls and cloisters. These halls were set up in five tiers, each with four courts and temples that housed exquisitely rendered golden life-size images of the Buddha. Water flowed through it, and a window carved out of the rocks lit the interior. Nagarjuna was known as Sa-to-po-ha-ha and was patronised by She-yen-to-ka. The king She-yen-to-ka has been identified with Gautamiputra Satakarni and Satavahanadynasty (N.K. Sahu, Buddhism in Orissa, P.99.101).

In the Harsa-Charta of Banabhatta, a mendicant named Nagarjuna is introduced as the friend of Satavahana, the lord of three oceans. This king was no other than Gautamiputra Satakarni, whose title "Tisasamudatya Pitavhana" (One whose charges drink the waters of the three oceans) in the Nasik cave inscription of Vasisthiputra Pulamavi seems to be the same as Tri-sam-

udradhipati (Lord of three oceans) ascribed to him in Harsa Charita. In the light of these evidence it may be said that South Koshala a region was included in the empire of the Satavahanas. Gautamiputra Satakarni probably conquered South Koshala by defeating the Chedi-Mahameghavahanas. It appears that Pulamavi retained his hold over Koshala and Kalinga, which became independent after his death under his weak successors (Harsha Charita, Chapter. VIII).

Western Odisha was in the dominion of the Pandavamsis (Cir 700-800 AD) who came to rule after the Satabharyas. The founder of the rule Tivara Deva described himself as Koshaladhipati. Chhatigarh and only the western fringe i.e. the Nuapara district of Odisha under the sway of the rulers of the dynasty. The whole of the geographical features of Western Odisha came to prominence in the reign of the Somavamsis (Cir 850-1100 AD), unlike the Pandavamsis who took Koshaladhipati title (J.K. Sahu, Historical Geography of Orissa, New Delhi, P.74).

Tivara Deva's three copper plate grants attest to his dominion over South Koshala. Grants for Bonda were awarded in the fifth regnal year, Rajin was awarded in the seventh regnal year, and Baloda was awarded in the ninth regnal year. The Somavamsis kings from Tivara Deva to Harashagupta were all devote Vaisnava but Balarjuna the powerful ruler of Somavamsis declared himself as Pramamahesvara. Though Balarjuna declared himself as Paramamahesvara still, he was a patron of Buddhism and two inscriptions of his time found at Sirpur and Mattar indicate that along with Saivism, Buddhism flourished with great vigour and his kingdom (E.P. Ind. VOL. XXXI, PP. 97-98).

About the middle of the 9th Century AD the Somavamsis were ousted from Sirpur region by the rising Kalachuries. The epigraphic records indicate that Mahabhavagupta Rajadeva had conquered present Bargarh-Bolangir- Sonapur region (Sahu, 1971). The coronation ceremony of his grandson and Balarjuna's son Janmejaya-I Mahabhavagupta was performed at Suvarnapura on the confluence of Mahanadi and Tel rivers. According to Janmejaya-I's epigraphic records, his kingdom's administrative divisions were given names derived from the main rivers in Western Odisha, such as Telatata Vishaya, Ongatata Visaya, and Naditata Visaya. The areas on the banks of the Mahanadi,

Ongutata, and Telatata rivers were known as Naditata, Ongutata, and Telatata, respectively. He founded an independent kingdom and took on the title Trikalingadhipati. He also renamed their dynasty Panduvamsis to Somavamsis (Sahu, *Historical Geography of Orissa*, New Delhi, p.76).

Mahabhagupta Throughout his career, Janmejaya-I does not appear to have established any lasting capital. Subarnapura, Murasima (modern Mursing in Bolangir district), Arna (modern Rampur in Subarnpur district), and Vinitapur (modern Binka in Subarnapur district) were among the locations that became the Janmejaya-I headquarters after Sirpur. Since the Brahmesvara Temple inscription of Kolavatidevi indicates that their authority was unstable, we know that Janmejaya-I killed the Bhanja monarch Ranabhanja of Khinjals Mandala and annexed the Sonepur-Boud region due to their swift succession. He had Matrimonial relationship with Bhaumakaras of Toshali. Janmejaya-I issued his last known record Kalibhana grant in his 34th regnal year (E.I.XXII, P.135-38).

Mahasivagupta Yayati-I was the son and successor of Mahabhavagupta Janmejaya-I. Yayati-I (Cir 885-925 AD) established his capital at Vinitapura (modern Binka) on the bank of river Mahanadi-Later on shifted his capital to Yayatinagar on the bank of Mahandi near Boud. He interfered in the political affairs of Bhaumakars of Toshali in favour of his widow sister Prithivi Mahadevi, who was the wife of Bhauma King Subhakara Deva-IV. After death of Subhakara Deva-IV, the throne setting aside the claim of Prithivai Mahadevi and Yayati failed to render the effective help to his sister as he remained busy with the war against Kalachuries of the time of the Crisis (Sahu, 1971).

It was during the middle of the 11th century AD that Koshala and Utkala were successfully brought under the control of Mahasivagupta Yayati-II, the monarch of the Somavamsis. However, he was forced to split Koshala from Utkala shortly afterward for political reasons; as a result, Yayatinagar was designated as the capital of Utkala, while Tel, at the confluence of the Mahanadi and Yayatinagar, became the seat of Koshala. Yayati-II is recognised as one of the most remarkable kings in Odisha's history. He is referred to as "the representative of Madhusudan and Ocean learning" in the Narasimhapur and Ratnagiri Charters. According to

the Madalapanji, Yayati initiated the building of the renowned Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar, which was finished during the rule of his son Udyota Kesari. Yayati-II is said to have supported Brahminism and invited ten thousand Brahmins from Kanyakubja to perform the Asvamedha sacrifice in Jajpur, as per popular tradition (Mishra, 1999).

Yayati-II was succeeded by his son Udyotakesari about the year 1040 AD. His Narasimhapur Charter reveals that, he was the lord of Koshala and Utkala as well as Odra desa. During the rule of Udyotakesari, Koshala was treated as important province was place in charge of governor of royal blood. The separation was made in order to encounter the formidable attack of Gangas over Utkala and Kalachuries over Koshala. The Sonepur Charter of Kumar Somesvara reveals that Koshala desa at that time was also known as Paschima Lanka and its capital was Suvarnpura. Sometime it was called as PaschimaKalinga.

In course of time Somevamsis lost Chhatisgarh part of Koshala. The part was taken away by Kalachuries of Tummana (Tuman, Bilaspur district) after a protracted struggle with the Somavamsis for about a century. The last known Somavamsis rulers of Koshala was Yavaraja Dharmaratha. After Dharamratha Sonepur region came under the rule of Telgu Chodas in Cir 1069 AD (Sahu, 1971). Three of their Charter available us record the names of village in Sonepur district. These were Champamlla grama, Mahada, Atanderela, Medheska, Khadan, Kokatideva, Kumaringha all of which has been identified with villages in Birmaharajpur Sub-division of present Sonepur district. Two villages Baniabandha and Phulanuthi in Charda Visaya are mentioned in a Charter. Two Charters refer to Lord Vaidyanath, evidently the deity in Vaidyanth village near Sonepur on the bank of the Tel River. The tradition of reverence to the Chitrotapala (Mahandi) as sacred has been maintained by TelguChodas.

The Ratnapur inscription of Jajalladeva dated 1114 AD reveals that Somesvara-III, the last Telgu Choda king was defeated by Jajalladeva of Ratnapur (Bilaspur district of Chhatisgarh) and the Sambalpur-Sonepur region passed to the hands of the Kalachuris. The whole of Koshala was unified and Consolidated by the Kalachuris power. Kalachures became the undisputed master of Koshala territory Buddhism seems to have lost its influence in South Koshala region during the time of

Kalachuris. As number of gold coins of these kings have been discovered (Senapati, 1968).

The Ganga Emperor Chodagangadeva tried to capture Koshala from Kalachuris but he was defeated by Ratnadeva-II. A protracted struggle to wrest the region of Western Odisha for a century. The Chatesvara inscription reveals that Vishnu, the general of Ganga king of the Anagavimadeva-III crushingly defeated the Kalachuri king of Tummana in a battle fought on the bank of the Bhima, the outskirt of the Vindhya and also on the Seashore in 1220 AD. As a result of this victory of Gangas could occupy the Sonepur-Bolangir region by driving out Kalachuris. Sonepur-Boudh region was organised as a previous named Paschima Desha as known from the Khambeswari temple inscription of Sonepur of 1268 AD (Journal of Asiatic society of Bengal, Old series, VOL. XVII, 1898, p.322.26). Province were made in other parts of western Odisha like Kalahandi (Kamal-Mandala under Madan Mahadev of Narla Siva temple inscription) Bamanda and Patnagarh.

Sambalpur region of the Kalachuri kingdom was occupied by the Yadava king Singhana. The invasion of Singhana might have taken place about the year 1210 AD in the beginning of the reign of Jajlladeva-III, when the Ganga invades Sonepur-Bolangir region. Yadavas in order to protect their territory from the Ganga menace would have appointed a military governor (J.K Sahu, 1978). The Bargarh copper plate charter of Ranaka Parachakra-Sulya issued in Samvat 56 from Vagharakotta identified with modern Bargarh district reveals that Rastrakutas for sometime ruling over Bargarh region. They were the feudatories of the Yadava rulers, came to Bargarh region in the train of Yadava invasion led by Singhana (Sahu, 1978).

During the Ganga rule continuous Muslim Invasion on Odisha weakened that Ganga hold over. When half of 14th Century AD, new Sub-regional kingdoms were set up in those provinces by various royal dynasties viz, Chauhan in Patnagarh (Bolangir district), Bhanja in Boudh, Naga in Kalahandi, Ganga in Bamanda, Parmara in Gangpur, Kadamba in Bonai. Therefore the Gangas left the internal administration of border territory to some feudatory chiefs and remained satisfied with the tributes they paid. They expressed nominal allegiance to the Ganga Emperors for some time. In 16th and 17th Century

AD three collateral Chauhan Kingdoms were setup at Sambalpur, Sonepur and Khariar (Mallick, 1931).

The Sanskrit book "Koshalananda Kavya," penned by Pandit Gangadhar Mishra in the first half of the 16th century AD, provides insight into the early history of the Chauhan dynasty. A work in Odia titled "Nrusinha Mahatmya" by Lakshmana Mishra in the later 19th century AD, and a work in Hindi called "Jaya chandrika" by Prahallad Dubey, written in Samvat 1838, or 1282 AD. Chikitsa Manjari provides insightful details regarding Chauhan's rule. A note on the "Garjat state of Patna" was produced on May 29, 1853, by Major H.B. Impey, a Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur. This paper was very helpful in studying the history of the Chauhan regulations of this former state (Mallick, 1931).

He destroyed the oligarchy of the Asta Mallika and founded his dynasty at Patnagarh in 1360 AD. It ushered in a new chapter in the history of Koshala. Harinath Deva was the feudatory Chief of Gangas at Patnagarh. After him, his son Krutivadeva was feudatory Chief of Patnagarh. After him, his son Krutivasadeva was feudatory chief of Patnagarh. Following the issueless death of Krutivasadeva, his widow Hemanta Kumari, with the assistance of eight Malliks, or Asta Mallik, governed the Kingdom. These chieftains ruled eight forts, or Garhs. First, Patnagarh; second, Kaggarh; third, Salebhattagarh; fourth, Jarasingagarh; fifth, Sidhekelagarh; sixth, Kholangarh; seventh, Goragarh; and eighth, Kumnagarh. The origins of the Chauhan kings are recorded based on the long-preserved traditions of these chieftains, who once held the position of head of the area. The Chauhans of western Odisha claimed ancestry from the Mynpoore Chauhan royal house. Whose forefathers were the renowned Prithiviraj Chauhan's Chauhans of Garh Sambhar? According to Major Impey's 1863 writing, "the Maharaja of Patna count back the individuals of this rule for 32 generations and claim direct descent from a race of Rajput Rajah of Garha Sambhal near Mynpoore" (Mallick, 1931).

Based on the information at hand, it may be concluded that Feroz Shah Toghlugh, the Sultan of Delhi, killed Hammir Dev somewhere in the middle of the 14th century AD. His queen Ashabati, also known as Jayanti, then performed the ceremony of suttee in anticipation of her husband's death. In an attempt to escape, Ashabati fled to western Odisha. There, she took refuge at the home of Patna Brahmin Chakradhar Panigrahi, a

member of the Asta Malliks, where she gave birth to Ramai Deva. In 1360 AD, he overthrew the Asta Mallik oligarchy and established the Patnagarh dynasty. It marked the beginning of a new era in Koshala's history.

The Kosaland describes these eight Chiefs, or "eight matris," as leading the nation in unison like brothers, but it also makes clear that the true power lay with those who chose and appointed these Mantris. This literature also claims that there was a time when a fierce man-eater caused enormous destruction and when every effort was made to overthrow the people's choice. Then came Ramai Deo, a young man who killed the tiger and, keeping their word, was crowned king by the populace. On the other side, the Yugachandrika tells a different tale. It states that Chakradhar Panigrahi, who was essentially Ramai's adoptive father, was one of the eight chieftains who alternately ruled over Patna for a day.

On the day he turned over the Panigrahi cme, he assigned Ramai to oversee the administration. While he was wildly misbehaving with other Chieftains, the young Ramai lavishly compensated the army and the people, making them extremely happy. The next time Ramai was sent by Chakradhar Panigrahi to reign, he used the army's support to eliminate all seven of the Malliks and take Patanagarh's crown (Mallick, 1931).

The Sanskrit work "Koshalananda Kavya," penned by Pandit Gangadhar Mishra in the first half of the 16th century AD, provides insight into the early history of the Chauhan dynasty. Important details concerning Chauhan rule may be found in two works: the Odia work Nrusihma Mahatmya, written by Lakshmana Mishra in the later half of the 19th century AD, and the Hindi work Yayachandrika, written by Prahallad Dube in Samvat 1838, or 1282 AD, which is attributed to Chikitsa Manjari. A note on the "Garjat State of Patna" was produced on May 29, 1893, by Major H.B. Impey, a Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur. This paper is quite helpful while studying the history of the Chauhan kings of this former state.

Vaijpal Dev-I's inscription in the Nrusinghnath temple makes it abundantly evident that Vaijpal was the son of Patna's monarch, Vachharaj Dev. He reached his zenith in the first half of the 15th century AD. Koshalanda claims that Vaijpal Dev engaged in a six-year battle with the Orissan Gajapatis, Rama Chandra and Mahaling.

Baijal Dev received tributes from Bamara, Ganjpur, Bonai, Boud, Sirguja, Kenkhanal, and other nearby states. Vaijal Dev is claimed to have made 72 Chiefs tributaries to Patna. He and his queen erected the temple of Nrusimhanath atop the Gandhamardan hill. Durlava Devi ordered the construction of a second temple for the worship of Harisankar, also known as Harihar, on the southern side of the same hill (Das, 1969).

The eulthor is Vaijal Dev-II. Prabodha Chandrika claims that he was the famous Chauhan ruler of Patna, his realm, which was situated west of Utkala. Haradhara Deo, his son, succeeded him. Sri Ram Chandra Mallik claims that Hiradhara Deo was a feudatory of Gajapati King Pratap Rudra Dev, who gave him various provinces, including Patna, after being vanquished by Krishna Deva Rai of Vijayanagar. He was presenting his respects to the Vijaynagar ruler. However, this opinion appears dubious because there are no records to support it.

Following his father Haradhara Dev, his son Nursimha Deva ruled over the strong kingdom of Patna. Nurasimha Deva's brother, Balaram Deva, was a princely and ambitious man. After overthrowing the Raja of Surguja, he seized control of Sambalpur. According to folklore, the dewger queen brought her sons to the Surangi River's bed and asked the younger and elder to sit on her left and right laps, respectively. Then she instructed them to claim the river Surangi as their own land in Anaga (Sahu et al., 1989).

Once the boys agreed with their mother's choice, the river came to be known as Ang and was considered the demarcation between the regions of Patna and Sambalpur. It seems that in order to restrain the hostility of the Haihaya Power of Ratanpur, Narusimha Deva placed the Sambalpur territory under the control of his brother Balaram Deva. Balaram Deva was a contemporary of Haihaya ruler Kalyan Sahai.

The Sambalpur region was once referred to as Huma Desa. The Huma Desa's domain stretched from the Mahanadi in the north to the Aang River in the south, and from the present-day Huma hamlet in the east to the Surangi River in the west. It is said that a military necessity led to the establishment of the kingdom of Sambalpur. The Kalachuri strength of Ratanpur then posed a threat of invasion to the western frontier of the Chauhan kingdom. He had been sent by his father Haridhar Deva to assist the king of Orissa in fending

off the Muslim invasion in 1568. From 1870 to 1595 AD, Sambalpur was ruled by Balaram Deva, who was regarded as the founder of the Chauhan dynasty (Sahu et al., 1989).

At first Balaram Deva built his Headquarters at Bargarh on the bank of the river Jira. Thereafter he shifted his capital to Nuagarh, situated in Bhatli, then to Chaurpur and finally to Sambalpur on the left bank of the river Mahanadi. He fortified the new Headquarters, built there a temple for Goddess Samalai and accepting the deity as his tutelary deity earned the support of the people and their chiefs as well. Then he entered into a career of conquest and made his empire vast. Balaram Deva first marched towards the Haihaya of Ratanpur where political stagnation had started after the death of Kalyan Sahai about 1580 AD. Taking this opportunity Balaramdeva defeated the Haihaya ruler who was probably Lakshman Sahai and forced him to cede Sarangarh, Raigarh, Bargarh and Sakti to the kingdom of Sambalpur. Thereafter Balaram Deva conquered the kingdom of Bamanda and reinstalled its chief Rama Chandra Deva as a feudatory of Sambalpur. His territory now touched Surguja and Gangpur. Soon after this there arose a conflict between Sambalpur and Surguja. Balaram Deva marched against Surguja through Gangpur. The ruler of Gangpur acknowledged the sovereignty of Balaram Deva and gave his daughter Kamala Kumari with him. The ruler of Surguja was defeated near the river Bheden and gave his daughter in marriage to Balaram Deva. Balaram Deva brought the image of Ananta Sayee Vishnu for whom a temple of Ananta Sajya was built at Sambalpur. Meanwhile Narasimha Deva of Patnagarh died and his son Hummira Deva also died after a short rule in three years leaving behind him a minor son Pratap Deva. Balaram Deva taking his opportunity, sent his son Hrudaya Narayan Deva to govern Patna on behalf of the minor prince. Subsequently Balaram Deva made Patna a Vassal state under the kingdom of Sambalpur and dismissed the ministers. The widow queen of Hummira Deva suspecting conspiracy against the life of her minor son fled away with the boy to Nandapur. Balaram Deva by means of conquest and diplomacy was able to extend his kingdom from Kanhar River in the north to river Bagha and Haldi in the South and from Brahmani on the east to Jonk River in the west including the states of Patna. The kingdom of Balaram Deva consisted of fifteen

states. They were Sambalpur, Patna, Sonapur, Bastar, Bindra, Nuagarh, Phuljar, Deorhi, Badasambar, Baud, Athamallik, Khariar, Bamanda, Gangpur, Surguja, Raigarh, Bargarh, Surangarh and Sakti.

Balaram Deva was succeeded by his son Hrudayanarayan Deva, who ruled over Sambalpur for a brief period 1600 AD to 1605 AD. He brought Pratap Deva from Nandapur, reinstalled him on the throne of who ruled over Patna kingdom as a Vassal ruler under Sambalpur kingdom. His son Balabhadra Deva (1605 to 1630 AD) was a powerful king. The most important event of his reign was the conquest of Boud. In Jaya Chandrika it is stated that Balabhadra Deva besieged the fort of Baud for twelve years without any success. During his rule many Lariya speaking people belonging to different castes from Chhatisgarh region came and settled in Sambalpur (Das, 1969).

Balabhadra Deva was succeeded by his son Madhukara Deva (1630 to 1650) he had five sons namely Baliar Singh, Madan Gopal, Bansi Gopal, Anirudha Singh and Krishna Singh. The eldest son Baliar Singh was made heir apparent to the Sambalpur throne and Madan Gopal was assigned to administer Sonapur where he established a line of Chauhan dynasty. Bansi Gopal became a Vaisnavite Saint who built some temples and Mathas in Sambalpur town itself and other places of the kingdom. Anirudha Singh became the ruler of Khinda whose descendant was Surendra Sai.

According to the Koshalanda Kavya (N.K. Sahu, P.K. Mishra, J.K. Sahu, Op. Cit., p.287), Madhukara Deva abdicated the throne in favour of his eldest son, Baliar Singh, who ruled over Sambalpur from 1650 to 1689 AD. An important source of information about the history of the Chauhan rulers in western Odisha is the Koshalanda Kavya, written by Baliar Singh's court poet, Pandit Gangadhar Mishra. Bonai Yamatangi is one of the two significant states that Baliar Singh is credited with conquering. Yamatangi is associated with the Yamagarta mandala, which included parts of the present-day districts of Keonjhar and Dhenkanal as well as the Pal Lahara region. Under the Bhanja dynasty, it was controlled. Declaring himself to be a lord of eighteen (1) Garhsviz; (2) Sambalpur; (3) Patna; (4) Sonapur; (5) Baud; (6) Athamallik; (7) Raikhol; (8) Bamanda; (9) Bonai; (10) Gangpur; (11), Raigarh; (12) Sarangarh; (13), Surguja; (14), Bindra Nuagarh; (15) Sakti 16, 17)

Phaljar, (18) Bastar. His dominion, which included parts of the modern districts of Sambalpur, Sundargarh, and Balangir in Odisha, as well as Raipur and Bilaspur in Chhatisgarh, roughly correlates to the old south Koshal kingdom.

Gangadhar Mishra is justified when he describes the Chauhan Kingdom of Sambalpur as the kingdom of Koshala in his *Koshalananda Kavya*. A massive elephant has been likened to the geographical layout of the eighteen states. When the Koshalanda kavya of Bamanda rebelled against him, he was put down and imprisoned in the Sambalpur fort. His younger sons, Vikram Singh and Fateh Singh, received the estates he had constructed for Barpali and Saria, respectively. Additionally, he bestowed the hereditary title of Sardar on Udam Singh, a soldier from the Gond tribe, and awarded Zamindari of Kharsal to him. On the bank of the Mahanadi River in Huma, he constructed the temple dedicated to Vimala Siva, one of the leaning Asta Sambhu. The most powerful Chauhan monarch of Sambalpur, Baliar Singh was given the honorific “Hirakhand Chhatrapati Maharaja Atharagarh Maudamani” by the Gajapati king of Puri (Das, Op. Cit., p.260).

Baliar Singh was succeeded by his son Ratan Singh who died within one year (1689-90). He was ousted from the throne and was killed. By that time his eldest son Chatra sai was not at Sambalpur availing of this opportunity the Deewan seized all power and refused to recognize the authority of Chatra Sai by receiving adequate military help from Dewan Udyota Sai of Sarangpur and Durjaya Singh of Raigarh, Chhatra Sai easily defeated his enemies, recovered his own capital, ruled the kingdom from 1690 to 1725 (Senapati (ed), Op. Cit., p.65).

He fortified the place and fort and excavated a deeper tank which is named after him as Chhatra Sagar. He had also renovated the temple of Samalaitotis present form and built the temple of Dudharaja the Kutha Jagannath and the Hotapara Balder temple in the town. He had also established the Rampur Dandapat, 25 miles from Sambalpur, situated at the Sangam of river Ib and Bheden. Gopinath Sarangi his court physician wrote “Chikitsa Manjari” a notable work on Material Medica from which it is known that the raja of Sambalpur at that time was the lord of eighteen Garah and thirteen

Dandapatas. While the extent of territory was one hundred miles in length, the capital of the kingdom had a population of twenty thousand. This description also supported by Prahallad Dubey in his *Jaya Chandrika* (Sahu, at, al., Op. Cit., p.307).

Chhatra Sai was succeeded by his son Ajit Singh (1725-1766). He was a weak ruler and spent most of his time in luxuries. The political conspiracies that vitiated the court of Chhatra Sai continued in a greater degree during Ajit Singh. For a long time Dewan Dakhina Ray ruled with an iron hand. Muktamani Devi, one of the eight Ranis, successfully organized a plot and killed him on 10th June 1763. Dakhina Ray built several Siva Temples in different parts of the Kingdom. The next Dewan Peelo Ray also fell a victim and was murdered by Akbar Ray on festival occasion. Akbar Ray became new Dewan in 1764 and he surpassed all in his cruelty and corruption. In the midst of such internal disturbances, Ajit Singh died in May 1766. The Chauhan rule became weak for civil war; it was started during the rule of Ajit Singh (Das, Op. Cit., pp. 273-274).

After Ajit Singh, his son Abhaya Singh (1766-68) became the king of Sambalpur, when he was a young man of sixteen. Jayanta Singh, was the brother of Ajit Singh. He revolted against his brother Ajit Singh. His rebellion was suppressed by Garhmandal to save his life. Akbar Ray killed Padman Singh elder brother of Abhya Singh and mother of Abhaya Singh, imprisoned the Dewan Krishna Bara Mallick and Abhaya Singh. Abhaya Singh died in prison in 1778. Abhaya Singh laid the foundation of Sakhi Gopal temple in Sambalpur town which was completed by his successor Jayanta Singh. After the death of Abhya Singh, Akbar Ray put on the throne a small boy named Balabhadra Sai, who was a son of Chauhan Zamindar of Padampur and Governed the kingdom in his name (Sahu, Op. Cit., p.8.) Jayanta Singh on hearing the death of his brother, returned from Garhmandal and taking military assistance from the Dewan Biswanath Ray of Sarangarh attacked the palace and killed Akbar Ray, his son and newly installed raja Balabhadra Sai. His coronation took place on Sunday 12th day of bright fortnight of Jyestha in 1782 AD (S.P. Das, Op. Cit., p.283).

But the reign of Jayanta Singh was not peaceful. He had faced continuous Maratha invasion which weakened the Chauhan rule in Sambalpur. During the period of

Akbar Ray, he followed a policy of friendship with English and quarrelled with the Marathas. Taking opportunity of the death of Akbar Ray, the Marathas attacked fluently on Sambalpur which at last compelled Jayanta Singh to purchase peace by agreeing to pay an annual tribute of 32000 Sambalpur cutcha coins equivalent to 16000 gold coins, This agreement prevailed till 1800AD (Selections from Nagpur Residency Records, Vol. I, p.54).

In 1799 A.D. Vinkoji Bhonsla, a younger brother of Raja Raghuji Bhonsla II had dispatched an army under Bhup Singh and captured Sambalpur in the winter of 1799. After a seize of the five months the fort of Sambalpur was stormed and Jayant Singh with his son Maharaja Sai was taken captive in April 1800 A.D. They were kept in Chanda fort with the chiefs of Baud and Sonepur. Bhup Singh who conquered Sambalpur, joined hands with Rani Ratan Singh Kumari, the queen of Raja Jayant Singh and wanted to be an independent ruler and as such, the Bhonsla of Nagpur invaded Sambalpur and drove him out of the place. Rani and Bhup Singh entered the British camp. In the second Anglo-Maratha War, Raghuji Bhonsla was vanquished by the British, and on December 17, 1803, he signed the Treaty of Deogaon. In accordance with the agreement, he gave up Cuttack but kept Sambalpur. Captain Roughsedge took over Sambalpur's administration after Broughton's occupation in 1804, and he helped in 1805 and on May 12. With the condition that Raja Jayant Singh and Maharaja Sai be released, it was decided to transfer Sambalpur to Raghuji Bhonsla, with the exception of Raigrah and Sakti (Selections from Nagpur Residency Records, Vol. I, p.54). Rani Ratan Kumari, however, demanded that she should keep her hands in the internal administration of Sambalpur kingdom and pay tribute to the Marathas. But in November 29th 1808, the Marathas invaded upon Sambalpur and drove away the Rani, who lived under British possession.

The Marathas failed to pacify the people and consolidate their power in the territory. Raghuji Bhonsla was succeeded by his son Parsoji. In this opportunistic moment, the British raised conflict in the Marathas. It was resulted in the third Anglo Maratha war and the disastrous defeat of the Marathas by the British in the battle of Sitabaldi on 27th November 1817. As a result of this the British Government took possession of Sambalpur. Raja Jayant Singh and Maharaja Sai were

released from Chanda and Jayant Singh was reinstalled on the throne of Sambalpur. Rani Ratan Kumari however, did not live to see the restoration of her husbands she died in 1816 at Kasi. She is remembered in the history Sambalpur for her courage and heroism in defending her country against the Marathas. Maharaja Jayant Singh breathed his last after a short rule in 1818 and succeeded by his only son Maharaja Sai who became the raja of Sambalpur in 1820. But he was deprived of the traditional feudal supremacy of over eighteen Garjat states (S.P. Das, Op. Cit., pp. 325-328).

Maharaja Sai died in 1827 A.D. leaving behind him two daughters but no son. The British Government installed the widow Rani Mohan Kumari on the Gadi. She allowed large scale migration of high caste Hindus from the coastal areas to settle down in her kingdom occupying tribal land. It resulted rebellion. To avoid trouble the company removed Rani to Cuttack with a pension and appointed old Narayan Singh, a scion of Barpali Zamindari family as ruler on 11th October 1833 A.D. The selection of such a person for the Gadi worsened the situation, followed by popular fury and discontent. As previously noted, Surendra Sai, who regarded Narayan Singh as a usurper, claimed the throne on the basis of his ancestry from the Sambalpur fourth Raja. In 1840, he and his sibling Udant Sai, along with their uncle Balaram Singh, brutally killed Durjaya Singh Zamindar's son and father in Rampur. Following this, the three were taken into custody and placed in political prison at Hazaribagh Prison. In the meantime, Sambalpur's raja, Narayan Singh, passed away on September 10, 1847, leaving no male heir, which, in accordance with Lord Dalhousie's well-known theory of lapse, resulted in Sambalpur's annexation to the British Indian Empire. The Chauhan rule in Sambalpur came to an end (History of Orissa, pp. 257-258, N.K. Sahu, P.K. Mishra, J.K. Sahu). They broke down the bars and freed the inmates during the Sepoys Mutiny of 1857. Also liberated were the Sai brothers, Surendra and Udanta. As the news of Hazaribagh jail break reached Sambalpur, Captain Leigh got alarmed and requisitioned forces from Cuttack. From October 1857 Surendra Sai led the revolt of Sambalpur in which the participants were mainly the tribals. Among the tribal chiefs, they were Zamindars of Ghens, Kolabira, Pahadsirgida, Machida, Laida, Kodabaga, Lakhampur, Loisinga, Patkulanda and Bheden. They were ardent supporters

of Surendra Sai claim for the throne of Sambalpur. In challenging the authority of the British. Some were killed during battle, some were arrested and committed to long terms of imprisonment. Some were even hanged to death (Sahu, et, al., 1971, p.257-258).

In April 1861 Major Impey, the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur preferred to adopt a conciliatory policy inducing the rebels to surrender. Surendra Sai's son Mitrabhanu laid down arms and surrendered on 7th January 1862. A few day later other followers of Surendra Sai also surrendered. Then Surendra Sai agreed to surrender. On 16 May 1862 Impey and Surendra Sai met in a jungle of Sambalpur where the later surrendered on a guarantee of life, liberty and pardon. He was sanctioned with an annual pension of rupees one thousand two hundred. Impey died in December 1863 at Sambalpur. After him, Captain Cumberlidge as the Deputy Commissioner, he was a hardliner who was opposed to a policy of reconciliation. Surendra Sai, his son and brothers and the leading associates were arrested by police in 23rd January 1864. Government did not want Surendra's return to Sambalpur. Surendra Sai was kept at Nagpur jail upto April 1864 and then removed to Asirgarh fort which was quite far away from Sambalpur. While at Asirgarh Medini Said died in 1876. This undaunted warrior against the British Raj is now acknowledged as national hero (Sahu, et, al., 1971, p.257-258).

By the end of the 1800s, Sambalpur demonstrated a newfound political awareness. To make things easier for the Hindi-speaking authorities in Sambalpur, the chief commissioner of central provinces replaced Oriya as the court language of Sambalpur on January 15, 1885, with Hindi. Sambalpur was the epicentre of the language unrest, which soon spread throughout Orissa. Given the ethical and linguistic distinctions between Sambalpur and the central provinces, Sir Andrew Fraser, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, who visited Sambalpur in 1901, expressed appreciation for the cause of the popular movement and made the following recommendation. After Oriyas was reinstated as Sambalpur's official language in 1903, the district's majority was moved to Orissa in October 1905. Orissa remained a part of Bengal province until April 1, 1912, when Bihar and Orissa were formed. Sambalpur also took active part in the National Movement of India since 1919. Chandra Sekhar Behera was the leader of the

movement in the district. Mahatma Gandhi visited Sambalpur on 23rd December 1928 and second time for Harijan works in 5th May, 1934. The ex-states Bamanda and Rairakhol merged with the Sambalpur district on 1st January 1948 (N.K. Sahu, P.K. Mishra, J.K. Sahu, History of Orissa, pp.257-258).

CONCLUSION

The Indian state of Odisha contains a region known as Western Odisha, or Kosala, which has a rich socio-historical tapestry reflecting a fusion of various cultures, customs, and historical processes. There is proof that humans have lived in Western Odisha since the prehistoric era, which gives the region its ancient past. The region's cultural patchwork is a result of the emergence and fall of numerous dynasties. Western Odisha's historical significance stems from its closeness to the Mahabharata. According to legend, the Pandavas permanently altered the cultural landscape of the area throughout a large portion of their banishment. A key hub in Western Odisha, the ancient city of Sambalpur is said to have been established by Sambara, the legendary monarch of Utkala.

Western Odisha has been influenced by several kingdoms over the ages, including the Mauryas, Guptas, Gajapatis, Marathas, and British. Every governing authority left its mark on the sociocultural fabric of the area, assisting in the blending of different customs and traditions. Due to its advantageous position, the area was a major hub for trade and commerce, which encouraged economic activity that influenced the formation of its social structure.

The socio-historical landscape of Western Odisha is marked by the peaceful cohabitation of diverse people, including tribal tribes that have managed to keep their own cultural identities, such as the Kondhs and Gonds. Celebrations such as Nuakhai, a significant agricultural celebration, represent the deeply ingrained farming methods and communal cohesion that are characteristic of the area. Western Odisha has experienced tremendous socioeconomic change recently. The traditional rural economy has changed due to rapid urbanisation and industrialization, which has changed occupational patterns. The region's cultural legacy is being protected and promoted, while measures for inclusive development are being implemented to deal with the socioeconomic issues.

To sum up, the socio-history of Western Odisha is an intriguing story that combines the liveliness of many groups, historical shifts, and age-old stories. The area is a monument to the people's tenacity and capacity to change with the times without sacrificing the rich fabric of their cultural history.

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